NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

TV For Women Who Think:
Female Intellectualism and Network Television in Mid-Century America

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Field of Screen Cultures

By

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EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

December 2020

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ABSTRACT

TV For Women Who Think:

Female Intellectualism and Network Television in Mid-Century America

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This dissertation argues that network television was a vehicle for the promotion and enactment of female intellectualism in the US during the period directly following World War II. Beginning in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, network television included among its offerings programs that were designed to appeal to women it designated as "educated." Eclectic in terms of format, the programs belonging to this category of television included women's service shows, public affairs documentaries, adaptations of classics and more recent Broadway hits, and plays written expressly for television broadcast. I analyze these formats, treating select programs and individual broadcasts as exemplary. My readings are also informed by industry press discourse and archival documents. Through a discussion of these sources I shed light on how the figure of the intellectual woman was imagined in the early postwar US and what the broadcasting industry hoped to accomplish by speaking to her. The history I trace also denaturalizes familiar concepts like "the intellectual" and "intellectualism," attending to other ways they have been thought and to the racial, class, gender and religious politics that continue to inform their elaboration. My first chapter examines the efforts of network television producers, particularly those at NBC, to develop a television program that resembled the women's service magazine, thereby attracting that medium's "class" consumers and, it was hoped, transforming other women into something that more closely approximated them. My

second chapter looks at the original television plays overseen by Fred Coe, particularly those written by Horton Foote, Paddy Chayefsky and other playwrights known to be specialists of "microscopic theatre." By reading select broadcasts in relation to the local color stories that were a familiar feature of women's service magazines and related popular media, I interrogate the gendering of scale in 1950s television and efforts to "open up" both women's media and the small screen. My third chapter analyzes public affairs programs developed in the very early 1960s for educated homemakers. I treat the series *Purex Specials for Women* as exemplary of the artistic documentary, a new kind of public affairs program, and I explore the cultural anxieties that informed this innovation. My fourth chapter explores the religious inflections of television's intellectualist address to women, focusing in particular on the color television dramatic specials broadcast as part of *The Hallmark Hall of Fame*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing is an odd activity. Over the course of completing this dissertation, I have had to spend extended periods of time alone, sitting with my thoughts. On the one hand, that is solitary work. On the other, it is work that I could never have accomplished without the insights, generosity of spirit, and material and emotional support of so many others. I am grateful to have this opportunity to record my appreciation for those gifts.

Lynn Spigel has been pivotal to this project from its inception. My initial research was undertaken in the context of seminars she taught, and her enthusiasm for the objects I found and the questions they raised was one crucial source of direction and encouragement. The model provided by her scholarship, the inventiveness of her conclusions and the rigor of her research, has been another. I feel privileged to have been taught by such an exceptional feminist thinker and to have been privy to how she works and how she thinks. My other committee members, Jake Smith and Jan Radway, have similarly supplied intellectual guidance and served as models of excellence. In meetings and over email, their thoughtful criticisms and tough questions have had a major impact on my thinking, reading and writing.

As a graduate student at Northwestern, I've benefited from the conviviality and intellectualism fostered by the Screen Cultures Program and the Gender & Sexuality Studies Program. Through each of these spaces I was able to access a sense of community and also inspiration from seeing virtuoso thinking and writing in action. My thanks to Linde Murugan, Maureen Ryan, Zach Campbell, Reem Hilu, Kate Newbold, Steve Babish, Alla Gaddassik, Kim Singletary, Cat Harrington, Ally Day, Alex Thimons, Dave Sagehorn, Nina Cartier, Mimi White, Miriam Petty, Jeff Sconce, Tessie Liu, Mary Weismantel, Lauren Berlant, Nick Davis, Alex Owens, Amy Partridge, Hamid Naficy, Scott Curtis, Jacqueline Stewart, Alex Bevan, Beth

Corzo-Duchardt, Chris Russell, Kareem Khubchandani, Daniel Elam, Anndrea Ellison, Dan Bashara, Catherine Clepper, Ilana Emmett, Katie Good, Ashley Smith, Ben Aspray for making my time in Chicago so generative.

This dissertation involved research trips to several different archives and those trips were only possible because of grants and fellowships I received, including the Phil Zwickler Memorial Research Grant from Cornell University's Human Sexuality Collection, the ARSC Student Research Award from the UCLA Film & Television Archive, the Caroline D. Bain Scholar-in-Residence Fellowship from the Sophia Smith Collection at the Smith College Archives, and dissertation and summer research fellowships from The Sexualities Project at Northwestern. My thanks to Mark Quigley, Josie L. Walters-Johnston, Mike Mashon, Dorinda Hartmann, Brenda J. Marston, Liz Muller, Amy Hague, Karen V. Kukil for the tremendous help they provided in navigating these collections and to Shelly and Gerry Elliot, Julia Fuma, Joan and Joel Aberbach, Urvashi Chakravarty, Anri Yasuda and Chad Diehl, Alexa, Dan, Rosa and Rafa Orr, Kaylin Goldstein and Ramie, Adam and Julian Blatt for the companionship and shelter they provided during those visits.

A significant portion of my writing and research was completed only after my home base ceased to be Chicago. This work would never have gotten done without the expertise of Shatoria D. Lunsford, Dawn Washington, and the amazing staff of Northwestern's Interlibrary Loan program. Thank you for answering all my questions and responding to my endless requests.

Over the course of completing this project I've been lucky to have my thinking jump-started by feminist scholars who were generous with their time and talent. My thanks to Moya Luckett, Suzanne Leonard, Elana Levine, Mimi White, Miriam Petty, Mary Kearney, Gry Rustad, Jaap Verheul, Alyx Vesey, Curran Nault, Robyn Citizen, Melissa Phruksachart, Hannah

Spaulding for their provocations and mentorship. And to the team—Alice Blander, Anri Yasuda, Urvashi Chakravarty, Shahirah Majumdar, Aarthi Vadde—I will always be grateful for our decades-long friendships and the feminist community they sustain.

My thanks to my first community—Paul and Iris Goldstein, Alexa Orr, Kaylin Goldstein, Tom Goldstein, Ronna and Bob Berlin—for teaching me how to argue and how to listen. And to Marie-Claude Ares, Guy Munro, Sonia Haddad, Eve-Marie Lampron, Angelina Zhao, I am grateful for the time you have spent looking after my guys (large and small) and for the warmth you have brought to my time in Montreal.

Finally, to Andre Munro, Linde Murugan, and Reem Hilu, my debts are so large I almost don't know where to begin. Linde and Reem, thank you for reading all the words, responding to all the pleas for help and for inspiring me with your talent. Andre, thank you for listening to me, feeding me, loving me, believing in me and creating the time and space that I needed to write. You and Jacques are my lifelines.

DEDICATION

To Paul Goldstein

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INTRODUCTION

The Working Mother opens with statistics and then segues into poetry. At the outset of this afternoon public affairs special, produced by NBC News and first broadcast in December 1960, we see Laura Tyler (Leora Dana), a white woman in her late 30s, sitting at a desk, a book in her hands. Dressed in a suit and wearing pearl earrings and a necklace, Laura looks the part of a woman who holds a reasonably well-compensated position of paid employment. We later learn that her job as an assistant to a publisher is demanding, fast-paced and the source of great personal satisfaction to her. In this moment of introduction, however, we are not catching Laura in the midst of professional activity or workplace conviviality. Instead, it appears to be after the close of the work day, with Laura staying after hours to enjoy a moment of solitude and do a little pleasure reading at the office before she returns home to her family. Via a voiceover delivered by Pauline Frederick, the NBC news analyst who serves as the TV special's host/narrator, we learn that Laura is "one of the eight million American mothers who leave home each day to go to work." A close-up then directs our attention to the cover of the book Laura is holding—*The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran. As Laura takes off her glasses and proceeds to chew on one end of them, her face held in expression of concentration, we hear her voice on the soundtrack, enunciating a passage from that book, presumably the inspiration for her present state of contemplation. The excerpt from *The Prophet* reads as follows: "You are good when you are one with yourself. Yet when you are not one with yourself, you are not evil. For a house divided is not a den of thieves; it is only a divided house. You are good when you strive to give of yourself. Yet you are not evil when you seek gain for yourself. In your longing for your giant self lies your goodness and that longing is in all of you."[1]

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[1] A recording of *The Working Mother* can be viewed onsite at the Library of Congress. Quoted dialogue from the television play was transcribed during my viewings of that recording.

Sponsored by the detergent company Purex, *The Working Mother* was produced and broadcast as part of *Specials for Women,* a series of hour-long, TV news documentaries that appeared on NBC between 1960 and 1962. Given a variety of labels by the network and the press, including "dramatic investigation," "dramatized case study," and "arty documentary," each special in this daytime series combined fiction and nonfiction techniques in its examination of a new social trend. In the case of *The Working Mother*, the phenomenon being reported on was the increasingly common practice of women continuing to hold positions of paid employment after they marry and after their children are born.

To the sufficiently attentive viewer it would have been apparent that the producers of *The Working Mother* were in favor of mothers working. As was the case with each special in the series, the majority of the broadcast is devoted to a television play that is meant to dramatize the social trend under examination. Laura, the play's protagonist, is a married woman with a twelve-year-old son Jimmy. Having re-entered the workforce out of necessity—an unspecified illness forced her husband Ross to take a leave of absence from his job—Laura finds herself unwilling to relinquish her position of paid employment after Ross's recovery. Faced with the pressure and disapproval expressed by her husband, her son and her neighbor, Laura insists that she has a right to "grow," and that the routine duties of housework fail to provide the intellectual stimulation she craves. The play ends with Laura offering to quit her job if it will save her marriage, only to be told by Ross that he understands her need for growth and that they will find a way to make their dual-career household work.

In an interview with Pauline Frederick that concludes the broadcast, Margaret Mead, billed as distinguished authority on the subject of women and society, reinforces the play's endorsement of working mothers. Asked by Frederick if a mother's work in a position of paid

employment can be of benefit to her children, Mead offers an emphatic yes. "Yes, it's important for all children that their fathers and their mothers do the things that they can do best. And if their mothers are trained to do something elaborate or complicated or different from housework and feel unhappy at home or do it badly it's better for the mother to be doing the thing that she does well and let someone else do the housework. Because after all the world at present needs every trained person to make their optimum contribution to the world and their children will be better off if they do."

And yet while the program is in favor of women's direct participation in the paid labor market, particularly with regard to "trained" or educated women, the way in which it articulates that position is not polemical. *The Working Mother* is not the televisual equivalent of an activist collective's manifesto, a thinktank's position paper or even a newspaper editorial. Instead it purports to "study" or make sense of a practice that it presents as conventional. As Mead explains in an introduction that accompanied a paperback edition of the television plays, the primary objective of *The Working Mother* and other specials broadcast as part of this public affairs series was not to "give answers to problems," that is, to tell people *what* to think, but rather to "provide… ways of thinking about human situations" and "a way of introducing discussions between husband and wife, a mother and her son or daughter or a father and his daughter, which neither knows quite how to begin."[2] In contrast to statements that are designed to persuade, that is, to provoke new attitudes or actions, *The Working Mother* was aimed at encouraging reflection and discussion—its purpose was to give the women watching it something to think about.

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[2] Margaret Mead, "Introduction," *Specials for Women: Eight Plays by George Lefferts* (Avon: New York, 1962), xvii.

This dissertation argues that television was a vehicle for the promotion and enactment of female intellectualism in the mid-twentieth century US. Far from being anomalous, the *Purex Specials for Women* is representative of a wide swath of network television programs that addressed viewers as women who think. Between 1949 and 1963, a woman who happened to turn on her television set at the right time and in the right place might have witnessed any of the following: Pauline Frederick reporting on a special session of the United Nations; Dorothy Doan, host of CBS's *Vanity Fair* and former women's editor of the International News Service, speaking with Ralphe Bunche on the subject of Civil Rights; Margaret Mead lecturing to an auditorium full of college students on the cultural and biological differences between American men and women; Arlene Francis, host of NBC's *Home*, narrating filmed footage of a two-week visit she made to Japan, a trip that is promoted as both a vacation and an ethnographic endeavor directed at discovering Japanese homemaking practices; performances of *Carmen, Hamlet*, and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*; James A. Michener, Pulitzer-prize-winning author of *Tales of South Pacific* and *Voice of Asia*, serving as host/guide of an hour-long travelogue filmed on location throughout Southeast Asia; Aline B. Saarinen, former arts desk columnist and book editor for the *New York Times*, reviewing a new modern art exhibition in her capacity as cultural commentator for *Today*. In promotional materials for Purex's *Specials for Women*, Mead characterized the imagined audience for such programs as "today's young mothers," women who are "well-schooled," and, as a result of that schooling, "want to know the best that is currently known and to feel, in all its poignancy, what others in the same situation as theirs feel."[3] To Robert Sarnoff, then the NBC President and known to be a man of few words, this same

[3] Ibid., xv.

audience and the programs designed to appeal to them could be summed up in more succinct terms: "TV for Eggheads."[4]

Defined by its address and purpose, this category of television was decidedly eclectic when it came to format. Cultural documentaries, women's service shows, discussion programs, entertainment specials, literary adaptations, and news bulletins are among the types of television that were thought to hold a special appeal to this particular audience—women who think. As NBC was the network most concerned with reaching such viewers, much of the history detailed in the pages that follow will focus on programs broadcast on that network or one of its owned-and-operated stations.

TV For Women Who Think explores this neglected facet of midcentury American television. An examination of the postwar television industry's efforts to appeal to women it designated as "educated," the history I detail sheds light on relations between institutions, authorities and practices that are commonly assumed to have been unrelated, if not antithetical, during the early postwar era. By complicating received notions of what television was, this history also challenges familiar understandings of concepts like "intellectual" and "intellectualism." Put simply, this is not a story about "The Intellectuals," New York or otherwise.[5] Rather, my focus is on the type of person to which such arbiters of culture addressed their remarks and opinions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given longstanding and ongoing associations between women and consumerism, this cultural type—the consumer of ideas-- was often figured

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[4] Robert W. Sarnoff, "What Do You Want from TV?" *Saturday Evening Post*, July 1, 1961, 13 – 15, 44 – 46.

[5] A considerable amount of scholarship on midcentury intellectualism concerns the group of editors and writers associated with *Partisan Review* and *Dissent*. This group is often referred to *the* New York Intellectuals. See, for example, Alexander Bloom, *Prodigal Sons: The New York Intellectuals and Their World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

as a woman. The programs I discuss provide insight into how this figure was imagined and what the industry—and the arbiters—hoped to accomplish by speaking to her.

Middlebrow, Intellectualism, and Eggheads

The claim that television was a vehicle for midcentury intellectualism might strike some people as an odd one. After all, the years directly following World War II were a period in which high-profile intellectuals of a variety of political stripes routinely published withering assessments of the medium and its impact on other forms of art and culture. In his 1953 essay "A Theory of Mass Culture," for example, Dwight MacDonald passionately derided television and other mass-mediated culture as "a cancerous growth on High Culture." In the view of MacDonald, the medium as a whole was suspect in that its programs addressed viewers as "the masses," that is, as a homogenized and atomized entity, rather than as individual constituents of a community. While opposed to television in general, MacDonald was most vehement in his condemnation of television programs and other forms of mass-mediated culture that purported to serve viewers' intellectual, cultural or artistic interests. These "midcult" or middlebrow cultural forms constituted, in his view, facile replications of the genuine article, preying on viewers who lacked sufficient knowledge or cultural literacy to distinguish real from fake, and forcing "real" artists and other cultural producers to compete with its debased standards. Television that purported to be intellectualist was, according to this one intellectual, a "spreading ooze," contaminating all cultural production and transforming it—for the worse.[6]

While unquestionably influential, both on the writing and thinking of his contemporaries and that of subsequent scholars, MacDonald's passionate denunciation of television and

[6] Dwight MacDonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," *Diogenes*, 1:3 (1953): 1 – 17.

middlebrow culture more generally was not shared by all cultural commentators in the midcentury. Other high-profile critics characterized their relation to culture—mass or middlebrow—in terms that were decidedly more ambivalent. According to this alternative perspective, the postwar period was indeed a time of unprecedented growth or expansion for middlebrow culture, but that growth amounted to opportunity and instigation. In a 1952 symposium convened by the editors of *Partisan Review*, for example, Sidney Hook dismissed as "bewildering" the "view that mass culture or the popular arts constitute a profound menace to the position of American intellectuals. [...] Unless one is an incurable snob (I am old enough to remember intense discussions by otherwise intelligent people as to whether the cinema is an art), the forms of mass culture and the popular arts should serve as a challenge to do something with them."[7] Almost all of the more than twenty contributors to the symposium, as well as one that had been held four years earlier, articulated a variation of this view, acknowledging a vast increase in cultural production, but—in a departure from MacDonald's well-known position—refusing to denounce that "growth" as by definition harmful, let alone cancerous.[8]

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[7] Sidney Hook, "Our Country, Our Culture: A Symposium, Part III," *Partisan Review* 19:15 (September-October, 1952): 572.

[8] Indeed, notwithstanding his well-publicized disdain for mass culture and his calls to contain its "spreading ooze" of influence, MacDonald, in practice, more or less adopted this position as guide (and member of the critical-nonconformist-elite) to an expanding intellectualist class. While the initial iteration of MacDonald's denunciation of mass culture was published in 1944 in *Politics*, a magazine founded and edited by MacDonald whose subscription numbers never attained more than a few thousand, subsequent versions achieved a far wider circulation via their publication in a journal funded in part by one middlebrow institution (the Ford Foundation) and in a collection of essays distributed by another (the mass-market publisher Random House). Perhaps even more to the point, soon after publishing the 1953 iteration of his critique of mass culture, MacDonald became a regular contributor to the *New Yorker*. It was in this middlebrow venue that he first published many of his famed critiques of Encyclopedia Britannica's Great Books series and other middlebrow targets.
For other responses to this same symposium, and for an earlier set of statements by members of the *Partisan Review* crowd on mass-mediated culture, see "The State of American Writing, 1948: A Symposium," *Partisan Review* 15:8 (August 1948): 855 – 893; "Our Country, Our Culture: A Symposium," *Partisan Review* 19:13 (May-June 1952): 282 – 326; "Our Country, Our Culture: A Symposium, Part II," *Partisan Review* 19:14 (July – August 1952): 420 - 450; "Our Country, Our Culture: A Symposium, Part III," 562 – 597.

In conceiving of mass-mediated culture as a vehicle for public pedagogy, midcentury intellectuals were building on practices and insights that dated back to the late nineteenth century. As Lawrence W. Levine and Paul DiMaggio have demonstrated, in the second half of the nineteenth century, philanthropists used their wealth to establish and maintain symphony orchestras, opera companies, museums and other temples of culture, sites of recreation that were guided by the tastes of a wealthy elite, but also designed to facilitate the assimilation of immigrants and edify workers. In the first decades of the twentieth century, this pedagogic project was taken up and further expanded by publishers and editors in the magazine and book industries. As Janice A. Radway explains, entrepreneurs such as Cyrus H.K. Curtis, publisher of the *Ladies Home Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, and Harry Scherman, founder of the Book-of-the-Month Club, challenged prevailing conceptions of culture, reconceiving of it as a commodity that could be made accessible to the rapidly expanding managerial-professional class. According to both Radway and Joan Shelley Rubin, education was a central facet of the marketing of culture by figures like Scherman. That is, the promise of organizations like the Book-of-the-Month Club entailed more than just guidance in what books one should be reading and why; their selections also modeled what Pierre Bourdieu calls a "habitus," or a social habit of mind. For those who were economically ascendant, such lessons constituted resources through which their newly attained class status could be cemented and reaffirmed. This sentimental education, to borrow Christina Klein's phrase, also, presumably, provided access to feelings of generality and belonging for at least some of its students.[9]

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[9] Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Paul DiMaggio, "Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America," *Media, Culture, and Society*, 4:1 (1982): 33 – 50; Paul DiMaggio, "Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston, Part II: The Classification and Framing of American Art," *Media, Culture, and Society*, 4:4 (1982): 303-332; Janice A. Radway, *Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Joan Shelley Rubin, *The Making of*

As Erika Doss, Karal Ann Marling, Lynn Spigel, and other historians of art, media and visual culture have noted, the project of democratizing, or making more widely accessible, high culture was also pursued in the 1930s and 1940s by entrepreneurs and cultural institutions working in the worlds of the performing and visual arts. Doss has traced the widely successful efforts of the Associated American Artists (AAA) to expand the market of those who collected original works of art. During the same midcentury period, Marling notes the expansion of amateur painting as a popular leisure activity, a phenomenon that, she suggests, culminates in the 1950s in the form of the paint-by-the-numbers craze. Similarly, Spigel and Danielle Ward-Griffin have shown that by the late 1940s, elite cultural institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Opera House were already exploring how the new medium of television might serve as a vehicle for introducing new audiences to their collections and repertoires.[10]

With respect to network television, Gilbert Seldes constituted one of the most influential voices among these self-anointed guardians of America's intellectual life. As part of a long, prolific and varied career that began in the 1920s with his work as an editor and critic at *The Dial* and other famed "little magazines"; soon flourished with the 1924 publication of *The Seven Lively Arts*, one of the first collections of American criticism to treat mass culture as an object

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Middlebrow Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945 – 1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[10] Erika Doss, "Catering to Consumerism: Associated American Artists and the Marketing of Modern Art, 1934 – 1958," *Winterthur Portfolio* 26:2-3 (1991): 143 – 167; Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994; Lynn Spigel, *TV by Design: Modern Art and the Rise of Network Television* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), Danielle Ward-Griffin, "As Seen on TV: Putting the NBC Opera on Stage," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 71:3 (2018): 595 – 654. Regarding related developments in film culture during the 1940s and 1950s, see also, Haidee Wasson, *Museum Movies: The Museum of Modern Art and the Birth of Art Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Barbara Wilinsky, *Sure Seaters: The Emergence of Art House Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Barbara Klinger,"Pre-Cult: Casablanca, Radio Adaptation, and Transmedia in the 1940s," *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 13:1 (2015): 45 – 62.

worthy of study; and later included a stint in the late 1950s and early 1960s as the first dean of the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, Seldes also worked extensively in the television industry in a variety of capacities, including executive, writer, producer, performer and industry critic. Appointed in the late 1930s by CBS to oversee its television department, Seldes spent the early, wartime part of his tenure primarily working in the network's radio division, collaborating with celebrated documentarian Norman Corwin, among others. After the war, he initiated partnerships with New York-based cultural institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Encyclopedia Britannica, as well as *Mademoiselle* magazine, welcoming their involvement in the network's experiments in television production.[11]

Such collaborations are indicative of Seldes's programming philosophy, a set of ideas that he laid out in some detail in *The Great Audience* (1950), a critique of the broadcasting and film industries that he wrote and published after his tenure at CBS, and then further developed and circulated via the numerous pieces of television criticism he generated throughout the rest of the decade. In his view, the commercial television networks had a responsibility to contribute to the formation of a "literate, at least partly educated public" and, under its current management, those companies were failing to fulfill that obligation.[12] Importantly, Seldes's chief complaint was directed not primarily at the quality of television programs, but rather the homogeneity of the program service as a whole.[13] Pointing to the Book-of-the-Month Club, mass-market book publishers, and *Life* magazine as examples, he called for the television networks to emulate these

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[11] For a thoughtful study of Seldes's extensive body of work, see Michael G. Kammen, *The Lively Arts: Gilbert Seldes and the Transformation of Cultural Criticism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
[12] Gilbert Seldes, *The Great Audience* (New York: Viking Press, 1951), 248.
[13] Seldes repeatedly makes the point that what he advocates is not a particular kind of programming so much as a variety of programs. Here is one of many examples from the text: "Since I am unwilling to accept anyone else's standards for my private entertainment, I do not care to see mine imposed on other people. But I think that in keeping with the spirit of our life, a true variety of choice should be available, not merely a variety of packages for identity goods" (214).

and other "popularizers." "The popularizers," Seldes wrote, "expose the incurious to new experiences, they set light and serious endeavors side by side, if they use sensational effects, they do not actively reduce the range of the average's person's interests. […] The function of the popularizers is not to impose a discipline but to offer attractively more kinds of experience, to extend the range of choice."[14] In an article published in the trade press journal *Printers' Ink* the following year, Seldes further developed this position, advocating for the "steady infiltration of cultural elements into the commercial program," so that "any evening of television [would] becom[e] more like a general magazine," offering "variety of experience" instead of uniformity.[15]

While Seldes's insights were published only after he left his position at CBS, that is, during a time in which he no longer had a direct say in network program content, his ideal for television as a "popularizer" akin to a general interest magazine is one that others in the industry, particularly NBC's Sylvester "Pat" Weaver, would echo and endorse throughout the rest of the decade. Although the arts and culture programming that resulted from Weaver initiatives and competitor programs at CBS had previously received little attention from scholars, in the last ten years or so, there has been a wealth of research on such programs generated by historians of broadcasting and performing arts. These include analyses of television's address to "sophisticated" taste publics such as modern art-literate homemakers, "sick" comedy aficionados, and poetry enthusiasts by Lynn Spigel, Ethan Thompson, and Jacob Smith; studies of television's articulation of black modernism in music and dance by Meenasarani Linde Murugan, Shane Vogel, and Lynn Spigel; examinations of the efforts of cultural institutions like the Ford Foundation, the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Opera to involve

[14] Ibid., 248.
[15] Gilbert Seldes, "A Siberia for Culture?" *Printers' Ink*, March 9, 1951, 32-35, 56, 60.

themselves in early television production by Spigel, Anna McCarthy, William Hughes, Anna E. Nekola, and Danielle Ward-Griffin .[16] My scholarship seeks to build on and expand their insights. To that end, I approach objects such as these from a slightly different angle, categorizing them as intellectualist television, or, "programs that inform and excite the mind," to borrow Seldes's language.[17]

In doing so, I am building on the groundbreaking and generative research of Andrew Ross, Paul Gorman, Marcie Frank, Christina Klein on the relationship between intellectuals and popular culture.[18] These and other scholars have productively examined the figure of the intellectual as a cultural authority. Their attention to the workings of power in the field of culture have for the most part entailed a definition of intellectualism as the practice of boundary-policing, of distinguishing between the real and the fake, the good and the bad. My dissertation seeks to add to these insights by attending to other ways that the practice of intellectualism was

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[16] Lynn Spigel, *TV By Design*; Ethan Thompson, *Parody and Taste in Postwar American Television Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Jacob Smith, *Spoken Word: Postwar American Phonograph Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Meenasarani Linde Murugan, "Electronic Salome: Exotic Dance, Early Television, and Black Modernism," *Ecranosphere*, 2018; Shane Vogel, "Madam Zajj and US Steel: Blackness, Bioperformance, and Duke Ellington's Calypso Theater," *Social Text*, 30:4: 1 – 24; Anna McCarthy, *Citizen Machine: Governing by Television in 1950s America* (New York: The New Press, 2010); William Hughes, *James Agee, Omnibus, and "Mr. Lincoln": The Culture of Liberalism and the Challenge of Television, 1952 – 1953* (Lanham, MA: The Scare Press, 2004); Anna E. Nekola, "Teaching Americans to be International Citizens: World Music and Dance on Television's *Omnibus*," *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 13:3 (2019): 305 – 337; Danielle Ward-Griffin, "As See on TV"; Danielle Ward-Griffin, "Up Close and Personal: Opera and Television Broadcasting in the 1950s," *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 13:2 (2019): 216 – 231; James Baughman, *Same Time, Same Station: Creating American Television, 1948 – 1961* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 82 – 120. For foundational analyses on this iteration of television, see William Boddy, "Operation Frontal Lobes versus the Living Room Toy: The Battle Over Programme Control in Early Television," *Media, Culture & Society*, 9:3 (1987): 347 – 68; Vance Kepley, "From 'Frontal Lobes' to the 'Bob-and-Bob Show': NBC Management and Programming Strategies, 1949 – 65," *Hollywood in the Age of Television*, ed. Tino Balio (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 41 – 61; Pamela Wilson, "NBC Television's 'Operation Frontal Lobes': Cultural Hegemony and Fifties' Program Planning," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television*, 15: 1 (1995): 83 – 104.

[17] Seldes, "A Siberia for Culture?", 60.

[18] Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Paul R. Gorman, *Left Intellectuals and Popular Culture in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Marcie Frank, *How to Be An Intellectual in the Age of TV: the Lessons of Gore Vidal* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*.

conceptualized in the early postwar, specifically its construction as a "passion for ideas," in Richard Hofstadter's phrase, or as "exuberant amateurism" in the words of *Newsweek*.[19]

To that end, my focus is less on the discourse surrounding those recognized as elite individuals, and more on those to which such statements were addressed. During the early postwar era, this second group was often designated as eggheads. First put into print circulation during the 1952 presidential campaign, the term "egghead" was used by political journalist Stewart Alsop to describe the kind of voter who preferred the policy rich, erudite speeches of Adlai Stevenson to, in Alsop's words, the "whistle-stop homilies" of Eisenhower.[20] In Alsop's telling, the Stevenson-enthusiast is "interested in ideas, and the words used to express those ideas."[21] Significantly, the column treats Stevenson's style of address as an innovation and as evidence of an emergent social type. What remains an open question is how significant a portion of the population can actually be said to belong to this new category. Or, to borrow the rhetoric of its headline, "How Many Egg-Heads Are There?"[22]

While the term most likely has masculine and derisive connotations for a contemporary reader, evoking images like the nerdy, lab-coated scientist on *The Simpsons*, at the time of its initial circulation, the label "egghead" was more descriptor than epithet and applied to both women and men. For example, in his 1952 column, Alsop points to "two elderly southern ladies" to exemplify the kind of "egghead" voter that appreciates the intellectualist address of Stevenson's speeches.[23] Similarly, in a *Newsweek* cover story on eggheads published a few years later, the article identifies the women who buy records featuring spoken word performances by

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[19] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Knopf, 1963); "Special Education Report," *Newsweek*, October 8, 1956, 55.
[20] Stewart Alsop, "Matter of Fact: How Many Egg-heads are There?" *Washington Post*, September 26, 1952, 25.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.

Dylan Thomas and other poets as exemplars of egghead-ness.[24] In the same vein, in explaining their pedagogic responsibility to address the ever-expanding audience for mass culture, cultural arbiters like Seldes or Lionel Trilling described their imagined readers as high school teachers, social workers, and other members of "the minor intellectual professions," that is, members of professions that were commonly designated as "women's work."[25] Put simply, in midcentury discourse about eggheads, those who produce intellectualist commodities are generally figured as men, but the prevailing assumption was that those who consumed those commodities were, for the most part, women.

In the mid-twentieth century US, another attribute routinely associated with intellectualism was passion. Richard Hofstadter, for example, argued in 1962 that the "true" intellectual—as opposed to other members of the briefcase-touting class of brainworkers—possessed a "feeling about ideas" that, in terms of intensity, approximated a religious faith. "Intellectualism," he wrote, "is often the sole piety of the skeptic."[26] Invoking a colleague as illustration, Hofstadter describes that unnamed professor's conception of intellectual labor "as a *calling*," "[h]is work was undertaken as a kind of devotional exercise, … more than workmanlike and professional" (emphasis in the original). Similarly, Lynes in his 1949 essay for *Harper's*, invoked Edgar Wallace's definition of the highbrow or intellectual (he uses the terms interchangeably) as "a man who has found something more interesting than women."[27] As these descriptions indicate, intellectualism was understood as a practice that failed to completely conform to the heteronormative logics and structures of American capitalism.

[24] "Special Education Report," 54 – 55.
[25] Lionel Trilling, "Our Country, Our Culture," *Partisan Review*, 19:13 (May-June 1952), 322.
[26] Hofstadter, 28.
[27] Lynes, "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow," *Harper's*, February 1, 1949, 20.

In what might come as a surprise to a contemporary reader, educated housewives, particularly housewives who had received some college education, were often discussed in similar terms. That is, education, it was assumed, had given them a passion for thinking and ideas that while not necessarily subversive, had the potential to undermine their primary responsibility of caring for family and home. Since that family and home was understood as being the building block of the consumer's republic, to borrow Lizabeth Cohen's term, the educated woman was a figure that provoked some anxiety and much discussion. As Lynn Spigel has shown, in early postwar television, one way in which those anxieties found expression was in the form a recurring female character: the college-educated art thief who has fallen under the spell of Communism.[28] In the mode of television I discuss, the same uneasiness manifests itself in a somewhat different form. As if in effort to prevent the kind of full-blown dissidence the Communist art thief embodies, intellectualist television provided guidance in how an educated woman might channel her passion for thinking into more tangible (and capitalist-friendly) ways of enriching herself and her family.

The anxieties attached to intellectual housewives during the early postwar period speaks to changes in women's education that had taken place in the preceding decades. As historian Barbara Miller Solomon documents in her authoritative history of women and liberal arts education, college attendance remained a rarefied pursuit throughout most of the twentieth century. That said, in the decades that elapsed between the founding of select group of Protestant women's colleges in the late nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, the percentage of women attending college among the US population as a whole increased from less than one

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[28] Spigel, *TV By Design*, 37 – 41.

percent to almost twenty percent.[29] In Solomon's telling, one consequence of this gradual increase in college attendance is that, by the 1920s, the female co-ed became a recognizable type, debated and discussed within and beyond the academy.[30] While the overall numbers of women attending college continues to increase throughout the mid-century, in the years directly following World War II, the percentage of women in the college population diminishes, in part as a result of changes to that population brought about by the GI Bill.[31] As Jacob Smith notes, in the 1950s, participants in various facets of the culture industries took note of this divergence in educational opportunity, addressing their wares to women who had intellectualist leanings, but lacked access to a formal course of study.[32] In so doing, they were drawing on a mode of address that had long been deployed by producers of women's service media. In the following section I will provide a brief overview and explication of this mode of women's culture.

Service as a Mode of Women's Culture

As I detail below, the defining attributes of the service mode are syncretism, an ameliorative purpose, a conceptualization of women as instruments, and an address that "talks up" or flatters its prospective consumers. A 1922 article authored by Christine Frederick, celebrated domestic economist, gives a sense of what is meant by "syncretism," a term that I've adopted from June Howard.[33] Published in *Good Housekeeping* under the headline "A Real Use of the Radio," Frederick's article outlines her vision of how individual radio stations might organize a day's worth of programming. In it, she recommended segments devoted to tips for

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[29] Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 63 – 64.
[30] Ibid., 172 – 185.
[31] Ibid., 186 – 206.
[32] Smith, 72 – 75.
[33] See June Howard, *Publishing the Family* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 158 – 212.

efficient housekeeping, cooking instruction and recipes, advice on beauty rituals and physical fitness, news on the latest developments in fashion, reviews of plays and novels, reports on public affairs, short talks on how to manage home finances, religious music and sermons, and story hours to keep the children at home occupied and entertained, among other program possibilities. By following her advice and attending to such subjects, Frederick explained, those in charge of radio's broadcast content "would answer the needs of the majority of women and families and provide them with a service which will put them in touch with the world of thought, progress, and amusement."[34]

An eclectic mix of subjects that, taken together, were designed to both enrich the mind and occupy the hands of homemakers, Frederick's broadcasting schedule closely resembled the table of contents page for the kind of magazine in which her article appeared—a service magazine. An industry designation, the appellation of "service," "home service" or "women's service" was initially applied to mass-circulated magazines that began publication at the end of the nineteenth century, including *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McCall's*, and *Woman's Home Companion*. In contrast to fashion magazines which preceded them, such as *Godey's Lady's Book*, service magazines were not directed at the rarefied, aristocratic collection of readers who could afford the hefty four-dollar price-tag for each individual issue. Dependent instead on advertisers and subscription fees, this new iteration of a magazine for women had a decidedly larger and more inclusive address. Female members of the burgeoning bourgeois class, that is, the native-born, Anglo-Saxon wives and daughters of men employed in the professions, were their assumed readers. While initially directed primarily at those who were based in the

[34] Christine Frederick, "A Real Use of the Radio," *Good Housekeeping*, July 1922, 77, 144 – 146.

Northeast, by the first decades of twentieth century service magazines boasted circulations north of 1 million subscribers and were calling attention to the national extent of their readership.[35]

In addition to the relative inclusivity of its address, another defining attribute of this mode of women's culture is its ameliorative purpose. Editors and writers for such publications cast themselves as occupying a privileged vantage point, a position that afforded them access to the best information, the latest practices and the most interesting people. This specialist knowledge, which formerly would have remained restricted to the upper-echelons of society, is, by virtue of mass-circulating media, now available to women all over the country, provided that they or someone in their community can afford the subscription fee. A December 1906 editorial that appeared in *Harper's Bazar* captures both the tenor of this address and the promise of edification. Noting that the magazine's readership had greatly expanded since its first decades, so that it now included "[m]any thousands of women living in the small towns of the South and the West," the editor makes clear the *Bazar*'s intention to serve the interest of all readers—those close to cultural centers and the more far-flung. "*Harper's Bazar* will continue to be the magazine for the up-to-date woman. It will still be the court of final appeal in all questions of fashion, entertainment, household decoration, and good form. But it will be more than this. It will [also] be 'guide, philosopher, and friend' to countless women of less experience, less opportunity, narrower environment, simpler ideals."[36]

In casting themselves as popularizers or disseminators of a specialist, feminized knowledge, producers of this early iteration of the women's service magazine were borrowing

[35] Regarding the early history of women's service magazines, see Helen Damon-Moore, *Magazines for the Millions: Gender and Commerce in the Ladies' Home Journal and the Saturday Evening Post, 1880 – 1910* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
[36] Editorial reproduced in Howard, 16 – 17.

from nineteenth-century domestic manuals. In much the same way that Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher-Stowe framed their domestic treatise *The American Woman's Home* as a written and published record of the same instruction that they delivered to the select group of girls capable of affording the tuition for the Beechers' seminary in Connecticut, service magazines "talked up" to readers by emphasizing their membership in a social class that also included "the most up-to-date woman."[37] The legacy of such nineteenth-century antecedents as the domestic manual, the seminary, and the early women's colleges also manifests in the Protestant conceptualization of women articulated by service magazines. In other words, service discourse addresses women as instruments rather than individuals. Their aim is to facilitate women in their social obligation or role of caring for others; to help women be the best media that they can be.

First circulated on a national scale via print industries, commercial service media depended upon a social group that was already coming into being through lecture series, church groups, community housekeeping organizations, and other women's clubs. The news and events of such organizations were a frequent topic of the *Ladies' Home Journal* and other magazines, with individual instances held up as exemplars that women in other parts of the country might emulate.[38] Following this early success in print, the service mode was soon taken up by network radio. According to Michele Hilmes, there were more than twenty daytime service programs on the air by the early 1930s.[39] That said, the service program format was soon superseded by the daytime serial, a new format that, according to Hilmes, more or less conquered daytime network

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[37] Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home* (New York: J.B. Ford & Co., 1869). The language of "talking up" to describe an address is one that I've taken from Lynn Spigel's discussion of modernist graphic and its appeal to "up-to-date" women. See Spigel, *TV By Design*, 59.
[38] For summaries of the content of early women's magazines, see Howard and Damon-Moore.
[39] Michele Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922 – 1952* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 147 – 150.

broadcasting by the end of the 1930s.[40] Throughout the subsequent decade, this dominance of the serial on daytime radio was frequently decried by critics of mass-mediated culture. In the view of these (male) commentators, serials were the radio equivalent of *True Confessions* or *True Story*, mass-circulating magazines that, in contrast to the service magazine, talked down (not up) to their readers, habituating women of all social groups to the most "lowbrow," sensationalist cultural goods.[41]

It is in this context that intellectuals like Seldes and Weaver made their case that the new medium of television should do its best to emulate the general interest magazine, that is, magazines that like the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping* or *Charmed* introduced their readers to a variety of subjects, and, as a result, "appeal to many different levels of human interest."[42] As part of this effort, producers of network television adapted the formats, rhetorical strategies, and topics of such magazines, as well as collaborating with the editors and writers with which they were associated. Similarly, they emphasized the need to diversify the content of their program service, presenting the mix of programs as one that, like the service magazine, would result in the amelioration of the women who watched. Not incidentally, the programs cast as adding complexity and diversity to television—the outliers that, by activating a range of tastes and interests, would "preserve our capacity to think"—were those that suited the tastes of the reader of *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McCall's*, and other women's service magazines, or at least what those tastes were assumed to be.[43] As I discuss in the individual chapters, this included

[40] Ibid.
[41] For summaries of the criticisms leveled against radio soap opera, see Robert C. Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 8 – 29; Hilmes, 151 – 165.
[42] Seldes, *The Great Audience*, 295.
[43] Ibid.

"local color" features organized around family life, social science research formulated for a generalist audience, and inspirational art and literature.

Placing "TV For Women Who Think" in Feminist Media Studies

The following section is an effort to situate my concepts and research in the context of Feminist Media Studies. In a 2005 *Cinema Journal* article, Michele Hilmes interrogated television's status as a "bad object" of study in the academic field of Cinema and Media Studies. Offering a cursory history of television studies as a subfield, Hilmes acknowledged the sexist dimensions to the medium's disreputable status within and beyond the academy. "Television," Hilmes wrote, "has always been associated with the feminine, because of its position within the home and its historically greater appeal to female audiences. Part of its status as low other has to do with this association. Feminists fought hard to put television on the film studies agenda. Work on soap operas, domestic sitcoms, and female-centered drama formed a crucial part of early television studies."[44] In designating television as a "bad object," Hilmes's piece echoes and modifies the characterization of TV, and mass culture more generally, as the feminized "other" to legitimate culture such as film.[45] Indeed, given that nearly two decades had elapsed between that characterization's initial circulation via publications by Patrice Petro, Andreas Huyssen, and the publication of Hilmes's essay, it is striking how little television's status has changed within the field, even as the field itself has shifted so significantly. In other words, while the field in the

[44] Michele Hilmes, "The Bad Object: Television in the American Academy," *Cinema Journal* 45:1 (2005): 111 -117.
[45] Patrice Petro, "Mass Culture and the Feminine: The 'Place' of Television in Film Studies," *Cinema Journal* 25:3 (1986): 5-21; Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," *After the Great Divide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 44 – 62.

interim had expanded, recognizing new media as part of its purview, that expansion had had little effect on television's legitimacy or its feminine connotations.

In their book *Legitimating Television*, Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine note a similar dynamic in play in more recent discussions about television's cultural status. Arguing that in the "convergence era of the twentieth-first century" television has attained a new cultural legitimacy, Newman and Levine nonetheless assert that this revaluation does not extend to televisual forms "rooted in the medium's past and associated with less valued audiences who had previously been seen as central to television's cultural identity—women, children, the elderly, those of lesser class status, people who spend their days at home."[46] In fact, in the view of the authors, it is only by their disassociation from such denigrated televisual forms (and audiences) that "more respectable genres of TV" can achieve and maintain their new legitimacy.[47]

In the last ten years, feminist media critics, particularly those writing about contemporary media, have steered into this curve, focusing their attention on reality television, "soapy" dramatic series, and other forms associated with the "less valued audience" of women. In multiple instances, this new scholarship is cast as a reinvestment and continuation of a critical project associated with Feminist Media Studies's past. That is, scholars note their indebtedness to groundbreaking feminist research in the 1970s and 1980s on soap operas, romance novels, film melodrama and other cultural forms discussed as "women's genres," and frame their new research as a return, after a decades-long hiatus, to cultural forms that are "feminized" and "delegitimated."[48]

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[46] Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine, *Legitimating Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 5.
[47] Ibid.
[48] See, for example, Elana Levine, ed., *Cupcakes, Pinterest and Ladyporn: Feminized Popular Culture in the Early Twenty-First Century* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Kristen J. Warner, "Value Added: Reconsidering Women-Centered Media and Viewership," *Communication Culture & Critique* 12 (2019): 167 – 172. The texts that are routinely cited include Annettte Kuhn, "Women's Genres," *Screen*

In addition to interrogating the gendered dimensions of disreputability, some participants in this feminist critical project have paid particular attention to the racial and class dimensions of concepts like "respectable" or "legitimate." For example, in separate articles unpacking the concept of "rachetness," Kristen J. Warner and Racquel Gates examine the relationship between black female viewers and reality television series such as *Real Housewives of Atlanta* (2008 -) and *Basketball Wives* (2010 -). In the view of both scholars, the condemnation (and pleasure) that these series generate cannot be divorced from a "politics of respectability," that is, the demands placed on black women to adhere to middle-class, white norms of comportment.[49]

My dissertation intervenes in this ongoing conversation about the politics of aesthetic hierarchies and the gender, class and racial connotations of designations like "quality" and "respectable." That said, there is a key difference between the TV programs that constitute my archive and the genres usually classified as "for women." Unlike soap operas or latter-day outgrowths like reality "docu-soaps," the mid-century program formats I discuss were not discursively constructed as "low culture" or "lowbrow." Instead, network television producers framed this iteration of television for women as part of a larger project of amelioration. That is, unlike the soap opera, which midcentury cultural commentators persistently associated with women who were lower-income and had less formal education, the dramatic television specials, service programs, television plays and other program formats I examine were similar to the midcentury arts education programs Lynn Spigel has discussed and the cultural documentaries

25: 1 (1984): 18 – 28; Tania Modleski, "'The Search for Tomorrow in Today's Soap Operas," *Film Quarterly* 37:1 (1979): 12 – 21; Charlotte Brunsdon, "'Crossroads': Notes on Soap Opera," *Screen* 22:4 (1981): 32 – 37; Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Ien Ang, *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination* (New York: Methuen, 1985).

[49] Racquel Gates, "Activating the Negative Image," *Television & New Media* 16:7 (2015): 616-30; Kristen J. Warner, "They Gon' Think You Loud Regardless: Rachetness, Reality Television, and Black Womanhood," *Camera Obscura* 30:1 (2015): 129 – 153.

examined by Susan Murray, in that they had connotations of "class" and "quality."[50] Designed to appeal to the imagined reader of the women's service magazine, this audience was not necessarily specified by either the broadcasting or publishing industries in terms of race or class, but the women held up as its exemplars were overwhelming white, reasonably affluent and either married or aspiring to be. That said, it is important to distinguish this imaged viewer from the actual women (and men) who watched these programs, a group that was undoubtedly more heterogeneous, in terms of tastes and demographics, than the producers of network television imagined it to be.

Importantly, such programs were not only addressed to women who were different from the (imagined) soap opera viewer; they also addressed women differently. In the chapters that follow I unpack this intellectualist address to women and the various cultural anxieties that informed it at different points in the decades directly following World War II. In doing so, I follow the lead of Rachel Moseley, Helen Wheatley, Helen Wood, Jilly Boyce Kay and other feminist television scholars who insist that the relationship between television and women is not necessarily defined by intimacy and belonging (as terms like "women's genres" would imply) and that it can be and, indeed, it has been, thought otherwise.[51]

Objects and Methodology

The process of excavating TV's intellectualist address to women has entailed significant research in archives housing audiovisual materials, paper materials donated by institutions and

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[50] Lynn Spigel, *TV by Design*, 154 – 9; Susan Murray, *Bright Signals: A History of Color Television* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 176 – 216.

[51] Rachel Moseley, Helen Wheatley, and Helen Wood, *Television for Women: New Directions* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Jilly Boyce Kay, "'The *Sunday Times* Among Them': *Good Afternoon!* and the Gendering of Afternoon Television in the 1970s," *Critical Studies in Television* 9:2 (2014): 73 – 96; Mary Irwin, "BBC's *Wednesday Magazine* and Arts Television for Women," *Media History*, 21:2 (2015): 162 – 77.

personal papers donated by individual women. Because of the liminal status of this category, the fact that it might be conceptualized as on the periphery of both television for women and public affairs television, my research has involved trips to archives that have considerable holdings of entertainment media, such as the UCLA Film and Television Archive, the Library of Congress, the Paley Center for Media (both the New York and Los Angeles locations), the Wisconsin Center for Film and Television Research, but also to collections where the media holdings are more closely affiliated with didacticism and pedagogy, such as the Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History at Smith College, the Human Sexuality Collection at Cornell University, the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction and the Peabody Awards Collection.

In their 2008 essay, "Is Archiving a Feminist Issue?," Rachel Moseley and Helen Wheatley argued that "everyday" or "ordinary" programs that made up the majority of daytime television schedules in the 1940s and 1950s were less likely to be considered worthy of preservation, resulting in a dearth of sources that inevitably informs histories of broadcasting.[52] My research trajectory has to a certain extent confirmed Moseley and Wheatley's concerns and conclusions. While feminized, the programs that I study were not "ordinary," but instead considered at the time as "special," both in the sense of being "of superior quality" and as being worthy of reviewing, recording and preserving. In practical terms, here's what that "special" status means: on the one hand, such programs, for the most part, can only be watched by visiting an archive. On the other hand, some record of them has been maintained, a distinction that has not been conferred on the vast majority of television programs addressed to women.

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[52] Rachel Moseley and Helen Wheatley, "Is Archiving a Feminist Issue? Historical Research and the Past, Present, and Future of Television Studies," *Cinema Journal*, 47:3 (2008): 152 – 8.

Finally, while each of my chapters is anchored in analysis of programs that I have been able to watch (and re-watch), I have also relied heavily on women's service magazines to make sense of those programs. Clearly indebted to Lynn Spigel's field-defining research on discursive constructions of television, the home, and women's labor in women's magazines and "shelter" magazines in the 1950s, this methodology is also my "make do" strategy to a problem that all historians of early postwar television confront.[53] As Mark Williams, Jason Jacobs, Moseley and Wheatley and others have noted, so little of the television produced during this "live" era of broadcasting remains extant.[54] This condition of research and analysis has forced historians to think creatively and to rely on resources like trade press reviews and features, television listings, published screenplays, audio and print transcripts, production files, personal papers, and oral histories to give life and texture to what remains. For this project, I considered women's service magazines to be the most obvious and relevant supplemental resource. The main reason behind this decision is that network television producers framed the programs discussed in this dissertation as television equivalents of "class" magazines like *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Charm*. In other words, they sought to make television that would attract the women who read these magazines and, by extension, the companies that usually advertised in those venues. In some instances that modeling resulted in magazine editors and contributors participating in a program's production. In other instances, television programs adapted topics, formats, conceptual figures, and modes of address associated with these publications. Tracing the relations between these two industries has made vivid the fictional status of distinctions like

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[53] Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 36 – 137.
[54] Moseley and Wheatley, "Is Archiving a Feminist Issue?"; Jason Jacobs, *The Intimate Screen: Early British Television Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Mark Williams, "Considering Monty Margett's *Cook's Corner*: Oral History and Television History," in *Television, History, and American Culture: Feminist Critical Essays*, eds. Mary Beth Haralovich and Lauren Rabinovitz (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 36 – 58.

"producer" and "consumer." In other words, it has helped me remember that television producers were readers, and that the *Ladies' Home Journal* and *McCall's*, in addition to *Time*, *Collier's,* the *Saturday Evening Post* and other "general" magazines with large female readerships, were among the publications they read.

Chapters

My first chapter, "Color, Compatibility, and Women," examines the most literal translation of the women's service magazine to television—the compatible-color women's service program. These programs were introduced by NBC during a period that the broadcasting industry conceptualized as transitional. The "compatible color era," is in other words, the period during which the industry sought to convince affluent homemakers to purchase color television sets, thereby creating a market that would induce advertisers to pay for colorcast programs, and compatible-color service programs were central to this campaign. As part of my analysis of this program category, I attempt to historicize the concept "color," arguing that this term was applied during this period to "other peoples," that is, ethnic and racial groups designated as other, but also, to revered individuals like Philip Johnson, Frank Lloyd Wright, Bertrand Russell, and Margaret Mead, that is, those who were designated as being other or minoritarian because of their exceptional talents. Similarly, the term "color" was also applied in the broadcasting industry to material that was understood as adult or risqué. This chapter seeks to explicate a now-forgotten iteration of postwar white womanhood, one in which "color-compatibility," defined as tolerance of marginalized viewpoints, tastes and "other" peoples, is a class signifier, that is, an attribute that distinguishes the white affluent, educated homemaker from her social inferiors. It also offers an extensive unpacking of the diverse efforts made by the television industry, NBC in

particular, to both attract and create this kind of white woman. To make this argument, I focus in particular on television service programs broadcast on NBC and its New York station, but I also discuss CBS programs such as *Vanity Fair* (CBS, 1948 – 1951) and *Woman!* , and read them in relation to "class" service magazines such as *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Charm*, *Good Housekeeping* and *Redbook*.

My second chapter, "Magnifying Women," examines the television plays written by Horton Foote, Paddy Chayefsky and other television playwrights for the dramatic anthology programs *Television Playhouse* (sponsored by Philco starting in 1947, and then Goodyear starting in 1951) and *First Person* (sponsored by Gulf). Both programs were conceptualized and overseen by Fred Coe. Frequently compared to Tennessee Williams, Foote wrote female-centric dramas about inter-generational conflict among inhabitants and descendants of a fictional Texas town that was based on his own birthplace. Via a discussion of these dramas, which were designated by Coe as "microscopic theatre," I interrogate the gendering of scale articulated in evaluations of television drama, both within and beyond the industry, in the 1950s.

My third chapter, "Feeling Trapped," focuses on public affairs programs made for educated homemakers, particularly the hour-long investigative news reports broadcast as part of the NBC series *Specials for Women* (sponsored by Purex). A mix of reporting, dramatic teleplays and expert commentary, these specials were framed in industry discourse as innovative, experimental and controversial, that is, as a new or "arty" way to articulate news, one that would be particularly palatable to the educated women watching television at home during the day. I read this particular construction of "new-ness" in relation to other efforts by NBC to stretch the category "news", so that it includes not just the reporting of new facts, but new ways of thinking and living. To that end, I unpack the term "trapped housewife," one of the figurations of

womanhood in *Specials for Women*. I argue that “trappedness” refers to a sense of intellectual and affective impoverishment, of being thwarted in the project of self-realization and expression that liberal human individualists like Friedan and Mead ascribe to women in general, or at least the kind of women who read women’s service magazines. As part of this reading, I also situate trappedness in relation to anxieties at the end of the 1950s regarding the maturity and well-being of the nation and the broadcasting industry.

My fourth chapter, “Dramatic Inspirational Television,” unpacks the Christian components of the postwar female ideal exemplified by the educated white homemaker. My primary objects of analysis are the series of *Hallmark Hall of Fame* television plays that were initiated in the second half of the decade, particularly Harris’s performance as Joan of Arc in *The Lark*. My reading of these plays situates them in the context of publicity initiatives made by the company and its long-term advertising agency, Foote Cone Belding, during the early postwar era. In readings that attend to the religious politics of these texts and related resources, such as Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *The American Woman’s Home* and the edited postwar collection *The Spiritual Woman*, I unpack the various connotations of “spirituality” in this Christian ideal, the idea that a woman is responsible for improving not just her self, her family or her community, but the earth itself, that her life-long duty is to make the material world into something that more closely approximates a heavenly one.[55] Following this alternative, but not oppositional, reading of what Friedan has brilliantly labeled as “the feminine mystique,” I then read the *Hallmark Hall of Fame* iteration of Jean Anouilh’s *The Lark* in relation to this ideal as well as other examples of dramatic inspirational television.

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[55] Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman’s Home* (New York: J.B. Ford & Co., 1869), particularly the book’s first chapter, “The Christian Family,” 17-22, and its last chapter, “The Christian Neighborhood”, 453 - 461; Marion Turner Sheehan, ed., *The Spiritual Woman: Trustee of the Future*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955).

This dissertation was a long time in the making. In its initial stages, the project was motivated by a desire to make my research in television history speak to my interest in feminist theory. While that commitment remains, my view of how to relate the two changed over time. I began with what I might retrospectively call an "intellectual agenda." I was eager to "find" feminism in my 1950s television programs, to cast television as some kind of initiator of 1960s feminist texts like Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. That agenda, though, was disrupted by the sources themselves. It was not that I found them to be the opposite of what I was expecting. Instead, I found a different story all together. I have spent hours in front of a kinescope or a computer screen watching and writing about 1950s television, attempting to figure out the best way to communicate the story that I found. Perhaps because I moved to a different linguistic context during this project, I often think of my research process as akin to learning a different language—I learned to speak early postwar women's service culture. One of the biggest challenges I have confronted in the writing process is one of translation; what to keep in the original language and what to translate. I also share a tendency that I have noted in some other feminist media criticism; a desire to bring inaccessible objects to life for readers who are unlikely to see them with their own eyes. In other words, I see myself, to a certain degree, as a medium for my sources. As I hope will be evident in the chapters that follow, such a relationship is not defined by the absence of interpretation, judgment or creation, but has instead demanded them.

CHAPTER ONE
Color, Compatibility and Women

On January 29, 1954, WNBT, NBC's New York station, broadcast its first commercially sponsored color television program. An episode of *Jinx Falkenburg's Diary*, a women's service program that was already a staple of the station's afternoon line-up, the broadcast was accomplished via the network's compatible-color transmission system, meaning that it was accessible to those who owned black and white sets, but also to the select few who were already in possession of a color monitor, a rarefied group consisting primarily of journalists, potential sponsors and network executives. Funded by a group of advertisers that included the women's service magazine *Ladies' Home Journal* and Gimbels department store, the colorcast iteration of *Jinx Falkenburg's Diary* had a dual purpose: it was designed to be a preview for advertisers of what the colorcast version of a women's service show would look and sound like and to be an introduction for viewers to a revamped version of Falkenburg's show. With regard to the preview function, some of the features were entirely predictable. To begin with, there was a lot fabric on display. Within a program whose running time totaled just 45 minutes, host Jinx Falkenburg, a former magazine cover-girl and fashion model, managed to squeeze in four different costume changes. Between Falkenburg's various outfits and a segment previewing the annual March of Dimes fashion show, an array of textiles, in a variety of colors and materials, were included in the broadcast. Other efforts to "colorize" this familiar program type were more inventive. In addition to the models, the broadcast also featured appearances by Beatrice Kraft, a dancer who was then appearing in the hit Broadway musical *Kismet*, and Ethel Waters, the revered singer and actress who performed some of her biggest hits and discussed her recently published memoir. As part of her promotion for *Kismet*, Kraft danced one of the show's

numbers, as one might expect, but also engaged in a make-up tutorial, demonstrating to viewers the daily process by which she, a white blond woman, was transformed into a character who belonged in the play's "exotic" and "Oriental" world. Rounding out the program's bill of attractions was an appearance by Dennis Day, an NBC-star who informed viewers that the American Heart Association would soon be having their annual fundraiser and urged them to donate.[56]

In one sense, this initial foray of *Jinx Falkenburg's Diary* into color-compatibility was short-lived. After the one-day preview, the program went back to being transmitted in black-and-white only. In another sense, the January 29th broadcast was just the beginning of *Jinx Falkenburg's Diary*'s reinvention as a compatible-color service program. In subsequent weeks, Waters became a routine feature of the show, performing 4 times a week in a segment entitled "Ethel's Kitchen."[57] Similarly, the show's producers continued to reinforce the show's new identity as educational and philanthropically minded, adding a daily segment featuring "news directed at femme audiences" and sponsoring a writing competition, with $1000 university scholarship serving as the first prize and a set of encyclopedias serving as the second.[58] In other words, while NBC did not continue to transmit *Jinx Falkenburg's Diary* via its color broadcasting technology, it did continue to produce a show that was tailored to the tastes of color television viewers, that is, the demographic group designated by the network as most likely to acquire a color television set: homemakers who were white, college-educated, reasonably affluent and self-identified as opposed to racial or ethnic prejudice.

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[56] "Jinx's Diary," *Billboard*, February 6, 1954, 9; "Jinx Falkenburg's Diary," *Variety*, February 3, 1954, 33.
[57] "Ethel Waters in 5-a-Week TV'er," *Variety*, February 24, 1954, 29.
[58] "Educational Segs Set for NBC Flags," *Billboard*, February 27, 1954, 26.

In this chapter, I discuss the compatible-color women's service program, treating it as one of various methods employed by NBC and CBS to transform college-educated homemakers into television-viewers. To be clear, I am using an industry-generated term—"color compatibility"—but I am giving it a slightly different, if still related, meaning. In industry discourse of the 1950s, "compatible color" is a marketer's term used to explain and promote new technology. Coined and first deployed by NBC-parent corporation RCA, it was initially circulated by the network as part of its efforts to convince the industry's regulators that RCA's system of color transmission was superior to that which was developed and promoted by CBS. The argument, which government regulators ultimately found persuasive, was that the industry and its consumers would be best served by a gradual shift from black-and-white to color broadcasting and that a system of transmission that enabled color broadcasts to be compatible with, i.e., legible to, existing monochrome monitors was the best way to accomplish this kind of transformation. In a departure from the industry's practice, I define color-compatible television programs not by the technology employed in their transmission, but instead by their purpose and address. The programs I designate as belonging to this category were all generated and distributed after RCA/NBC introduced and then, at the tail end of 1953, won approval for its color transmission system.[59] Belonging to an era of the industry that was conceptualized by the networks as transitional, these programs were fashioned with the explicit goal of inducing affluent women to buy the newly available color television monitors and thereby hasten the industry-wide transition to colorcasting. At the same time that NBC and CBS wooed this demographic, and by extension the advertisers who sought to reach them, they also recognized that the vast majority of their potential viewers did not belong to it. To that end, they made

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[59] For a rich history of this process and the politics of whiteness that informed it, see Susan Murray, *Bright Signals: A History of Color Television* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

programs that were simultaneously tailored to the tastes of more affluent and educated women yet also deemed as appropriate for women in general. Such a two-tiered address is succinctly captured in a statement made by Dave Garroway, host of *Today*, one of the first monochrome network series to incorporate colorcasting. Asked to explain his idiosyncratic way of engaging with his audience, Garroway characterized himself as having a conversation with "one and half people," that is, as directing his speech to one person, but with the knowledge that others could overhear what was being said.[60] Put simply, affluent, educated white women, or what industry participants designated as the "class" segment of the mass audience, were directly addressed by compatible-color service programs; everyone else was in the position of listening in on that conversation.

Of course, this begs the question, what did such women want to watch? Or put more exactly, how did NBC and, eventually, CBS conceptualize the interests of the "class" segment of its mass audience of daytime-television-viewers? In what follows, I unpack the hypothetical viewer around which this program category is fashioned. I argue that the compatible-color woman is a multi-faceted construct, defined by the networks by her affluence, education, marital status, politics, hobbies, reading interests, and purchasing habits, among other attributes. Out of this laundry list of characteristics is forged a chain of associations, with some attributes getting more airtime in one program and others being foregrounded in another. As a result, despite being united by an address and purpose, the programs I locate within this category are nonetheless distinct from one another in terms of form and content. Such diversity is also reinforced by the conflation between intellectualism and innovation. That is, because the "elite" segment of the mass audience was presumed to be attracted to what was new, experimental or otherwise

[60] 5.4.1., Dave Garroway – Autobiography, undated, Box: 4, Folder: 1.0. Lee Lawrence papers, 0006-MMC-LAB. Special Collections and University Archives.

unfamiliar, successive efforts to reach such an audience entailed deviation from existing programs that had, only a year or two earlier, been designated as innovative.

A second, related project of this chapter is to recover for contemporary readers the now-forgotten standing of postwar women's service television, and postwar women's service media more generally, as a form of postwar intellectualism. That is, in a departure from feminist critics such as Betty Friedan, whose famous, still-influential reading of *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Woman's Home Companion*, *McCall's* and *Redbook* designated them as "women's magazines," that is, as texts whose service components were marginal or secondary, I define such texts in terms of their service features and locate them in a tradition of female intellectualism that dates back to the late nineteenth century and stretches forward and out into 1950s daytime television. This attention to the intellectualism of women's service media, that is, to the efforts made by those working in postwar American television and magazine production to reach women who via their liberal arts education had been trained to think, is motivated, in part, by my desire to productively complicate and extend accepted definitions of women's culture and women. By opening up this category so that, in addition to the soaps, women's weepies, and romance novels that have been brilliantly excavated by feminist scholars such as Annette Kuhn, Christine Gledhill, Charlotte Brunsdon, Janice A. Radway and Lauren Berlant, it is also made to include the roundtable discussion forums published in *Ladies' Home Journal* or the news documentaries produced by CBS News for housewives, I hope to demonstrate that women's culture is addressed not just to those who shop and feel, to borrow Berlant's memorable phrase, but also to those who think, teach, learn and cultivate.[61]

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[61] Annette Kuhn, "Women's Genres," *Screen* 25: 1 (1984): 18 – 28; Christine Gledhill, "Speculations on the Relationship between Soap Opera and Melodrama," *Quarterly Review of Film & Video*, 14:1-2 (1992): 103 – 124; Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Charlotte Brunsdon, "'Crossroads': Notes on Soap

What is this “service” in women’s service television?

Before turning to service television’s reinvention at the outset of the industry’s compatible-color era, I want to begin by providing a more detailed picture of the “before” iteration of this program category, that is, what its objectives and formal characteristics were pre-makeover. As has been noted by Lynn Spigel, Marsha Cassidy and other feminist historians of early network television, shows devoted to women’s service were ubiquitous in the early postwar era.[62] “At television’s birth,” Cassidy writes, “locally produced women’s programs made their appearance in every region of the United States, often within hours of a station’s sign-on.”[63] Such popularity was at least in part the result of financial considerations. Service programs were comparatively cheap to produce. In contrast to fictional programs, which required sets and scripts elaborate enough to transport viewers to a diegetic world, early postwar service shows were cast as mechanisms for instruction rather than entertainment. Also labeled as “home service,” “homemaking,” “homemaker,” “how-to,” “women’s” and “woman’s” programs in broadcast industry press, such shows sought to lure viewers with the promise that they would impart information. The standard format for conveying that information was a demonstration; a host, usually but not always a woman, simultaneously explains and models the best way to tackle

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Opera,” *Screen* 22:4 (1981): 32 – 37. Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 7.

[62] Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 80 - 81; Marsha J. Cassidy, *What Women Watched: Daytime Television in the 1950s* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005). For other sources on women’s service television, see Mark Williams, “Considering Monty Margett’s *Cook’s Corner*: Oral History and Television History,” in *Television, History, and American Culture: Feminist Critical Essays*, eds. Mary Beth Haralovich and Lauren Rabinovitz (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 36 – 58; Inger Stole, “There is No Place Like *Home*: NBC’s Search for a Daytime Audience, 1954 – 1957,” *The Communication Review* 2:2 (1997): 135 – 61; Michele Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922 – 1952* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 130 – 182; Kathleen Collins, “A Kitchen of One’s Own: The Paradox of Dione Lucas,” *Camera Obscura* 27:2 (2012): 1 – 23.

[63] Cassidy, 28.

some facet of caring for a home and family. How to select your Christmas gifts (*The Television Christmas Shopper* [WNBT, 1945]), how to rearrange living room furniture to accommodate a new television set (*Radio City Matinee* [WNBT, 1946]), and how to cook a steak (*In the Kelvinator Kitchen* [WNBT, 1947]) were subjects of demonstration in some of the first postwar television broadcasts and these and related skills continued to be demonstrated in service shows throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s.[64] As such examples perhaps indicate, the demonstration component of the service program lends itself to the prominent display of a commercial good. Indeed, in its most pared-down, no-frills iteration, a service program can look and sound a lot like a commercial. This speaks to another reason for the prevalence of these shows on station schedules throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s—they were attractive to advertisers. In fact, the first television program to achieve network-wide distribution and full commercial sponsorship was a service program—NBC's *Swift Home Service Club*, a daytime show hosted by Jinx Falkenburg and Tex McCrary and sponsored by Swift & Co., a national meat-packing corporation based in Chicago.[65]

While the demonstration might be thought of as the core or essence of the service show, it is not the *only* component of such programs. In the early postwar era, the service show, especially in its more critically-lauded iterations, routinely combined demonstrations with other features, such as interviews, news reports, fashion shows and audience participation games. In its debut broadcast, *Swift Home Service Club*, in addition to demonstrations by an interior decorator and home economics instructor, featured a contest in hat-decoration between select members

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[64] Robert Rice, "Diary of a Viewer," *New Yorker*, August 30, 1947, 44; "NBC Television Station Resumes Day Schedule," *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, March 18, 1946, 30; "Radio City Matinee," *Billboard*, May 25, 1946, 20.

[65] "Swift & Co. is First TV Network Sponsor," *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, November 10, 1947, 14; "Stage Set to Organize TV Networks," *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, November 10, 1947, 17.

from the audience.[66] Months later, the show became a news resource, offering American viewers their first look at footage taken by the BBC of the celebrations surrounding Princess Elizabeth's wedding.[67] Incidentally, that broadcast, which took place "only" 29 hours after the wedding and involved a transatlantic flight of the BBC's kinescopes from London to New York, was praised by industry press as evidence of television's capacity for "rapid-fire coverage."[68] Similarly, CBS's *Vanity Fair*, a service show hosted by Dorothy Doan that included Maiden Form among its sponsors, complemented its demonstration segments with newsmaker guests and fashion shows.[69] Doan, a former editor for the International News Service whose beats included women's news and the United Nations, was known for her facility as an interviewer, her ability to book leaders in politics, arts and letters as guests (e.g., Ralph Bunche, Walter White, Salvador Dali, Fannie Hurst, Eleanor Roosevelt) and her willingness to discuss "controversial" topics, such as discrimination and civil rights.[70] Even *Your Television Shopper*, a popular service show on the Dumont network that consisted primarily of its host, Kathi Norris, "demonstrating" the products of her program's sponsors, also featured interview segments, often with women who, like Norris, were presented as "housewives" who, in their spare time, had "run hobbies into profitable businesses."[71] Other programs embellished or embroidered upon the standard program format not by additional segments, but rather by their approach to the demonstration itself. In *Cooks Corner*, for example, host Monty Margott demonstrated how to cook, but from the perspective of an inept novice rather than a trained, knowledgeable expert. Diverse in terms of

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[66] "Swift Home Service Club," *Variety*, May 21, 1947, 39, 42.
[67] "Royal Wedding Is Big Video Event," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, November 24, 1947, 17, 84;
[68] Sam Chase, "Royal Nuptials Tip Video's Mitt on Future News Coverage," *The Billboard*, November 29, 1947, 15.
[69] "Mr. Sponsor: Ida Rosenthal," *Sponsor*, May 8, 1950, 20.
[70] "Vanity Fair," *Radio and Television Mirror*, February 1949, 46, 111 – 112; "'Vanity Fair' Does It," *The Billboard*, December 24, 1949, 14; Dorothy Doan, "How to be a Hostess," *Radio Television Mirror*, August 1951, 48 – 49, 74; "How TV Sells Women," *Sponsor*, February 27, 1950, 26-27, 54 – 59.
[71] Bruce Robertson, "Kathi's Daytime Success," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, November 7, 1949, 6, 59.

content, form, tone and skill-level, this program category might be best understood as a recipe, beauty tutorial, or other service feature from *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Good Housekeeping* brought to life. Or, in the case of its more ambitious iterations, the service program might be thought of as a televisual equivalent of the magazine as a whole.

Indeed, this is how those working in the broadcasting industry in the late 1940s and early 1950s seem to have conceived of them. As Lynn Spigel points out in *Make Room for TV*, producers of service television gave their shows titles like *Women's Magazine of the Air* and *Woman's Page*, encouraging potential viewers to read their programs as analogous to existing print media. Spigel makes clear that this association was not mere window-dressing, that those working in service television did not simply allude to print media in their titles, but, perhaps more importantly, also replicated the narrational strategies and the subject matter of such texts. "Such programs," Spigel writes, "included 'women's editors' and 'femcees' who provided a narrational thread for a series of 'departments' on gardening, homemaking, fashion, and the like."[72] In some instances, the approach adopted by television producers in their efforts to recreate a service magazine on television could be quite literal. For example, in the first episode of *Women in Wartime* (CBS-TV, 1944 – 1945), a collaboration between CBS and *Mademoiselle* magazine that constituted one of the network's first television service programs, it was *Mademoiselle* editor-in-chief Betsey Blackwell herself who performed the managing editor/narrator role before the camera. Critics were not impressed; they pointed out that whatever skills Blackwell might possess as a magazine editor, they did not seem to have served her well as a television performer.[73]

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[72] Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 80.
[73] "Reviews," *Billboard*, November 25, 1944, 11.

Such efforts on the part of the networks to align themselves and their programs with service publications like *Mademoiselle* were perhaps informed by then-prevalent anxieties about television's reputation among women, particularly affluent white women living in cities. In the late 1940s, executives at corporations that made and sold television sets worried that the television industry was failing to adequately speak to two important and overlapping consumer groups: women and the wealthy. At the second annual meeting of the Television Broadcasters Association, held in October 1946, William H. Howard, a vice president at Macy's, articulated this position. "It's the women who buy everything," Howard is quoted as saying, "and television hasn't made a good first impression on women." Relaying the complaints and questions of individual Macy's shoppers, Howard advised program producers and set manufacturers to let the tastes and wishes of female consumers guide their plans and designs—or to be more exact, the taste and wishes of the women who shopped at his high-end New York department store.[74] Similarly, a 1948 study entitled "The Urban Market in Television" and based on reports previously published by Sylvania Electric Products indicates that the company was particularly concerned about television's reputation among "higher income groups." Among other findings, the study notes an enthusiasm-gap between less and more affluent consumers. While those designated by Sylvania as 'high-income' or 'high-middle income' were the industry's 'best prospective customers," that is, those who were best able to afford the purchase of a television set, it was the "low-middle income" and "low-income" groups who "*have a more enthusiastic attitude toward television's possibilities*" (italics in the original).[75] Like the Macy's executive,

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[74] Bruce Robertson, "Sessions, Exhibits at TBA Meet Draw 900," *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, October 14, 1946, 77.

[75]Reports conducted by the Sales Research Department of Sylvania Electric Products, Inc. on June 18, 1946 and October 10, 1946. Cited in Stuart Kempner, *Television Encyclopedia* (New York: Fairchild), 393 – 399.

the study concludes with the recommendation that those working in television modify their products so that they are better suited to the taste of the affluent.

Producers of women's service magazines cast their publications as products that had been particularly successful in reaching such consumers—women in general, more affluent and cosmopolitan white women in particular. Tagged as the "Magazine Women Believe In" and the "Magazine America Lives By," respectively, *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping* presented themselves as enjoying a privileged relationship with the women who read them, one in which they occupied the role of trustworthy adviser. Often such claims rested on assertions about the similarities between those who wrote for and edited the magazine and those who read it. In a 1949 *Ladies' Home Journal* feature commemorating the opening of the Journal Workshop, the publication's newly remodeled offices and demonstration spaces in Rockefeller Center, the magazine's editors are portrayed as smartly-dressed, busy, knowledgeable women whose authority derives from professional training, but also from their own efforts to navigate the same problems that are facing their readers. "You'll never find us saying, 'All you have to do is—,'" one editor is quoted as saying, "because we do everything ourselves and know how hard it is."[76] Other service magazines were even more explicit in making such claims. In the August 1950 issue of *Charm*, the "Magazine for Women Who Work," newly appointed editor-in-chief Helen S. Valentine introduced herself and her staff via an editorial entitled "We work too." Accompanying Valentine's piece is a photo taken by Robert Frank of the "woman who works," that is, a figure framed as representative of both the magazine's readership and its staff. Pictured from behind and on the move as she makes her way through a crowded city sidewalk, this

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[76] "How the Journal Lives: A Workshop Housewarming," *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1949, 185 – 194, 214.

woman, much like the editors profiled in the *Ladies' Home Journal* feature, is defined by her stylish, well-tailored suit and metropolitan context.[77]

In other instances this construction of women's service magazines as texts that were by and for sophisticated, affluent white women was made via comparison to radio. In an April 1947 issue of *Ladies' Home Journal*, for example, Aloise Buckley Heath, a writer who self-identifies as an "intellectual housewife" and "reader," denigrates radio service shows, arguing that the "conductors" of such programs are often wrong, do not put enough effort into producing quality programs and that their voices have a "certain adenoidal quality." Bored by such poorly executed "good" programs and overmatched by the logistical challenges of reading and ironing simultaneously, the writer is forced to find her daytime entertainment in radio soap opera, that is, programs that are designed for housewives with "less scholastic pretensions" than herself. She concludes by wishing that radio dramatists could make a program that was entertaining but also tailored to her taste, interests and education—in other words, a better analogue to magazines like the one in which her article appears.[78]

World Housekeeping and *Home*

Service programs continued to be a routine feature of local TV stations's daytime broadcast schedules throughout the early and mid-1950s. A 1953 study conducted by a researcher at the University of Oklahoma found that 90 percent of the television stations he surveyed included one or more "homemaker shows" as part of their programming.[79] However,

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[77] Helen S. Valentine, "We work too," *Charm*, August 1950, 71 – 75.
[78] Aloise Buckley Heath, "A Housewife Looks at Soap Opera," *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1947, 23, 246, 249.
[79] "Television Homemaker Programs," *Sponsor*, May 4, 1953, 36 – 38, 72 – 73. In trade press, the decline in prevalence of such programs is generally pegged as beginning in 1954. See, for example, "Video Not Very Girl Crazy," *Variety*, July 4, 1956, 21; Carpenter, Liz, "'Mrs. Mike' Now an Egghead," *Variety*, April 29, 1959, 33.

despite this enduring popularity with station program managers, by 1952, such shows had become objects of derision within and beyond the broadcasting industry. “These programs, in general, seem dull,” wrote Jane Marshall and Louise Frazier, two graduate student researchers in Home Economics at Ohio State University, in a 1952 article published in the trade journal *Practical Home Economics*. Entitled “The Homemakers’ View of TV,” their article offered a withering assessment of local service programs; the “demonstrator,” that is, host, of such programs was found to be “untidy and unprofessional from the home economists’ standards.” Noting that housewives were similarly struck by the “carelessness, poor techniques and lack of enthusiasm,” they warned the broadcasting industry that the “homemaker has switched the dial to a new program in the past and she will continue to do so if an effort is not made to offer appealing, entertaining, and useful programs.”[80] Such sentiments were reinforced by the networks, particularly NBC, which though initially more focused on organizing and centralizing evening television, were, by the early 1950s, eager to dominate daytime as well.[81] In a speech to a home economics trade association that was excerpted in the same journal, NBC executive Ruddick C. Lawrence similarly depicted locally-produced service programs as television that failed to appeal to its target audience of women. “Our experience to date indicates as soon as you start to televise to women about home service exclusively you are no longer televising to them,” Lawrence is quoted as saying. “They switch the dial over to the charms of Francis X. Bushman in a 1912 thriller rather than look at a 1952 kitchen range in action.”[82] Lawrence goes on to point to a network-produced daytime television show, *The Kate Smith Hour*, as a more successful

[80] Jane Marshall and Louise Frazier, “The Homemakers’ View of TV,” *Practical Home Economics*, October 1952, 14 – 15, 46.
[81] For more on the networks’s belated entry into daytime television, see Spigel, *Make Room for TV*; Cassidy, *What Women Watched*; Stole.
[82] Ruddick C. Lawrence, “The Networks’ View of Homemakers Shows,” *Practical Home Economics*, October 1952, 15, 46.

example of televising domestic instruction, one that had attracted viewers by following the lead of "large circulation magazines" and mixing service demonstrations with entertainment segments.[83] Of course, what such an account fails to acknowledge is that many early postwar television service programs, including those broadcast on local stations owned-and-operated by NBC, adhered to the same magazine-like format.[84] Published side-by-side, the two *Practical Home Economics* articles, taken together, make the case that the locally-produced and broadcast TV service program had failed homemakers—more a visual iteration of the radio "hints" program than a televisual *Ladies Home Journal*—but that better, more expert hands could make service television that, like "the large circulation magazines," was "appealing, entertaining, and useful." Networks, it was not so subtly suggested, were those better hands.

In June 1953, NBC announced its plans to produce a service program intended for a nation-wide audience of homemakers. Like *Today*, the morning news program that NBC had introduced the year before, *Home* was part of the network's effort to organize, coordinate and determine the content of the broadcasts being transmitted from local television stations throughout the country during the day. And like countless service programs before it, *Home* was promoted as a televisual equivalent to the women's service magazine. "*Home*: the electronic magazine for women" was the headline of a big ad covering two full pages that appeared in both *Variety* and *Broadcasting-Telecasting* in 1954.[85] Yet, unlike most previous iterations of this

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[83] Ibid.
[84] As Mark Williams, Marsha Cassidy, Charlotte Brunsdon and others have noted, the service show is a significantly under-archived category of television. Of the countless numbers of individual programs that were produced during the late 1940s and early 1950s, only a select few were perceived as being worthy of a kinescope and subsequent preservation. My generalizations are therefore heavily reliant on summaries and reviews published in early postwar press and on descriptions made in the course of oral histories with industry practitioners. See Williams; Cassidy, 27 – 48; Charlotte Brunsdon, "Lifestyling Britain: The 8-9 Slot on British Television," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 6:1 (2003): 5 – 23.
[85] "Home: the electronic magazine for women," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, February 8, 1954, 36 – 37.

program type, *Home* was also promoted as a service program that would include color as one of its attractions. Although the FCC did not grant approval to the color transmission process advocated by CBS or RCA until months after plans for *Home* were first announced, NBC, from its earliest statements to industry press through the show's premiere, indicated that *Home* would provide opportunities for sponsors to advertise their products in color.[86] This innovation, NBC hoped, would enable the network to lure to television funding from "fashions, foods and furnishings," that is, the industries that typically preferred to put their advertising dollars in service magazines. *Home* was, in other words, conceived and promoted as a television service magazine that featured color advertisements.

Interestingly, while *Home*'s designation as a color television service program rested in part on NBC's expectation that the FCC would soon make a decision on industry standards for colorcasting, thereby enabling the network to use the technology it had developed and patented to broadcast in color and secure commercial sponsorship for such broadcasts, transmission in color was not the only criterion for this designation. That is, *Home*'s standing as a color television program was not only a matter of the technology used in its transmission. Other criteria included the types of people it would feature as "editors" and guests, the kinds of topics they would discuss and the quality of the information they would dispense. As one *Billboard* article from the fall of 1953 explained, in these and other respects, the producers of *Home* looked to women's service magazines for guidance; their objective was to "duplicate the appeal of the top slick magazines for the middle to upper class fem audience."[87] The result, as the same article

[86] "NBC-TV Testtubes 'Home' Daytimer as New Concept," *Variety*, June 17, 1953, 21, 34; "Pat Weaver Cooks Up Idea for 'Home' Stanza," *The Billboard*, October 3, 1953, 6; "'Home': President Weaver Announces Plans for Revolutionary Daytime TV Program, *NBC Chimes*, February 1954, 8 – 9; "Home: the electronic magazine for women," *Variety*, February 3, 1954, 34 – 35.
[87] "Pat Weaver Cooks Up Idea for 'Home' Stanza," *Billboard*, October 3, 1953, 6.

goes on to state, was a "format and pattern" that "tradesters consider…a good bet in the color era to come."[88] Implicit in such statements is the claim that for daytime color television to become a reality, NBC and CBS would have to attract the kind of sponsor or sponsors that could afford the considerable costs that color transmission entailed and that some program proposals were better bait than others. Or, to say the same thing in a slightly different fashion, in order to broadcast *Home* in color, NBC would have to tailor its design to the tastes of the companies that paid for color advertisements in service magazines and, by extension, to the tastes of the women that they hoped to reach with such advertisements.

Who were these women? In an ad directed at potential sponsors, NBC describes the show's intended viewership as a "screened audience" consisting of a particularly desirable group of consumers—women interested in amelioration. "Every woman who watches will watch because she is interested in improving her home, her family life and herself," the ad reads. "It stands to reason, then, that HOME's audience is made up almost exclusively of prospects."[89] In the view of the network, these prospects could be broken up into roughly two groups: "class" women and "mass" women. The "class" group would be familiar to advertisers; they were the same "middle to upper class fem audience" addressed by "the top slick magazines." Or, at least, they resembled the kind of woman such publications portrayed as their average reader. Affluent, educated, metropolitan homemakers interested in world affairs, these women might also be thought of as so many editors of *Ladies Home Journal* or so many iterations of the woman in the Robert Frank photo published in *Charm*. The "mass" group was larger and consisted of women who were less affluent, educated, metropolitan, married and/or interested in world affairs. For

[88] Ibid.
[89] "Home: the electronic magazine for women," *Variety*, February 3, 1954, 34 – 35.

these women, "improving" their homes, family lives and selves meant becoming more like the "class" women in each respect. Such a transformation, the network implied, would be brought about by the show itself. Or to borrow the language of an NBC researcher quoted in Spigel's *Make Room for TV*, one goal of *Home* was to create "an audience with the *size* of a mass medium and the *quality* of a class medium."[90]

This transformational project was not restricted to *Home*. Beginning in 1951, Weaver and other NBC executives claimed for the network the mantel of "civilizer," asserting repeatedly, even incessantly, that NBC's programs were designed to "progress," "grow" or otherwise improve those who watched them.[91] With regard to women in particular, television shows such as *Hallmark Hall of Fame* and *Matinee Theater* were promoted as "quality" daytime programs that, like *Home*, would bring about women's "enlightenment," to borrow another of Weaver's keywords. Significantly, these shows were also broadcast in color and portrayed in NBC ads as representative of the network's increasing commitment to and investment in color television.[92] As labels like "quality" and "prestige" indicate, social pressure and shame were key factors in NBC's plan to bring about a better, more mature version of both women and television. In the view of the network and the industry more generally, there was little-to-no distinction between better, more evolved television and television designed to appeal to "class" women.[93] Instead it was assumed that a program like *Home*, that is, one that is associated with both "the new, the good, the useful" and the "top slicks," would automatically attract a "class" audience and that

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[90] Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 82.
[91] Sylvester L. Weaver, Jr., "Minute Inspection of Our World Via Science Wonders Lies Ahead for TV," *The Billboard*, December 1, 1951, 14, 38.
[92] See, for example, "A Spectacular Beginning," *Variety*, September 28, 1955, 36-37; "Billings and Bouquets," *Variety*, November 9, 1955, 28 – 29; "We're 248 Plays Old Today!" *Variety*, October 31, 1956, 47.
[93] In the *Variety* ads cited above, NBC describes *Matinee Theater* as both "mature" television and as "a CLASS show for a MASS audience."

"mass" women would feel compelled to emulate the former's approving response, even if it meant transcending visceral reactions of aversion or distaste. Presented with a program that they were told they *should* like, women would learn to like it, or at least watch it. Equal parts coercion, earnestness and paternalism, the assumptions underlying this effort to bring about the dual, intertwined evolution of both television and women are given one of their fullest explications in a July 1955 memo by NBC's Pat Weaver in which he outlines his plans for *Matinee Theater* and other aspects of NBC's daytime schedule. After proposing that one episode of *Matinee Theater* be devoted to an outdoor production of a Greek tragedy broadcast in color via one of the network's mobile production units, Weaver reaffirms his faith that material like this, which might seem to have a limited appeal, can in fact succeed in attracting a mass audience. "I believe," Weaver states, "that the people will always watch something they are not interested in if they have been sold on the idea that it is valuable or rewarding or inherently good, or in general have a feeling of prestige associated with it, a feeling that if they do like it it reflects credit on them, and if they don't like it it reflects lack of knowledge on their side."[94]

In the case of *Home*, NBC producers assumed that a better or "class" women's television program was one that liberated housewives "trapped in the home" during the day.[95] As Ted Mills, one of *Home*'s first producers, explained in a 1953 memo, one objective of the program was to takes viewers out of "the inner sancta of kitchen, bedroom and bath."[96] Such statements were, of course, metaphoric. Mills and other producers of *Home* did not want housewives to leave their homes; quite the opposite—they wanted them to stay in front of the set, watching this

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[94] Frank Steuben, *Live Television: The Golden Age of 1946 – 1958 in New York* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1990), 138.
[95] "NBC-TV's Projected 'Today's Home' Daytimer Eyed for 'New Concept,'" *Variety*, September 9, 1953, 31, 45.
[96] Quoted in Stole, 148.

NBC program. The escape promised by the show was instead supposed to be psychological and intellectual. Presented as a deviation from the “standard” service program, which, in the view of NBC executives like Ruddick C. Lawrence, were mind-numbingly monotonous, *Home* was promoted as a service program that respected the intelligence of housewives. In *Variety*-speak, the show’s producers did not do women the disservice of presuming “that their IQ is deficient in terms of what they will watch while trapped in the home.”[97] While the network and the trade press presented this goal as a radical departure in television made for women, some of the strategies employed by the show for liberating housewives were familiar from past iterations of the service program. Like *Vanity Fair*, *Jinx Falkenburg’s Diary*, and various other examples of this program type, *Home* “broadened” the “narrow” world of women’s service media by complementing its demonstrations with non-service segments, such as news bulletins, musical performances, fashion shows and interviews with guests who were newsmakers in such fields as science, politics, art, design and literature.[98]

Other methods employed by the show to get housewives “out” of the home were more innovative, at least with regard to this program type. Episodes of *Home* routinely featured filmed inserts, that is, films incorporated into the show’s live broadcast in much the same way that daytime news programs like *Today* or *New York Closeup* featured film of locations otherwise inaccessible to their TV audience. In the case of *Home*, such footage was often presented as a guest’s home movie and used in conjunction with an interview. In a 1956 visit to the show made by the Kennedys, for example, much of their segment is devoted to a 16mm film of Jackie running around her Georgetown neighborhood with her dog, doing errands. Because the film is

[97] “NBC-TV’s Projected ‘Today’s Home’ Daytimer Eyed for ‘New Concept,’” 31.
[98] Guests on the show included Carl Sandburg, Helen Keller, Eleanor Roosevelt, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. See “Arlene Francis –No 3. In News and Views Interview Series,” *AWRT News and Views*, January 1959, 3.

silent and the activities quotidian, Francis, clearly worried that it makes for boring television, repeatedly prompts Jackie to add commentary or to otherwise fill the soundtrack with anecdotes about Jack, friendly provocations that produce little more than monosyllabic, softly-spoken responses. In other instances, the film on *Home* was presented as a record of Francis's travels. Throughout January 1956, for example, the show featured films of Francis's visit to Japan in multiple broadcasts, including footage of Francis, dressed in kimono, making a visit to a Japanese home in effort to discover what "home life" means in that context.[99] Other films made of Francis and shown on *Home* included documents of her trips to Paris, London and Amsterdam.[100]

Similarly, *Home* also tried to provide its viewers access to the experience of travel and a sense of mobility via its use of remotes, that is, segments or whole episodes broadcast live from locations outside *Home*'s New York studio, often from another NBC O&O station or via one of the network's mobile production units. Via such remotes, *Home*'s viewers visited locations in or near St. Louis, Milwaukee, Chicago, Columbus, Cleveland, Washington D.C., Arlington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Louisville, San Francisco, Miami Beach, Tampa, Catalina Island, Bermuda, Kentucky, Alabama, and Cape Cod, as well as various locations within the city of New York.[101] And even when Francis and co. stayed "at home," broadcasting the show from their NBC studio in New York, which was purported to have cost $200,000, the show's high-tech set was designed to mitigate the intertwined threats of visual monotony and domestic stasis. In contrast to service programs like *Vanity Fair* or *Your Television Shopper*, which unfolded in

[99] Michael Drury, "Portrait of a Happy Woman," *Redbook*, October 1956, 40 – 43, 86.
[100] Alfred Bester, "Antic Arts: At Home with Arlene Francis," *Holiday*, October 1956, 79 – 80, 82.
[101] For more on travel shows and their association with color television and cosmopolitanism, see Murray; Meenasarani Linde Murugan, "Exotic Television: Technology, Empire, and Entertaining Globalism," Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 2015.

the same living-room-like setting day after day, *Home*'s set was organized as a "theater in the round" divided into eight separate stations, a design that was meant to facilitate flexibility and dynamism. Such innovations, as Lynn Spigel notes, won praise from leading industrial designers.[102] Quick transitions between and within these segments of the set, akin to the breakdown and reassembly of props and scenery between acts in a stage play, were a routine component of the show's production and often included within a broadcast, thanks to a birds-eye view of the set that, as Marsha Cassidy and Mimi White note, was the program's signature shot.[103]

Finally, colorcasting was also enlisted in these efforts to free housewives from the intellectual prison of domestic monotony. That is, if *Home*, in general, was designed with an eye towards "liberating" housewives by giving them a mental and physical break from daytime chores, the segments broadcast simultaneously in color and in black-and-white were cast as the parts of the show that added otherwise missing detail to its diegetic world, thereby enabling a housewife's escape within it to feel all the more complete. Such thinking was informed by RCA's larger promotional campaign for compatible-color television, a discourse that characterized the move from a black-and-white set to a color set as a leap from a less to more fully realized representation. As the narrator of a 1956 RCA promotional film explains, "This is a world of color and the men of television long dreamed of capturing the full-paint part of nature and brushing it on the screen."[104] In such statements the difference between color and black-and-white TV sets is presented as additive; color or "multi-chrome" monitors are superior to

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[102] Lynn Spigel, *TV by Design: Modern Art and the Rise of Network Television* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 67.

[103] This aerial view of the set was also reproduced in a photograph that appeared in *Life*. "Be It Never So Humble," *Life*, March 29, 1954, 50 – 51; Marsha Cassidy and Mimi White, "Innovating Women's Television in Local and National Networks: Ruth Lyons and Arlene Francis," *Camera Obscura* 17:3 (2002): 31 – 69.

[104] Story of Television, RCA Films, 1956.

"monochrome" ones because they allow those watching them to see more of the world. This same construction of color as "the missing piece" can be seen in an April 1955 print advertisement NBC made to promote *Home, Today* and *Tonight*, three programs that incorporated colorcasting in 1954 and 1955.[105] Consisting of three brightly colored panels arranged side-by-side, the ad shows Francis sandwiched between Dave Garroway (host of *Today*) and Steve Allen (host of *Tonight*), with Garroway on the left, Francis in the middle, and Allen on the right. Each host is facing forward, looking directly at the camera and smiling, as though caught in the middle of a greeting. Behind each is a background that at first glance looks empty but on closer examination reveals itself to be filled with a maze of tiny stick-figures drawn in a variety of colors. In ads such as this, color television is portrayed as the means through which a previously unknown world of detail will now be made visible.

Interestingly, while full appreciation of *Home*'s "full-paint" segments presumably entailed the acquisition of a color television set, according to *Home*'s producers the show's colorcasts were also designed to flesh out the imagined world of even those watching on a monochrome screen. To that end, in addition to commercials, colorcasting was often used in *Home* for segments devoted to local "color," that is, quasi-ethnographic examinations of practices, styles and products portrayed as specific to a particular place within the US. For example, as part of a remote pick-up originating from Cleveland included in a July 1954 broadcast, *Home* featured "a group of Clevelanders of Slavic descent performing native dancers in full costume," material that the network's monthly magazine described as "a subject ideally suited for color television."[106] In the same vein, a week's worth of colorcasts from New York in September 1955 included what the *New York Herald Tribune* described as a "feature in color

[105] *Radio Age*, April 1955, 1.
[106] "Television Reviews," *Variety*, July 7, 1954, 36.

honor[ing] the Jewish Holy Days."[107] And in July 1956, *Home*'s three-day trip to Cape Cod included a clambake featuring a "group of Portuguese singers and dancers" and a film exploring the history of "Cape Cod's Portuguese fishing families."[108] Where possible these local color features were also combined with publicity for local commerce. A subsequent colorcast from Cleveland featured two of *Home*'s editors, Nancyann Graham and Gloria Brown, explaining the history of the city's various "nationality groups," with the city's major department stores serving as the backdrop for their report.[109] Similarly, in April 1955, a colorcast of *Home* originating from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., included a fashion show in which the clothes being modeled were based on eighteenth century paintings in the Gallery's collection.[110] Viewers were informed that if they liked what they saw, they could purchase the same styles at Hecht Co., the local high-end department store that sponsored the broadcast. Broadcasts from Chicago's Carson Pirie Scott and from the Jade Room of San Francisco's Gumps Department store also portrayed local commerce as local culture.[111] Richard Linkroum, *Home*'s executive producer, described such broadcasts as efforts to "re-create the flavor and atmospheres of these areas…and [to] bring[ ] our nationwide audience into first-hand contact with their individual ways-of-life."[112]

In an interview with the *Washington Post,* Al Morgan, another member of *Home*'s production staff, echoed this rationale, albeit in more prosaic terms. After noting that *Home*'s local color segments were "good public relations" in that a visit to a particular city or region often resulted in a ratings boost in that same market, Morgan admitted that these mini-

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[107] *New York Herald Tribune*, September 11, 1955, P16.
[108] *New York Herald Tribune*, July 29, 1956, P32.
[109] "TV-Radio Production Centres," *Variety*, March 6, 1957, 26.
[110] "Art Comes to Life," *Washington Post*, April 20, 1955, 41.
[111] "Home Passes First Milestone," *NBC Chimes*, March/April 1955, 4, 5, 11.
[112] Ibid.

travelogues were also driven by the producers's fears of repeating themselves. “Five one-hour shows each week consume a tremendous amount of material,” Morgan is quoted as saying. “By traveling, we get variation.”[113] The show's local color segments were, in other words, seen by the producers's as one component in their ongoing effort to fight monotony and boredom with variety.

And yet, despite this valorization of variation and the stated desire to provide housewives with an escape, however brief, from the prison of domestic monotony, one aspect of *Home* was remarkably unvarying; from earliest promotion to the end of its three-year run, the show consistently addressed its viewers as homemakers. In other words, the show's conceptualization of “improvement” for women is quite different from the one articulated by Betty Friedan a few years later in *Good Housekeeping* and, few years after that, in *The Feminine Mystique*. For Friedan, a housewife's emancipation from the trap of domesticity is about money, power and self-expression. To get “out” of the home, a woman must literally leave her house or apartment and go to work, ideally in a prestigious position of paid employment that entails creative labor. On *Home*, the “trap” of domesticity is an intellectual problem; women, especially college-educated women, are bored during the day because the tools at their disposal—radio, television—have failed to stimulate them, to give their college-trained minds something to think about. Liberation in this context does not entail physical displacement or a professional identity. Instead it can be achieved by a certain kind television, one that, much like the liberal arts curriculum, is designed to enlarge minds, to broaden worldviews. Crucially, this kind of “growth” on women's part is framed as facilitating, rather than contesting the domestic responsibility of caretaking. As a *TV Guide* journalist explains in a 1954 profile of the show,

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[113] Lawrence Laurent, “Bringing ‘Home’ Here for Week Is a Chore,” *Washington Post*, April 17, 1955, J3.

"The idea of *Home* is to take women out of theirs an hour a day and give them something to talk about when father returns nights."[114]

As with other aspects of the program, *Home*'s conception of an "improved" woman owes much to mid-twentieth century service magazines. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, magazines like *Ladies' Home Journal, Woman's Home Companion*, *Redbook* and *Charm* spoke to readers as wives and mothers, but also encouraged their participation in labor, paid or unpaid, that involved the organization of a local community. In many instances such activities were framed as the first step in the larger project of putting to right the postwar world as a whole. In the case of *Ladies' Home Journal*, such recommendations became a routine feature in March 1947, with the magazine's creation of a Public Affairs Department. Under this heading, the magazine published an ongoing series devoted to community organizing, spotlighting the efforts made by local organizations to create and staff birthing centers in Oneida, Kentucky; to establish a community group dedicated to promoting "racial harmony" in Philadelphia; to organize discussion groups in New York City dedicated to following the proceedings of the United Nations, among other projects.[115] Such profiles did the double-duty of securing publicity for the individual organizers and explaining to readers how they might emulate them in their own communities. The women to which such articles drew attention, most of whom are white, married and affluent enough to have the time to devote to these undertakings, are framed as "world housekeepers," that is, as homemakers who have extended their caretaking responsibilities beyond the boundary of their house or apartment, so that it encompasses the

[114] Katherine Pedell, "What's Her Line?" *TV Guide*, July 9-16, 1954, 4.
[115] "Minorities…Philadelphia Fellowship," *Ladies' Home Journal*, December 1947, 23, 215; "Mountain Mothers…Maternity Center," *Ladies' Home Journal*, October 1948, 23, 102, 104; "Forums…New York City Experiment," *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1947, 23, 106.

people living in the houses next door, and even to those living in the nation next-door, or to use the magazine's term, "world-wide neighbors."[116]

In adopting this ideal for a daytime television program, *Home*'s producers put themselves in a tricky position. In contrast to service magazines, daytime television had a vested interest in where its consumers spent their daytime hours; they wanted them in a home consuming their product. In other words, while service magazines could acknowledge and encourage activities women did outside the confines of their living spaces, *Home* had to make world-housekeeping into an activity that could be done by someone who spent a good chunk of her time at home. The persona of Arlene Francis, the program's host, seems to have been integral to navigating this dilemma. A Broadway actress who was at the time of her casting as *Home*'s "editor-in-chief" already familiar to television viewers from her weekly gig as a panelist on CBS's critically-lauded *What's My Line*, Francis was often praised for her ability to think and joke on her feet, talents that led *Newsweek* to dub her the "Quick Queen of Television."[117] The virtues of speed and intelligence are also emphasized in accounts of Francis's life off-camera, which usually detail Francis's long list of professional and personal commitments, including her marriage to Broadway producer Martin Gabel, their young son and their Upper East Side townhouse, and ascribe to her "widespread interests and knowledge."[118] Such descriptions depict Francis as being like the affluent homemakers that constituted *Home*'s target audience, only more so. That is, Francis is portrayed as a "homemaker"—this term is routinely applied to her—yet one whose

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[116] This term is used in Margaret Hickey, "Talking with a Purpose," *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1947, 23; Margaret Hickey, "World-Wide Neighbors," *Ladies' Home Journal*, December 1949, 23.
[117] "Arlene Francis: The Quick Queen of Television," *Newsweek*, July 19, 1954, 50.
[118] Drury, 40.

combination of intelligence, efficiency and servants have enabled her to pursue other interests and activities.[119]

In the press coverage of Francis and on the program itself, these "other interests" are often figured as "others"—that is, as individuals designated as non-normative. A 1956 profile in *Redbook*, for example, talks about her relationship with her husband and son at length, but the photos chosen to illustrate Francis's life are taken from her professional activities; we see Francis in a kimono, eating with a family in their home during her visit to Japan for *Home*, and Francis on the set of *Home*, attempting to follow Helen Keller's lead in communication.[120] Similarly, in a 1954 article in NBC's corporate magazine, a publication whose much smaller circulation was presumably restricted NBC employees and sponsors, Francis is shown laughing and chatting with Gene Whitlock, a young man who, in addition to being identified as a track-star and Brown University graduate is also introduced as "the first negro page on the NBC Guest Relations staff."[121] In some instances, these different facets of Francis's persona are articulated in relation to one another. A 1954 *Look* photospread bearing the headline "TV's Busiest Woman" includes images of Francis at work on *Home*'s set, out to dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria and visiting a living facility for individuals with cerebral-palsy, as well as a photo of Francis putting her son to bed in a room whose décor is dominated by a giant map of the world. Taken together, the combination of photos suggests that Francis's "worldliness" informs, rather than competes, with her caretaking responsibilities within her own household.[122]

Home never quite made good on NBC's promises to advertisers. That is, in addition to telling potential sponsors that the show would transform "mass" women by giving them "class"

[119] See, for example, "TV's Busiest Woman," *Look*, May 4, 1954, 52 – 56.
[120] Drury, 40.
[121] "In This Corner: Gene Whitlock," *NBC Chimes*, September 1954, 14.
[122] "TV's Busiest Woman," 52 – 56.

tastes, the network also implied that an expansion of this cultural category would ultimately lead to increased sales of "class" products. An article in NBC's corporate magazine succinctly summarized these claims, introducing *Home* as a program that "will be dedicated to the proposition that the American housewife is profoundly concerned with improving her home, raising her family and expanding her own perspective, and that news of products, ideas and suggestions in these areas will, therefore, be of compelling interest to her." To put it mildly, the theory of class transformation that undergirds such statements is an odd one in that it imagines the demand for "better," more expensive products is solely a matter of taste, that it is wholly independent of finances. Even if NBC was able to "improve" the tastes of the women who watched its programs, what's to say that these new members of the "class" female audience would have the money to purchase the "class" products that, thanks to the network, they had learned to desire? The flaws in such thinking were not lost on *Home*'s initial reviewers. Noting that the show was "jam packed with thousands of alluring (and expensive) household, personal, eatable, and wearable items," *Chicago Tribune* critic Anton Remenih bemoaned the lavish taste endorsed by Francis and other on-camera editors. "On one show last week," Remenih wrote, "housewives were exposed to a long lecture on the difference between Chippendale, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite furniture. They were advised never to over decorate a room. This is 'terribly important,' the smooth talking [sic] female narrator admonished. At those prices, how could anybody over decorate?"[123] In such pseudo-comic, sexist, whose-going-to-pay-for-all-this diatribes, reviewers pointed to financial considerations elided in the network's central claim about *Home* and other programs aimed at female improvement: the claim that "better" women

[123] Anton Remenih, "TV's New Home Show Upsets Life at Home," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 28, 1954, W12.

automatically meant better business. After years of struggling to secure sponsors and respectable ratings for the show, NBC ceased to broadcast *Home* in August 1957.[124]

Color-Compatibility Enters its Awkward Period

As early as February 1955, NBC began to revise and finesse the claim that "better" television would directly result in better business. By this point the network was forced to confront the fact that their initial efforts to attract "class" viewers and the sponsors interested in reaching them had not succeeded in one significant department; the sudden demand for color television sets the network hoped to provoke with its colorcast programs had not materialized. Pressed on this point in the course of an extensive interview with *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, Weaver acknowledged that one of the most high-profile parts of NBC's color initiative, the 90-minute compatible-color spectaculars the network had introduced into its primetime schedule in September 1954, had failed to "pay off," that is, to generate more demand for color television sets or for the products of the spectaculars's sponsors. Yet, almost immediately after conceding that point, Weaver insisted that the promised "take off" in color sets would have in fact occurred if only "the manufacturers," by which he meant RCA's competitors, had done their part and produced and promoted color sets in an adequate fashion. "[W]hat has happened," Weaver is quoted as saying, "and I don't think it's particularly remarkable, is that the manufacturers have not come through with color sets available at the dealers—well promoted and for sale at any

[124] Industry discourse suggests that the high costs of broadcasting the show prolonged its run. The show was expensive to produce, but it was even more expensive for the network to let its custom-built studio go un-used and the network could not conceive of another program to broadcast from that studio space or find renters willing to pay to use it. Because of these too-big-to-fail complications, NBC seems to have been willing to carry it until May 1957, when it got into a public dispute with CBS about which network was "winning" daytime television and *Home*'s extremely low ratings thwarted NBC's ability to claim any kind of victory, no matter how creatively calculated. See, "It's an Endless 2-Way Discussion: Those CBS Vs. NBC Daytime Claims," *Variety*, May 1, 1957, 51.

price. RCA is just about the only one, and one manufacturer can't do it all by himself. […] From my side, as a broadcaster, we expected a certain flow of sets and we haven't got it."[125] Hobbled by such short-sighted-ness on the part of their industry partners, the network's compatible-color spectaculars had instead resulted in record sales for black-and-white sets. He concluded his response by suggesting that this unexpected boom in black-and-white set sales would likely slow the industry's transition to colorcasting, in effect lowering expectations and shifting any blame away from his part of RCA and towards other, less enlightened facets of the TV industry. "[T]his was the year that the manufacturers all expected to go on their ear, you know," Weaver is quoted as saying. "They expected a real bad year. I would guess that they are thinking again exactly the way they thought before. In other words, they are saying, 'This is great. Now the thing to do is to hope that color doesn't get going and that we keep on having these great black-and-white years because when color does get going we're going to be forced to have an awkward period where everybody suddenly wants to wait for color.' Undoubtedly that awkward period is going to come. That's not our business. Our business is to build a great broadcasting service."[126]

An "awkward period" did in fact follow; arguably it had already begun by the time Weaver gave that February 1955 interview. By January 1956, the number of color sets in circulation was estimated as being at most 50,000 and perhaps as little as 15,000.[127] Industry discourse from the mid-to-late 1950s suggests that manufacturers and network executives continued to engage in a blame game, with manufacturers and dealers insisting that it was the meagre program offerings, not the high-price tag, that prevented affluent consumers from buying

[125] "B-T Interview: Weaver Scans the Way Ahead," *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, February 28, 1955, 40, 42.
[126] Ibid.
[127] David A. Loehwing, "End of the Rainbow? Color Television Has Still to Yield Its Pot of Gold," *Barron's National Business and Financial Weekly*, January 16, 1956, 3; "NBC-TV Puts Its Chips Behind Color Programming," *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, October 8, 1955, 29.

color television sets. "[T]he 'wealthy middle classes' in the U.S., who pay $3,000-$4,000 for an automobile, will hardly blink at a $700 or even a $1000 price on a color television set, once they see it in operation and are assured of a sufficient number of programs to make it worth-while," is how *Barron's*, the financial news publication, summarizes the thinking of RCA manufacturers in a 1956 article bearing the subhead "Color Television Has Still to Yield Its Pot of Gold."[128] Such finger-pointing aside, manufacturers, broadcasters and dealers seem to have been united in their conviction that any "explosion" in sales would depend on first attracting "class" consumers—"the people that you reach with your *Harper's* and *Atlantic's* and your news magazines and so forth" in Weaver-ese or what one Chicago dealer describes as "the '$1,000 Club' of social and business leaders"—and that the industry had yet to succeed in this regard.[129] Such fears were perhaps confirmed or even intensified by a satirical depiction of color television that appeared on the May 14, 1955 cover of *The New Yorker*. Dominated by shades of gray, the cover portrays a well-dressed white man in suit and tie seated in his armchair and scowling as he looks at a color television set that appears to be on the fritz; the bright, and presumably expensive, oasis in his monochrome world offers little more than a view of multi-colored static.[130]

In response to this vicious circle of slow sales, limited circulation and the wariness of advertisers to pay for the heightened production costs and rates that colorcasting entailed, NBC gradually shifted its definition of "compatible color" over the course of the late 1950s. While it continued to present itself as the "quality" network, that is, as an advertising venue comparable to the "top slicks," the evidence used to buttress that claim changed. In addition to pointing to their colorcast spectaculars, the network also foregrounded certain monochrome programs,

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[128] Loehwing, 29.
[129] "B-T Interview: Weaver Scans the Way Ahead," 39; Loehwing, 3.
[130] Peter Arno, *The New Yorker*, May 14, 1955, c.

programs that it designated as "pioneering," "exciting," or innovative. For example, in a March 1955 ad for NBC that ran in *Variety* and *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, the network drew attention to its compatible-color spectaculars, particularly its upcoming colorcast of *Peter Pan*, but also foregrounded *The George Gobel Show* and *Medic*, neither of which were colorcast, designating all of them as evidence of "the pioneering" being done by NBC.[131] Similarly, in a December 1956 ad bearing the self-congratulatory headline, "We're proud as a peacock of NBC," RCA applauded its network for its "pioneering in Color TV programming," but also aligned this achievement with other "exciting" "firsts", a category that is exemplified by news and cultural programs for both radio and television, such as *NBC Opera, Monitor,* and *Information, Please*.[132] Such promotional efforts effectively expanded the meaning of "compatibility" in "compatible-color television" so that this program category came to include black-and-white broadcasts that were of comparable quality to the colorcasts, at least in the view of NBC.

A *New York Herald Tribune* article published in 1957 and entitled "Color TV for You?" is unusually explicit in this regard. Purportedly authored by Jinx Falkenburg, the NBC personality who was by that point as famous in New York for her color TV sales-pitches as she was for her 1940s past as a magazine cover girl, the "article" is really an extended advertisement for RCA, one that is aimed at dispelling enduring misconceptions about color television. Falkenburg opens by recounting a conversation she had with one of her neighbors in Manhasset, the wealthy New York suburb. This matron, Falkenburg tells us, volunteered her interest in purchasing a color television set, only to fret that her living room did not have the requisite space to accommodate that new piece of furniture *and* the black-and-white set she would need to retain in order to watch black-and-white broadcasts. In a tone of good-willed exasperation, Falkenburg

[131] "Future Indicative," *Variety*, March 9, 1955, 34 – 35.
[132] "We're proud as a peacock of NBC," *Variety*, December 12, 1956, 37.

makes clear that she set the record straight, telling her neighbor that "she didn't *need* two sets in order to see both black-and-white *and* color programs. A color set would bring her *all* the programs—that's why it's called a 'compatible' system." Once used to reassure owners of black-and-white sets that the transition to colorcasting would not leave them behind, "compatibility" is here deployed to reassure wealthy suburbanites that the acquisition of a new color television set would not entail losing access to the black-and-white programs that also appealed to them.[133]

Concomitant with such shifts in the construction of "color compatibility", the concept of the compatible-color service program was also revised during this "awkward period" of industry transition and expansion. While NBC had initially sought to lure advertisers to television and away from women's service magazines by designing and promoting its compatible-color service programs as "electronic service magazines", by 1957 that strategy seems to have been abandoned. In addition to the cancellation of *Home*, NBC also ceased colorcasting *Jinx Falkenburg's Diary* and *Here's Looking at You*, two daytime service programs modeled on service magazines. Presumably these programs reverted back to black-and-white broadcasts because the network could no longer find sponsors willing to pay the added costs entailed by broadcasting them in color. At the same time, NBC introduced monochrome daytime shows that, like the "compatible" shows foregrounded in ads trumpeting NBC as the "pioneering" network, were framed as breaking new ground. For example, *Close Up*, a WRCA-TV black-and-white program that NBC made available to other stations and affiliates and promoted as one part of an afternoon package that also included WNBQ's colorcast daytime variety show *Club 60*, was discussed in trade press as a new kind of afternoon show for women, one that addressed

[133] Jinx Falkenburg McCrary, "Color TV for You," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 6, 1957, F6.

"controversial" subjects in a "Mike-Wallace" style.[134] Similarly, *Tex and Jinx's Jury*, a WRCA-TV black-and-white program that replaced *Close Up* in 1958, was touted as a show "designed for the 'thinking' women of New York."[135] As a *New York Herald Tribune* article explained, the show boasted an innovative format—the "jury" of the title was a rotating panel consisting of one expert-guest and three housewives—and a willingness to address "topical controversies," a category exemplified as follows: "City Living Versus Country Living; Steady Dating for Teen-Agers; Women in Business; Living on a Budget, and Separate Vacations."[136]

Importantly, despite such revisions to its definition of "color" and "compatibility," NBC continued to claim that "better" television could be both popular and transformational—that, in addition to appealing to "class" consumers, colorcast programs and black-and-white programs of comparable quality could attract and improve the "mass" of consumers. By 1957, the popularity of *Twenty-One*, NBC's primetime quiz program, had become central to this claim. Programmed against CBS's *I Love Lucy*, *Twenty-One* was the first NBC series to win the ratings competition against that wildly popular series since *Lucy*'s debut in October 1951.[137] It had also, via the winning appearances of contestant Charles Van Doren, normalized intellectualism, making it seem consonant with hetero-masculinity.[138] Seeking to capitalize on *Twenty One*'s recent success, an ad for the network from March 1957 deploys Van Doren to make NBC's familiar claim that television can be both educational and popular. "There's a measure of egghead in all of us," is the form that this argument takes in the ad's copy. Under the headline "Portrait of the

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[134] "NBC-TV's 'Co-Op in the Afternoon' in 90-min. O & O Program Splash," February 13, 1957, 27, 70; "New Daytime Color on NBC-Owned TV," *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, February 4, 1957, 66; "Close-Up," *Variety*, February 20, 1957, 27; "NBC Reclaims 11/2 Daytime Hrs," *Billboard*, July 8, 1957, 2.
[135] "Tex and Jinx in New Program," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 30, 1958, A4.
[136] Ibid.
[137] "Doren Passes 'Lucy,'" *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, February 25, 1957, 14.
[138] For an example of the construction of Van Doren as a "virile" intellectual, see "The Remarkable Van Dorens," *Time*, February 11, 1957, 48.

American Family," there is an image of three eggs, each decorated to look like a member of an egghead nuclear family. Invoking "informational, cultural and inspirational programs" such as *Project 20, Wide, Wide World*, *Meet the Press,* and *NBC Opera*, and aligning them with Van Doren, who is described as a "hero" and one of the nation's "best knowers," the ad further stretches the "compatible" program category, so that a quiz program like *Twenty One* is now a part of it. We can all become Van Dorens, the ad suggests, provided we watch NBC's quality programs.

Colorizing Women's Service with Intellectualist Sex

In this context, WRCA-TV, NBC's New York station, announced in July 1958 that the slot that it had for years devoted to one or another of Falkenburg's shows would instead be occupied by a new program featuring Joyce Brothers. At that time, Brothers's name and face were already familiar to television viewers, as a result of her successful appearances on CBS's quiz program *$64,000 Question* and its follow-up, *$64,000 Challenge*. A slim, young blond woman who was then pursuing a PhD in psychology at Columbia University, Brothers had competed on both shows by answering questions on the history of boxing, a subject that the shows's producers framed as being at odds with her slight, feminine, and bookish self-presentation. Her subsequent, prize-winning run was ascribed to a general, jack-of-all-trades mental acuity, rather than expertise or interest in that particular subject; it was widely reported that Brothers acquired her requisite knowledge of boxing by memorizing an encyclopedia of boxing statistics.[139] In the years following her quiz show wins, Brothers maintained her television celebrity by making regular appearances on the ABC network as a commentator for

[139] See, for example, John Crosby, "Boxing Expert's Progress," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 11, 1958, A1; John Lardner, "Science in the World of Soap," *New Yorker*, September 13, 1958, 131 – 135.

boxing matches. At the same time she enhanced her credentials as an egghead by finishing her degree and co-authoring a how-to book on improving one's memory.[140]

WRCA-TV drew upon and reinforced these two defining attributes -- her braininess and her heterofeminine looks—portraying her as a new kind of host for the women's service program. With her Ivy League graduate degree serving as one kind of credential and her camera-ready appearance as a young blond doctor's wife (and mother) serving as another, Brothers was promoted as a professionally trained psychologist who would provide direct counsel to New York's homemakers. *Dr. Joyce Brothers* invited its viewers to write in to the station, detailing relational problems, that is, difficulties that arose in their experiences with a spouse, in-law, friend, child, neighbor, etc. Brothers, it was promised, would read all the letters sent in. During each of her 30-min, weekday afternoon broadcasts, Tuttle, her announcer, read three or four on air, each followed by a response from Brothers that she had researched and written in advance of the broadcast.

By 1958, advice on relating was a staple of American women's service media. In the inaugural iteration of *Home*, for example, there was an on-camera editor devoted to "child and family relations," in addition to the ones for interior decoration, cooking, gardening, and shopping.[141] Similarly, experts in the social and human sciences, such as Marynia Farnham, Margaret Mead, Abraham Stone and Lena Levine, regularly appeared as guests on service programs and were billed as authorities in marital, family and/or human relations. What distinguished *Dr. Joyce Brothers* was that it promised sex would be among the kinds of relating that its host discussed. "Love, marriage, divorce, sex, child-rearing, in-laws, community

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[140] Dr. Joyce Brothers. [No. 1926A, 1958-12-23], Peabody Awards Collection, 58054 PST 1 of 1, Walter J. Brown Media Archives & Peabody Awards Collection, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
[141] "Television: For the Ladies," *New Yorker*, April 3, 1954, 81 – 82.

relations, social obligations and decorum" was how the show's construction of human relating was summarized in the earliest public announcements regarding the program.[142] By the time the program was on the air, this initially expansive construction of its purview had been narrowed, but the foregrounding of sex was retained. "Dr. Brothers will answer questions on love, marriage, sex, and bringing up your children" explained Roger Tuttle, Brothers's sidekick and announcer, at the top of each broadcast.[143]

In industry press, the show's discussion of sex was presented as groundbreaking, that is, as analogous to other "compatible" monochrome programs. In an address to the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) reproduced in *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, an executive at Revlon held up the show as indicative of broadcasters's new willingness to be "controversial," to respond to the "desire of an independent public for some independent spirited thinking." Highlighting Brothers's discussion of "intimate marital relations", i.e., sex, the Revlon executive compared her show to the critically-lauded primetime monochrome series *Playhouse 90*, arguing that both programs were exemplary of a new, more daring kind of television, one that tackled "hot topics" considered "taboo five years ago."[144] Popular press discourse about Brothers similarly highlighted the show's treatment of "topics formerly considered taboo for television."[145] In articles that appeared in *Newsweek*, *Sunday News*, the *New York Post*, and the *New York Herald Tribune*, *Dr. Joyce Brothers* is lauded as the program that brought "topics on sex to television," with "topics on sex" exemplified as "sexual frigidity, incompatibility, the

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[142] "Joyce Brothers Gets Daily Show," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 23, 1958, B5; "Quiz Winner to Give Counsel," *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, August 4, 1958, 91.
[143] Audiotape A96, Joyce Brothers papers, #4253. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.
[144] "Big Buyers To Buy Even Bigger," *Broadcasting-Telecasting*, November 17, 1958, 44, 48.
[145] "Sex Is on the Air," *Newsweek*, September 29, 1958, 65.

menopause, infidelity, pregnancies among teen-agers, [and] how to tell children the facts of life."[146]

To be clear, discourse about sex on *Dr. Joyce Brothers* would not be easily confused with discourse about sex in a 1980s issue of *Cosmo* magazine or from an episode of HBO's *Sex and the City* TV series. Such texts adopt a corporeal-centric view of sexual amelioration, identifying a particular position, act or technique as a means for improving the sex lives of its consumers. The approach taken on *Dr. Joyce Brothers* was decidedly more intellectualist. Some combination of analysis, research and conversation are Brothers's go-to recommendations; that is, better sexual relations can be achieved, but it requires a lot of thinking and some carefully premeditated conversation. This it's-all-in-your-head construction of sex is perhaps best exemplified by a segment from the December 22, 1958 episode of the series. Presented as something akin to a "greatest hits" compilation, the episode begins with Brothers announcing that the letters she will discuss are all ones that had been previously addressed on air and that these initial airings had generated so much fanfare, including demands for transcripts, that she decided to present them a second time. The sex problem that sparked such a level of interest, we soon learn, is a wife's complaint that her husband wants to have sex far less frequently than she does. Mismatched desire – wives indicating that their husbands want more or less sex than they do – was a common topic on the show and often labeled by Brothers as "sexual frigidity," i.e., the wife or husband less interested in sex is described as frigid. In this instance, Brothers provides a multifaceted response, sketching two, almost-diametrically opposed scenarios. The first one, which she explicates via reference to the Kinsey Reports, is that the husband is "constitutionally" pre-

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[146] Mina Wetzig, "Want a doctor in the house?", *Sunday News*, October 26, 1958, 8, 30. See also "Sex is on the Air,"; Gael Greene, "Dear Dr. Brothers," *New York Post*, October 19,1958, M4; John Crosby, "Boxing Expert's Progress," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 11, 1958, A1.

disposed to be less interested sex, occupying the low-end of the range of "normal" sexual responsiveness. The second scenario is distinctly more Freudian. Brothers suggests that the husband might be "withholding" sex as a result of a desire, "conscious" or "unconscious," to punish his wife. Significantly, Brothers does not deliver the final verdict, but instead recommends that the woman who wrote the letter give her marriage some careful, "objective" reflection and come to her own conclusion. If it turns out that the Kinsey-ian reading is the right one, then Brothers's recommendation is that the wife come to understand and accept that situation, a change of thinking and feeling on the wife's part which, somehow, is supposed to induce a change in the husband's sexual behavior. Her advice concludes as follows: "When you understand emotionally that his lack of desire is normally infrequent, then you may be able to relax within yourself. With a more relaxed attitude you will find that you will be less tense and worried about the problem and with that you will be less demanding of him. When you are no longer so demanding, your husband may find it easier to give you the love you want. So sit down with him and discuss your feelings…Perhaps these comments…on your problem have given you some insight into your problem and you can communicate them to your husband."[147]

From a certain vantage point, the characterization of *Dr. Joyce Brothers* as innovative or "avant-garde" seems like a hollow claim, if one that the show's producers were eager to promote.[148] Intellectualist sex, that is, discussion of sex in the vocabulary of Freud (e.g., "Oedipus Complex," "repression," "unconscious desires") or Kinsey (e.g., "wide variations in the frequency of the marital sex act," "average responsiveness") was actually quite pervasive in

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[147] Audiotape A96, Joyce Brothers papers, #4253. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

[148] Peabody submission form describes the show as an "avant garde answer to the community's need for a program on human relations." Dr. Joyce Brothers. [No. 1926A, 1958-12-23], Peabody Awards Collection, 58054 PST 1 of 1, Walter J. Brown Media Archives & Peabody Awards Collection, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

the early postwar era. Plays and films labeled "adult" or "mature," such as those associated with directors like Alfred Hitchcock, Joseph L. Mankiewicz, Elia Kazan and Otto Preminger and/or writers such as Tennessee Williams, Budd Schulberg and Arthur Miller drew on psychoanalytic theories of sexuality and deployed Freudian terminology, as did the journalists who reviewed them. While such adult fare was not generally written for broadcast media, the theatrical plays and films that generated enough box office, praise and awards eventually became a part of radio and television discourse, either as adaptations or in the form of interviews and commentary with their creators. *A Streetcar Named Desire*, for example, opened to widespread acclaim on Broadway in 1947, became an "adult" Hollywood film commended for its tasteful treatment of the "sex problem" of "nymphomania" in 1951, and, after winning several Oscars and prizes, was excerpted on CBS's *Omnibus* in 1955 and extensively discussed by playwright Tennessee Williams in "compatible" programs such as *Wide Wide World* and *Tex and Jinx's Jury*.[149] Less explicit but perhaps even more numerous were the TV programs generated by writers, producers and actors who were adherents of psychoanalysis. In such texts, characters and narratives were informed by concepts like repression and sublimation even if those words were never uttered on screen. And, as the research of Sarah E. Igo has shown, the influence of Kinsey was just as pervasive, if not more so, with both Kinsey Reports leading to an explosion of commentary in the popular press.[150] Of course, for both strains of this intellectualist discourse about sex,

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[149] Quotes are taken from the *Variety* review of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. See *Variety*, 1951. Other examples of "mature" plays and films that made this trajectory were *All About Eve* which was presented as part of *Theatre Guild on the Air* on November 16, 1952; *All My Sons*, which was presented on *Lux Radio Theater* in 1950; *Spellbound*, adapted for *Lux Radio Theater* in 1948 and 1950; *Lady in the Dark*, presented as part of *Lux Radio Theater* in 1945, on *Theatre Guild on the Air* in 1950 and 1953, and as a high-profile NBC television spectacular in 1954. *People Will Talk* (not sure if it was adapted, but Mankiewicz definitely talked about it). Similarly, Mankiewicz, Kazan, Miller, and Schulberg all gave interviews on radio and television in which they discussed their "adult" films and plays.

[150] Sarah E. Igo, *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

intelligibility depended on the viewer possessing some familiarity with the jargon and theories. What made such texts "adult" or "mature", in other words, was that education in Kinsey or Freud was required in order to understand their statements. Just how commonplace such knowledge actually was became a point of contention within the television industry. "Most of us are aware of the primitive Freudian explanations of our relationships to each other," Paddy Chayefsky wrote in a 1955 commentary that positioned his acclaimed teleplay *Marty* as a portrait of male homosexual desire, different but not unrelated to *Tea and Sympathy, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and other, more widely recognized treatments of the same theme. "The Oedipus complex is hardly an esoteric piece of psychoanalytic jargon; it is a commonly used and understood conversational phrase." He goes on to mock "[a]ctors, and especially directors" for mistaking such "rudimentary psychology" for rarefied knowledge.[151]

Yet, if intellectualist sex was familiar ground for network TV drama and adult Hollywood cinema by the mid-1950s, for women's service programs it still constituted uncharted, or at least, under-charted territory. Given that the purpose of such programs was explicitly pedagogic, this reticence is not surprising. Producers of service programs faced different challenges than those working in drama, comedy or even news. Rather than simply referring to a sexual concept, such "how-to" programs must also explain it and situate it in the context of advice to viewers on how to improve one's self, family and community. In a review of *Dr. Joyce Brothers*, TV columnist John Crosby noted these obligations of the "sexual" service show before pronouncing Brothers as more or less successful in fulfilling it. "There was a time when the daytime air was full of programs telling the housewives how to do things—everything from cooking to interior decoration to gardening," Crosby writes. "Now we are reduced to a half-

[151] Paddy Chayefsky, *The Television Plays* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955), 186.

hour course on how the girls should go about curbing their sexual aggressiveness and other more titillating subjects. As advice goes, this is definitely a step down in quality but we should be decently grateful for the fact that it is useful at all."[152]

Innovating the monochrome service program with intellectualist sex proved to be a commercially successful strategy—*Dr. Joyce Brothers* achieved significantly higher ratings than the Jinx Falkenburg program it replaced.[153] In August 1959, WRCA-TV added a second iteration of the program to its weekday schedule. Entitled *Consult Dr. Brothers*, this show was scheduled at 1am, directly following *Jack Paar*, and promoted as an "adults only" variation of the afternoon service program that, in keeping with its "mature" time-slot and lead-in, would focus exclusively on questions relating to sex.[154] Like the afternoon show, this follow-up program was a ratings success and had no trouble attracting sponsors. In addition to Revlon Products, Richard Hudnut cosmetics, Tropicana and several others, Brothers's programs counted B. Altman, a New York department store that also advertised in the *New Yorker*, among its sponsors.

In the wake of this success, Ed Stanley, the head of NBC's public affairs programs, announced in September 1959 his division's plans to feature Brothers in a network-wide series organized around pressing social problems.[155] Those plans never materialized and it seems likely that they were impacted by Charles Van Doren's testimony before Congress on November 2, 1959, in which he confessed that his winning streak on *Twenty One* had been orchestrated by the show's producers. This confession dramatically intensified what William Boddy has described as an already mounting public relations crisis for the television industry as a whole in the late

[152] John Crosby, "Boxing Expert's Progress," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 11, 1958, A1.
[153] "WRCA-TV's Banner 9-Month Billings," *Variety*, October 22, 1958, 54.
[154] "Joyce Brothers For Post-Paar Sex & Marriage," *Variety*, July 15, 1959, 35; "New 'Dr. Brothers' Series Starts Aug. 10," *New York Herald Tribune*, July 16, 1959, 13; John P. Shanley, "TV: Dear. Dr. Brothers," *New York Times*, August 12, 1959, 59.
[155] "NBC-TV Eyes Com'l Pubaffairs Vistas; 10 Hour Specials," *Variety*, September 16, 1956, 19.

1950s.[156] While Brothers was never accused of cheating, the quiz program on which she first appeared and made her name, *$64,000 Question*, was along with *Twenty One* at the center of the Quiz Show scandal. Perhaps even more damaging, trade press had often discussed her in relation to Van Doren, framing both as Columbia University-trained intellectuals who had put the celebrity acquired via their quiz program appearances to good use; Van Doren by appearing as a cultural commentator on *Wide, Wide World* and *Today* and Brothers via her service programs.[157] As Boddy explains, in the aftermath of Van Doren's testimony, the networks made assiduous efforts to localize the scandal to particular industry participants or, at worst, a particular program format; their ultimate success is indicated by the fact that, despite hearings concerning industry-wide practices and featuring testimony from top executives at the networks and sponsoring corporations, this event in television history continues to be called the Quiz Show scandal.[158] Plans for public affairs specials, like the one NBC had previously announced, were made even more elaborate and given extensive promotion, as part of a joint effort on the part of CBS, NBC and ABC to rebuild the industry's image and stave-off increased government oversight.[159] The initial plan, though, of making Joyce Brothers, Van Doren's fellow egghead and former quiz show winner, one of the faces of NBC's "better" television seems to have been dropped. In a departure from its treatment of Steve Allen, Jinx Falkenburg, Jack Paar, and other successful

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[156] William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press), pp. 214 – 233.
[157] Patrick D. Hazard, "Oh, Brothers!" *Variety*, July 29, 1959, 39, 88. Interestingly, Columbia University seems to have encouraged this association. In September 1958, the university put out a press release in which it drew attention to Van Doren and Brothers's standing as alumni and past instructors, and pointed out that a then-reigning contestant, Elfrida Von Nardroff, was currently enrolled at the university as a graduate student. This press release was summarized in *TV-Radio Mirror*. "Diller-Dollar Scholars," *TV-Radio Mirror*, September 1958, 81.
[158] Boddy, 214 – 233. See also William Boddy, "The Seven Dwarfs and the Money Grubbers: The Public Relations Crisis of US Television in the Late 1950s," in *Logics of Television*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 98 – 116.
[159] Boddy, *Fifties Television*, 233 – 55; Michael Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

WRCA-TV personalities before her, NBC did not attempt to further capitalize on Brothers's popular local program by giving it a network-wide distribution.

Thinking *Woman!*

For the most part, this chapter has attended to programs broadcast on NBC. The reason for this focus is that the effort to make compatible-color service programs, that is, programs designed to increase the sales of color television sets and expand the number of "class" female consumers, was dominated by this network. During this "awkward period" of industry transition, ABC defined itself against such efforts. That is, in contrast to NBC's promises to "expand" and improve television through colorcasting and other innovations, ABC associated itself with the pleasures of the familiar and predictable, promoting itself as the venue for "regular" series that were scheduled week-in and week-out in the same timeslot and provided access to reliably enjoyable entertainment.[160] CBS was somewhere in the middle. Like NBC, CBS presented its programming as a mechanism for entertainment and education. Yet, in contrast to the thinking of NBC, at CBS this dual purpose was conceptualized as two distinct responsibilities that were undertaken by different parts of the network; entertainment and profit-generation would be handled by the network and education and information would be the responsibility of CBS News. In this bifurcated framework, programs made for the women during the weekday were understood as belonging to the realm of entertainment. To that end, the network's daytime weekday schedule was dominated by popular soap operas, quiz programs and reruns throughout most of the decade.

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[160] For more on ABC during the era of color compatibility, see Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

At the tail end of the decade, however, CBS briefly amended its approach to television for homemakers. The instigation for that shift was the network's abrupt cancellation of *Dotto*, an afternoon program, in August 1958 and the response this decision provoked from TV critics. Sponsored by Colgate, *Dotto* was a popular game show that involved an audience participation element. CBS's decision to remove the show from its schedule, despite its high ratings, was interpreted by industry press as confirmation of rumors already in circulation that the games on *Dotto* were rigged. Interestingly, in contrast to the uproar about ethics that would later attend the congressional testimony of Van Doren and others concerning industry-wide fraud, the critical response to allegations concerning *Dotto* and their seeming confirmation was much more muted and it identified a different social problem. In his nationally syndicated column, critic John Crosby argued that the "real scandal" of *Dotto* was not that the outcomes of its games were rigged by producers but rather that the games themselves required little intellectual ability or effort. "This was show in which a moving line gradually filled out a picture of some celebrity or other," Crosby wrote, before dismissing the program as "kid's stuff."[161] In the view of Crosby and other TV columnists, programs like *Dotto*, whether rigged or honest, were evidence of the excessive commercialism of daytime television. The Pat Weavers and Arlene Francises, they argued, had abandoned daytime television, leaving intelligent housewives to make do with giveaway contests and little else. "During the many years that I have been surveying weekday daytime television it has been, for the most part, scorned and ignored by the few creative people working in television, and dominated by the shoddy, the careless, and the contemptuous," was how Ann Warren Griffith phrased this oft-repeated complaint in a 1959 column for the *New York*

[161] John Crosby, "The Real Scandal," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 29, 1958, A1; Ann Warren Griffith, "Summertime and the Giving is Sleazy," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 31, 1958, G62.

Herald Tribune.[162] Similarly, as part of a column that paid tribute to NBC's recently cancelled *Matinee Theater,* the *Atlantic Constitution* critic wrote, "If one used daytime TV offerings as a measuring rod, the general conclusion would be that the mother is a fossilized, pap-loving dunce. […] Certainly there is little weekday programming that indicates she wants something more—to be treated as a thinking adult who needs the stimulus of ideas."[163]

At the same time that network television's critics were arguing that intelligent housewives were at best ignored and at worst insulted by daytime programs, market researchers were making the case that this same type – the educated, affluent white woman—should no longer be conceived as a minority of female consumers, that her tastes and interests had instead become representative of housewives in general. "The inventions and mass production of the twentieth century revolutionized American women's lives and thinking," Janet L. Wolff writes in *What Makes Women Buy*, an influential "guidebook" to a late-1950s consumer type she calls "today's woman." "Their interests have been widened to include the entire world. They like to taste and cook foreign dishes. Many know and appreciate the great works of art—especially when they have seen them hanging in the galleries throughout Europe and the United States. They go to concerts and listen to classical works on their radios and high-fidelity sets. They know and dress in the latest styles. Their homes reflect the color and artistry they have learned to appreciate in their travels and through mass media."[164] Elsewhere in the text Wolff explicitly credits television and other mass media for participating in the creation of "today's woman," arguing that, "Women have had a liberal education in the arts through the growth of education

[162] Ann Warren Griffith, "Special Specials," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 19, 1959, G62. For another example of this critique of television's excessive commercialism and its periodization as a "post-Weaver" phenomenon, see Richard Austin Smith, "TV: The Light That Failed," *Fortune*, December 1958, 78-81, 161-162, 166, 168, 171,

[163] Norman Shavin, "CBS-TV Believes Mom's No Dunce," *Atlantic Constitution*, March 15, 1959, 15F.

[164] Wolff, Janet L. *What Makes Women Buy: A Guide to Understanding and Influencing the New Woman of Today*, (New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1958), 34.

for all and mass communication. […] They have become acquainted with art masters and contemporary painters through mass magazines reproducing in color many lovely works. Television has taken women on tour through museums in various cities. Radio has brought better music to their attention."[165] Texts such as this effectively argued that the transformation of "mass" female consumers that Weaver and others had promised to bring about via compatible color television had in fact taken place. The "class" woman was no longer an ideal to which the much larger group of "mass" women should look for direction and guidance; she had become the norm.

In this context, CBS produced its own version of a "controversial" monochrome service program addressed to affluent, educated housewives. In March 1959 the network's news division announced that it would fund a series of investigative news reports that would be researched and produced by staff in its prestigious Public Affairs department and scheduled during the weekday. Entitled *Woman!* (exclamation point included), the series received a high-profile publicity campaign, one that included an unusual volume of press releases, interviews with executives within and beyond the news division and a closed-circuit preview of the first special in the series for select journalists and members of women's organizations. As part of this promotion, James Fleming, the series's initial executive producer, and Irving Gitlin, the director of Public Affairs at CBS, as well as others involved in the production, presented *Woman!* as a high caliber series that would benefit from the same exhaustive research, professionalism and seriousness of purpose that characterized past CBS News investigative reports, yet speak specifically to the needs and interests of female viewers. "The intent here," Gitlin explained in one of many interviews, "is to do something of great importance in daytime, to create new excitement, to be

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[165] Ibid., 196.

of special service to the women who watch."[166] Claudette Colbert, host of the first special in the series, offered a similar if more specific explication of CBS's goals, explaining to one journalist that *Woman!* would serve "thinking women" by reporting on "intelligent topics"—that is, by giving them something to think about.[167]

While *Woman!* was initially projected to include as many as eight hour-long special reports, CBS ultimately broadcast only five.[168] Scheduled on what Gitlin referred to as a "pre-emptive basis," the series did not have its own time slot. Instead, each of its broadcasts supplanted a regularly scheduled program. The first special, *Do They Marry Too Young?*, appeared on May 17, 1959 and the last, entitled *The Lonely Years*, on March 1, 1960, with anywhere between 1 and 4 months elapsing between broadcasts. Time slots were similarly inconsistent. All five were shown during the weekday, but one at 11:00am EST, others at 3:00pm, and another at 4:00pm. A sixth special, *The Troubled Teens*, was shot in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, and set to be hosted by Jane Wyatt, star of CBS's *Father Knows Best*, but CBS never completed its production.[169] All but the first of the five specials were sponsored by Dow Chemical.

In terms of format, each special report was organized as an examination of a then-widely reported and, arguably, disturbing change in society, that is, a social problem. The basis for *Do They Marry Too Young*, for example, was the increase in the rate of teen marriage and teen pregnancy. Subsequent specials examined the increasing number of women participating directly in the paid labor market (*Is the American Woman Losing Her Femininity*), the rise in the divorce rate (*The Marriage that Failed*), the proliferation of mass-circulated parenting advice literature

[166] Marie Torre, "New CBS Series May Lift Daytime TV Level," *New York Herald Tribune*, May 6, 1959, A4
[167] Margaret McManus, "New to Daytime Television," *Baltimore Sun*, May 17, 1959, A9.
[168] Griffith, "Special Specials," G62.
[169] Val Adams, "Tab Hunter to Star in NBC Comedy Series," *Atlanta Constitution*, 14.

(*You Can't Raise Children by the Book*) and the projected growth of the senior-citizen demographic group (*The Lonely Years*). The trend under discussion is announced near the top of the special and then investigated via filmed interviews with those recognized as "experts," a motley crew comprised of academic researchers, legislators, judges, marriage counselors, ministers, rabbis, psychologists, psychiatrists, newspaper columnists, and those designated as "real people," that is, individuals who are living the trend and can therefore provide a first-person perspective on what is behind it. Importantly, both the "expert" and "real person" groups are presented as heterogeneous; different and often competing views are asserted within the course of each special. Near the conclusion of each program there is a segment akin to the question and answer period following a public lecture. In it, we see one or more experts field questions from "real people," individuals who are cast by the program as analogous to the viewers watching at home.

In both their structure and their subject matter, the *Woman!* specials closely resemble the roundtable discussion features and investigative reports published throughout the early postwar era in *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Redbook*, *Charm, Good Housekeeping* and other women's service magazines.[170] Despite this adherence to convention, *Woman!*, like *Dr. Joyce Brothers*, was

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[170] Throughout the 1950s, *Ladies' Home Journal* published eleven "journal forums." These features were edited transcriptions of extensive roundtable discussions held at the magazine's offices in Rockefeller Center. The conversations were hosted by Beatrice and Bruce Gould, the magazine's editors-in-chief, and centered on a topic that they designated as a pressing social concern—a social problem. They were moderated by Margaret J. Hickey, the editor of public affairs, and usually included seven or more participants, some of them "ordinary" housewives, as well as professionals designated as "experts" in medicine, politics, or arts and letters. The publication of these features generally included photos of the participants seated around a table talking. Similarly, in the 1950s, *Redbook* and *Good Housekeeping* ran features on social problems, including prejudice faced by interracial couples and the complications faced by black students "breaking the color line" of all-white schools, on a routine basis. Yet, in contrast to *Ladies' Home Journal*, these magazines instead pursued these subjects through investigative reports. In their final, published iterations, the reports included quotes from the same kind of participants featured in the *Ladies' Home Journal* forums—"ordinary" housewives and professionals with relevant expertise—and, where possible, photos of the "ordinary" people. *Charm* and *Woman's Home Companion* adopted another approach, including features on the phenomenon of working women, but examining that "problem" in the format of first person narratives. Taken together, these various features constitute a sizable number of

depicted by some reviewers as a thoughtful treatment of subject matter that could be seen as "daring," "a little rough" and even "shocking." Reviewers like Cecil Smith and Paul Jones acknowledged that the series was well-executed and would be of interest to its target audience, but also suggested that it was questionable programming for daytime, a period during which young children might also be watching. Such assessments call attention to an editorial complication particular to television. While *Woman!*, like the public affairs features in service magazines, was addressed to "educated women," it was also produced for and distributed on a "family medium." In other words, *Woman!*'s producers were not forced to contend with a criticism directed at *Home*—reviewers did not complain that the reports were "above" the taste or comprehension of most housewives—but they did still have to design their program with a two-tiered audience in mind. *Woman!* was addressed to educated housewives, but those statements were fashioned so as to be appropriate for an audience of one or more children that might also be listening and looking on. And, in contrast to the promises it had long made regarding housewives, network television was loathed to be seen as the means through which children at home received an education in sex and other "controversial" matters.[171]

In addition to its structural and thematic indebtedness to the public affairs components of service magazines, *Woman!* also benefited from the contribution of magazine personnel; editors and writers, such as Margaret Mead and *Charm* editor-in-chief Helen S. Valentine, were hired by

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statements, but they represent a small fraction of the total number of pages that these service magazines published over the course of the decade. See, for example, "Politics Begins at Home," *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1952, 23, 129; "Why Don't They Like Us Abroad," *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1954, 46 – 47, 164 – 168; William Peters, "We Dared to Marry," *Redbook*, August 1954, 44 – 45, 82 – 84; Alfred Bestor, "Diplomas the Easy Way," *Good Housekeeping*, June 1958, 14, 218 – 222; William Peters, "Houston's Quiet Victory," *Good Housekeeping*, October 1959, 106 – 107, 137 – 138, 140, 142, 144, 152; Betty Friedan, "I Went Back to Work," *Charm*, April 1955, 145, 200; Jer'e Merritt, "Wanted: Someone to Trust," *Woman's Home Companion*, September 1955, 34 – 35, 93.

[171] A cartoon published in a 1955 issue of *TV Guide* played upon such industry anxieties. In it we see two small boys staring at a television monitor on which a scantily clad woman is singing. The caption reads "Boy, is this program educational." *TV Guide*, July 10 – 16, 1953, 14.

CBS to serve as consultants on the series.[172] Similarly, two of the series's producers, James Fleming and Fred Freed, were veterans of NBC's compatible color programs addressed to homemakers. Fleming had been one of the first producers of *Today* and Freed was a chief writer of *Home*. Despite such affinities and interconnections, CBS did not promote *Woman!* as a "women's magazine on the air." Instead Gitlin and other CBS executives cast the show as a radical departure from women's service media, claiming that unlike "regular" service media, *Woman!* would go beyond "how to bake a cake, or how to sew a dress."[173] Reporters and TV columnists reiterated this view in their coverage of *Woman!* Calling the series a "Distaff *See it Now*" and noting the other successful CBS News programs with which Fleming and Gitlin had been associated, newspaper journalists foregrounded *Woman!*'s connection to news production formats and techniques and ignored previous (and concurrent) service programs addressed to college-educated women.[174] Some went so far as to admonish women to watch the series, claiming it was the best and perhaps only opportunity to prove that they deserved something better than the usual "fashion-and-beauty-tip type series." Or as one reviewer put it, a high-rating for *Woman!* would challenge "video's general attitude that women are brainless dolts."[175]

While in its selection of topics, *Woman!* owed much to contemporary service magazines as well as "compatible" service programs that similarly took on "controversial" or envelope-pushing subjects, in terms of its treatment of these familiar topics, the series of specials also departed from these source texts. In other words, one of the "controversial" "innovations" of *Woman!* was that it invited women to think without telling them what to think. The format of one

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[172] "Networks," *Broadcasting*, March 30, 1959, 55; "3 More 'Woman' Specials on Tap," *Variety*, July 15, 1959, 36.
[173] Oscar Katz, CBS Vice President of Network Programs, quoted in McManus, A9.
[174] Cecil Smith, "Woman!—a Distaff See it Now Show," *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1959, A8.
[175] Shavin, 15F; Griffith, "Special Specials," G62; Torre, "New CBS Series May Lift Daytime TV Level," A4.

of these one-hour reports is similar to that of a class meeting for an undergraduate seminar at a liberal arts college or a panel of presentations at an academic conference. Throughout the course of each report, multiple perspectives on the issue at hand are presented and no single take is privileged at the expense of others, suggesting that it is up to the viewer to make up her mind about which one she agrees with and why. This invitation to each individual housewife-viewer to arrive at her own conclusions is at its most explicit in the special in the series that is devoted to parenting. As its title, *You Can't Raise Children by the Book*, indicates, the advice on parenting that the program dispenses is that rather than following to the letter the decrees of Dr. Benjamin Spock or other so-called specialists, parents should trust their own judgment about their children. As Spock himself explains, in his capacity as one of several talking heads featured in the special's concluding question and answer session, authors of advice literature speak in generalities and provide guidelines; it is the responsibility of each individual parent, especially the mother, to decide how best to care for her particular child. Asked by Gladi Russell, an "ordinary" homemaker who lives near New Haven, Connecticut and is having problems with her six-year-old son, "Dr. Spock, can I trust my own feelings even if they don't agree with your book?", Spock responds, "You certainly can, Mrs. Russell, and you should. After all, you know your child a lot better than I do."[176]

CBS claimed *Woman!* as a ratings success. *Do They Marry Too Young?*, broadcast on May 15, 1959 and the first special in the series, was, according to the network, watched by 40 percent more viewers than the series usually programmed in that particular time-slot.[177] "It is amazing how popular 'Woman' is," Irving Gitlin is quoted as saying in an extensive interview

[176] Script for *You Can't Raise Children by the Book*, Steven H. Sheuer Collection of Television Program Scripts, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, 62.
[177] "Daytime Specials," *Broadcasting*, December 14, 1959, 94.

with John Crosby published on May 1, 1960, days after CBS failed to air the last special in the series, *The Troubled Teens*. "The thing that impresses me is that the canard Madison av. clings to—'be very certain to distinguish what is popular from what is good'—just ain't right. We have the facts to prove it."[178] Sounding very much like Pat Weaver, circa 1954, Gitlin would leave CBS the following month to become the head of NBC's Creative Projects division. This defection was treated as major news in industry press and articles cited CBS's disinterest in renewing *Woman!* as one of precipitating factors for his decision.[179]

Is This What You Mean by Compatible-Color TV?

Television historians when accessing this period in network history and its cultural politics have often drawn on hegemony theory. For example, in the conclusion of a 1995 article that offers a rich, extensive reading of NBC in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Pamela Wilson characterizes the network's efforts to ameliorate television and the viewers who watched it as an "enlightenment ideology" that "emphasized the performance of canonized works of classical music, theater, literature, and drama, and the interpretive fabrication (through both documentary and dramatic forms) of elite ideological perspectives on history, culture and the arts." In her view, NBC's "strategy tended to deny any acknowledgement of diversity within—diversity of cultural lifestyles and forms of cultural or artistic expression."[180]

In this chapter I have adopted a somewhat different theoretical framework, focused on a slightly later period in the network's history and it has led me to a slightly different conclusion.

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[178] John Crosby, "Gitlin Lucky Man," *Boston Globe*, May 1, 1960, 48.
[179] George Rosen, "That Other Mr. K.—(NBC's)," *Variety*, May 25, 1960, 27; "Gitlin Switch to NBC Portends Big Pubaffairs Trust," *Variety*, May 25, 1960, 27, 48.
[180] Pamela Wilson, "NBC Television's 'Operation Frontal Lobes': Cultural Hegemony and Fifties' Program Planning," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television*, 15: 1 (1995): 86.

Where Wilson reads "canonized works" of "elite culture" as in opposition to "diversity," I follow the lead of network executives and television critics and locate them both within the category "color."[181] This multi-faceted construct included revered individuals like Edward Steichen, Bertrand Russell, Margaret Mead and Marian Anderson, as well as "other peoples"—all of these entities were expected to bring "color" to the programs addressed to the affluent, white, educated homemakers charged with taking care of the world.

In the case of early postwar American television, this conceptualization of white femininity and its particular power dynamics is perhaps best exemplified by the opening montage of *Is the American Woman Losing Her Femininity?*, the second in CBS's *Woman!* series. This sequence combines short soundbites from women who feature prominently in the remainder of the program: a suburban housewife whose name is never provided; Monique Benoit, identified as a French advice columnist currently working at a San Francisco newspaper; and Jade Snow Wong, an author and businesswoman based in San Francisco's Chinatown. Associated with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and espousing distinct views on what an American woman is or should be, these women, taken together, are clearly meant to signal the range, complexity and inclusivity of western, i.e., non-communist, femininity. And yet, without wishing to discount their differences, it bears noting that each component of this continuum is a heterofeminine, "classically" beautiful woman who speaks about femininity in relation to masculinity. Such visual and ideological continuity is underscored by the camerawork and editing of the sequence. Framed in medium close up as she directly addresses the camera, each woman, once she finishes speaking, dissolves into the next. The sequence concludes with Jade

[181] For examples of "color" being used in industry discourse to describe what intellectuals add to "mass" entertainment, see Marya Mannes,"Enlightening the Jerks," *The Reporter*, March 24, 1955, 38; "Conversations," *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1955, 135.

Snow Wong, the last of the three and the one who speaks at greatest length, transforming into a head-shot of Botticelli's Venus that serves as the show's title art. It would appear that all American women are free to decide for themselves who they are or what they should be, provided that their answers can be read as some iteration of a Christian humanist individualist ideal.

CHAPTER TWO

Magnifying Women

At the conclusion of "A Trip to Bountiful," Mrs. Watts vows to her son that she will try harder to get along with his wife. Elderly and frail, Mrs. Watts has spent years plotting to leave the Houston apartment she shares with her son Ludie, and his wife Jessie Mae, and return to Bountiful, the desolate farm town in East Texas where she once lived with the now-deceased relatives, neighbors and friends she still thinks of as "her people." *A Trip to Bountiful* is the story of her efforts to realize that dream. We see Mrs. Watts being lectured by Jessie Mae to give up on her schemes to leave Houston for Bountiful, only to watch Mrs. Watts rush to the bus station as soon as Jessie Mae gives her an opportunity. We see Mrs. Watts evade Ludie and Jessie Mae's efforts to track her down and, via the help of a kind stranger, board a bus that deposits her in a small town just miles outside of Bountiful in the middle of the night. There, with her destination nearly in sight, Mrs. Watts is given the debilitating news that the woman who was Bountiful's last remaining inhabitant and her girlhood friend, had died just days earlier. Forced to accept that staying in Bountiful would be impossible, Mrs. Watts talks a local sheriff into driving her to the land she had once worked and to the ramshackle building where she had once lived so that she may experience these sites one last time before Ludie and Jessie Mae arrive to collect her and bring her back to the two-room apartment that she sees as a kind of prison. It is there—on the porch of a building that after years of neglect is still standing, but just barely—that Mrs. Watts makes her vow to Ludie that she will have a different kind of relationship with Jessie Mae. Revived by her brief restoration to the place that signifies home, she apologizes to Ludie for having forced him to skip a day of work, potentially putting his job in jeopardy, and for having fought so violently and so frequently with Jessie Mae. Yet, moments after reassuring Ludie that

those conflicts are in the past, that this sojourn at Bountiful has helped her to, in her words, "reclaim her dignity," Mrs. Watts is confronted by Jessie Mae and the bickering begins anew. Only this time it is Ludie who is overcome. He tells Jessie Mae to wait in the car and then, alone with his mother, he starts to cry. Chastened by this display of emotion, Mrs. Watts apologizes again, but also points out the obvious. "We shouldn't live together," she tells Ludie. Jessie Mae, she tells him "brings out the worst in me and I reckon I bring out the worst in her." "But we have to live together, Mama," is Ludie's response. Mrs. Watts acknowledges he's right, pledges anew to do better, and together they make their way back to the car.

Broadcast on March 1, 1953 as part of NBC's *Television Playhouse*, "A Trip to Bountiful" was one of thousands of television plays presented throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s on network television. What distinguished the play, written by Horton Foote, from the many that preceded and succeeded it was the response it provoked. In addition to admiring reviews, Foote's play also generated good press from an unlikely source—other television dramatists. In a special dossier on television drama published in *Variety* months after its one-time-only broadcast, several of the participants invoked "Bountiful," casting it as a model of good writing for television, one that they themselves emulated. Paddy Chayefsky was particularly effusive, calling "Bountiful" "a delicate, gentle play…that seemed peculiarly suited for television, quiet, intimate and, at the same time, unrelentingly intense."[182] Such admiration was not restricted to the broadcasting industry. "A Trip to Bountiful" was the first television broadcast to be acquired by the Museum of Modern Art for its permanent collection. Other accolades included a Tony-award-winning adaptation of the play, also starring Gish and Eva Marie Saint, that *Television Playhouse* producer Fred Coe brought to Broadway.

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[182] Paddy Chayefsky, "Consider the Case of the TV Writer," *Variety*, July 29, 1953, 35. In the same forum, Foote's plays were also singled out by Sumner Locke Elliott and Robert Alan Aurthur.

Fast forward about six years, and the broadcasting industry's perspective on "A Trip to Bountiful" and the kind of television drama it exemplified had shifted considerably. In a September 1958 interview with Fred Coe published in the *New York Times*, dramas like "A Trip to Bountiful" were cast as the epitome of a more primitive era of television, one that, thanks to bigger and better soundstages, new technology and more know-how, the industry had long since superseded. This earlier, now outmoded television had come to be known within the industry as "closet drama"—because of its "limited physical scope," the journalist made sure to clarify.[183] In a think-piece published in *Variety* a few years later, NBC President Robert Sarnoff fleshed out that definition, explaining that the "closet" label referred not only to the small, "restricted" scale of the sets on which the dramas were shot, but also to the "intimate" scale of their storytelling. With the lavish budgets, new studios and film and video technology now available, Sarnoff concluded, such an "interior" approach to drama was no longer needed.[184]

I begin with this sketch of "A Trip to Bountiful" and its changing status within the television industry because I think it captures two different ways of evaluating magnitude and quality articulated in industry discourse in the 1950s. The first one, exemplified by Chayefsky's comments, holds that a television play has stature or, to use industry parlance, "size" if it provokes an intense emotional response from those who watch it. The second one, encapsulated by the term "closet drama," makes production values and space the main determinants of a program's worth. In this chapter, I examine how these two different ways of thinking magnitude informed strategies for ameliorating television and women in the 1950.

Building on the previous chapter, where I examined network efforts, particularly that of NBC, to present programs for women as the televisual equivalent of the *Ladies' Home Journal*

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[183] John P. Shanley, "Fred Coe—Pioneer's Viewpoint," *New York Times*, September 14, 1958, X15.
[184] Robert W. Sarnoff, "Spare Me Your Saw," *Variety*, July 27, 1960, 34, 52.

and other "class" women's service magazines, here I look at the industry's efforts to cast certain programs as a television equivalent of "general" culture—that is, mass-mediated culture that was designed to appeal to women, but not to women only.[185] I begin by detailing some of the cultural anxieties that informed this project through a discussion of a conceptual figure that I am calling the "out-classed wife." From there I trace the broadcasting industry's efforts to help this figure "mature," to expand her understanding and knowledge of the world so that it was on par with her husband's. Borrowing industry rhetoric, I label the first of these efforts at magnifying homemakers and their media the "women are people" strategy. The second strategy, which will be the focus of this chapter, might be thought of as the "people are women" approach. I unpack it through a discussion of "A Trip to Bountiful" and other examples of what *Television Playhouse* producer Fred Coe termed "microscopic theatre." My concluding sections discuss the devaluing and increasing feminization of these TV dramas in the second half of the decade, as "microscopic theatre" becomes the "little picture," the "snapshot" and finally, the "closet drama."

For TV historians, my decision to include dramas broadcast as part of *Television Playhouse* in the category of egghead television for women might seem like a provocative one. This series is generally classified as an "anthology drama," a category that is distinguished from more feminized televisual forms like the episodic drama (sitcoms) and dramatic serials (soap operas). Associated with male playwrights—Chayefsky, Rod Serling, Reginald Rose—it has been defined in scholarship by the creative autonomy afforded the writer. Whereas writers for an episodic dramatic series like *I Love Lucy* or *Man Against Crime* were forced to contend with a

[185] I discuss this in more detail below, but I use the term "general" because that is how magazines like *Saturday Evening Post* and *Time* described themselves—that is, in contrast to "special" or gender-specific magazines like *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Field & Stream*.

formula for the series that had already been put in place, one that was designed to showcase the talents of a star performer and a sponsor's product, a writer for an anthology series faced no such constraints. "There were no specifications as to mood, characters, plot, style or locale" is how broadcast historian Erik Barnouw has described the "carte-blanche invitation" that *Television Playhouse* made to writers.[186] In what follows, I complicate and historicize the anthology drama's associations with quality and masculinity, attending to the intimate scale of the plays broadcast as part of this series, their extensive engagement with stories of family and romance and their commonalities with women's service magazines.

Magnifying 'Women's World' and the Out-classed Wife

In "The Happy Housewife Heroine," the second chapter of *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan laments the narrow focus of women's service magazines. In effort to make vivid for her readers the limited conceptualization of "women's interests" offered by such texts, Friedan reproduces the table of contents from the July 1960 issue of *McCall's*, framing this one issue as "fairly" representative of the "image" or "world" that women's service magazines in general construct for their readers. Such a world, she goes on to explain is one "of bedroom and kitchen, sex, babies, and home. […] It is crammed full of food, clothing, cosmetics, furniture, and the physical bodies of young women, but where is the world of thought and ideas, the life of the mind and spirit?"[187]

Friedan's characterization of early postwar women's service magazines has had a significant impact on subsequent accounts of gender and American mass-mediated culture in the

[186] Erik Barnouw, *The Image Empire: A History of Broadcasting in the United States, Volume III: From 1953* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 26.
[187] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1963), 34.

1950s, as well as histories of the decades preceding that mid-twentieth century period.[188] It has also been contested, to a considerable degree, by feminist cultural critics and historians. In "Beyond the Feminist Mystique," arguably the most influential reassessment of postwar gender norms, Joanne Meyerowitz depicts Friedan's interpretation as accurate but incomplete. Motherhood and marriage were endorsed by women's service magazines, she argues, but so were positions of paid employment and other forms of "public achievement."[189] Put simply, she finds the "world" of women in such magazines to be larger than Friedan's depiction acknowledges. Meyerowitz's summarizes her take by framing *The Feminine Mystique* as "remarkably rooted" that is, something of a continuation, of the women's world it interprets."[190] "The success of her book," Meyerowitz writes, "stemmed in part from her compelling elaboration of familiar themes."[191] Here I want to extend and echo Meyerowitz by pointing to another continuity between Friedan and postwar women's service culture. Her complaint about women's service culture—that it was too limited in focus, producing a confining world—was itself one of the "familiar themes" that Friedan compellingly elaborated. *The Feminine Mystique* and postwar service culture for women both find women's service culture and its conceptualization of "women's interest" to be lacking.

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[188] Friedan's influence on feminist academics working in the disciplines of history and literary studies has been discussed by both Linda K. Kerber and Joanne Meyerowitz. Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History*, 75:1 (June, 1988): 9 – 39; Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946 – 1958," *Journal of American History*, 79:4 (March, 1993): 1455 – 1482.
[189] Meyerowitz, 1458. Other influential rereadings of Friedan and her sources include Daniel Horowitz, "Rethinking Betty Friedan and the Feminine Mystique: Labor Union Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America," *American Quarterly*, 48:1 (March, 1996): 1-42; Eva Moskowitz, "'It's Good to Blow Your Top': Women's Magazines and a Discourse of Discontent, 1945-1965," *Journal of Women's History*, 8:3 (Fall, 1996): 66 – 98; Jessica Weiss, "'Fraud of Femininity': Domesticity, Selflessness, and Individualism in Responses to Betty Friedan," in Kathleen G. Donohue, ed., *Liberty and Justice for All? Rethinking Politics in Cold War America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 124 – 53.
[190] Meyerowitz, 1458.
[191] Ibid.

As I discussed at length in Chapter One, producers of network television, particularly those at NBC, held a similarly dismal view of the service culture broadcast on both radio and television in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In language that is remarkably similar to Friedan's, they bemoaned the monotony of such programs and their reduction of women's world to the "inner sancta of kitchen, bedroom, and bath."[192] While, unlike Friedan, their public disparagement did not extend to magazines, they, like Friedan, routinely made the case that the "world" of women constituted by daytime programming needed to be "opened" up, "expanded" or otherwise magnified. And, once again like Friedan, one of the ways in which they made that case was to assert that mass-mediated culture addressed specifically to homemakers needed to have more in common with mass-mediated culture that was generally addressed to them. "Women are people" is how an NBC executive explained this strategy in an interview with *Variety* published in 1955. Recognition of the personhood of female consumers, he goes on to explain, entailed an enlargement of subject matter. In other words, this kind of "pitch to femme audiences" demanded that broadcasters move beyond the "slanted to' em segments" and expand to include "the general" material as well.[193]

As I noted in Chapter One, in the development and promotion of some of these "classier" daytime television programs, some network television producers cast their programs as an instrument for women's amelioration wherein the "mass" female consumer could be transformed into something that better approximated her "class" counterpart. Here I want to further unpack this televisual discourse concerning women's amelioration by situating it in relation to a related,

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[192] Ted Mills, Memo to Charles C. Barry, May 16, Box 397, Folder 43, NBC Papers. This memo is cited in Inger L. Stole, "There Is No Place Like *Home*: NBC's Search for a Daytime Audience, 1954 – 1957," *The Communication Review*, 2:2 (1997): 148. See also Ruddick C. Lawrence, "The Networks' View of Homemaker Shows," *Journal of Practical Home Economics*, October 1952, 15, 46.
[193] *Variety*, October 19, 1955, 22.

but slightly different set of cultural anxieties. In addition to being positioned as the cultural inferior to more affluent, more educated female consumers, this type—the “mass” woman—was also constructed in relation to her husband. One prevalent characterization in postwar middlebrow discourse was that of the out-classed wife, that is, as a woman who, denied the same opportunities for travel and formal education as her husband, fails to keep up with his rate of social and personal advancement and, in a worst case scenario, threatens to impede it and the stability of their marriage.

An early and influential example of this conceptual figure can be found in James A. Michener’s *Tales of the South Pacific*. First published in 1947, and narrated in the first person, Michener’s collection of short stories is framed as an account of the Pacific Ocean theater of World War II, but one that is organized around the larger-than-life personalities who served, rather than in the idiom of military strategy. In fleshing out these men, and a few women, Michener repeatedly ascribes to his American characters a feeling of estrangement from “home.” Importantly, like Michener’s characterization of the war, “home” is here personalized, taking the form of “sweethearts” and mothers who write and expect letters in return. That obligation, in Michener’s telling, becomes increasingly difficult to fulfill as the war continues. In the short story “Fo’ Dolla,” for example, the protagonist, Lieutenant Joe Cable, is identified as a “Princeton man” who maintains a correspondence with a fiancée back home, a “lovely, fair-haired” girl who, rather than being named, is generally referred to as “the Bryn Mawr junior.” Most of the story is an account of Cable’s evolving relationship with Bloody Mary, a Tonkinese woman and jack-of-all-trades, who conducts her business on the island where he is stationed. These events, however, are punctuated by letters that Cable writes to the Bryn Mawr junior—or at least they are until he abruptly ends the correspondence. Michener frames this development as

a consequence of Cable's encounters with Bloody Mary. That relationship, in other words, so changes him that giving an account of himself or his experiences to the girl back home becomes impossible. Cable, Michener writes, "had reached a great impasse in his life. …[N]ever again, as long as he lived, would he write to that girl in Philadelphia."[194]

In subsequent years, the construction of this discursive figure shifts slightly, as the impediments to intimacy and equivalent social class status become less directly tied to the war, and instead framed in relation to formal education and suburban living. In *Apartment for Peggy* (1948), the breach in the relationship between the protagonist (Jeanne Crain) and her husband is portrayed as a crisis born out of the GI Bill. A veteran who is now a college-undergraduate, Peggy's husband (William Holden) has a definite position in the new, dramatically expanding middle-class, but it is less clear where Peggy and other wives-of-students fit into this picture. Similarly, in *A Letter to Three Wives* (1949), each of the title characters is portrayed as a social inferior to her husband, a discrepancy that renders each of their marriages unstable and vulnerable to the threat of their classier friend, the heard-but-never-seen Addie Ross (voiced by Celeste Holm).[195] In the film, the intra-marital estrangement between wife and husband is also given a spatial dimension. Situated in a bedroom community that is a twenty-minute train ride from "the city," the wives are depicted as always in their town and for the most part engaged in community activities with each other, while the husbands are understood as perpetually coming and going and enjoying a wider sphere of acquaintance.

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[194] James A. Michener, *Tales of the South Pacific* (New York: Random House, 1947), 116.

[195] I discuss this more below, but that inferiority has a different basis in each relationship. For Debbie (Jeanne Crain), it concerns her limited frame of reference; she grew up in a "hick" town and is now having to learn the ways of the Country Club set in an unspecified bedroom community, probably on the East Coast. For Lorna Mae (Linda Darnell), inferior standing stems from her Irish ethnicity and her upbringing in a poor family "from the other side of the tracks." And for Rita (Ann Sothern), marital inferiority is about taste; although she and her husband are of the same class background and social circle, their compatibility is now threatened by her willingness to not only write for soap operas, but, even worse, to defend them (!).

In addition to this circulation in fiction, the out-classed wife was also discussed in popular sociological writing aimed at a generalist audience. In *The Lonely Crowd*, first published in 1950, David Riesman describes women living in the suburbs as "psychological prisoners," and suggests that their compromised mobility and their circumscribed choice of companionship would ultimately imperil their marriages.[196] Such women, he writes, are doomed to become "uninteresting," and will therefore fail to "grow and develop at approximately the same rate" as their husbands.[197] In a series of articles published in *Fortune* the following year, William H. Whyte embellishes this portrait, presenting "the outgrown wife" as a familiar figure in American corporate life. The tone of the articles is tongue-in-cheek, but the same cannot be said for the corporate executives that serve as Whyte's sources. Here is how one summarizes this "problem" figure and her trajectory: "I've seen it happen so many times. He marries the kid sweetheart, the girl next door, or a girl from the jerkwater college he went to. They start off with a lot in common—but then he starts going up. Fifteen years later he is a different guy entirely; he dresses differently, talks differently, thinks differently. But she's stayed home—literally and figuratively."[198]

Significantly, in articulating the problem of the out-classed wife, many of the texts in this discourse also recommend themselves as a means by which it can be mitigated. While Joe Cable was not up to the task of explaining the "faraway places" and people he was encountering in the

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[196] While its prose style, use of jargon and initial publisher suggest the contrary, *The Lonely Crowd* was identified by its authors and at least one reviewer as a book that was addressed to a general, rather than expert, reader. Validity for this claim would seem to come in the form of the book's astonishingly successful sales. By 1960, it had sold 1 million copies and Riesman had become a celebrity, in the mold of Alfred Kinsey, appearing on the cover of *Time*. Morroe Berger, "A New Pattern of Sociological Thinking," *New York Herald Tribune*, November 5, 1950, E8. "Freedom—New Style," *Time*, September 27, 1954, 24. On the sales of *The Lonely Crowd*, see Melinda Gormley, "Pulp Science: Education and Communication in the Paperback Book Revolution," *Endeavour*, 40:1 (January 2016): 24 – 37.
[197] David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 332.
[198] William H. Whyte, "The Wives of Management," *Fortune*, October 1951, 209.

South Pacific, the Bryn Mawr junior is not doomed to ignorance and incomprehension. By reading Michener's Pulitzer-prize-winning, Book-of-the-Month Club selection—or seeing its subsequent adaptations as a Broadway musical and Hollywood film—she can gain some idea of what life was like, over there, during those years, and, ideally, catch-up. Similarly, by making time to read articles in a "quality" publication like *Fortune*, a wife cannot only learn about the potential obstacles her husband is likely to face in his rise through corporate middle-management; she can also engage in the kind of activities—learning about the latest sociological studies, contemplating ideas—that will allow her to keep pace with him.[199]

Yet, if leisure activities like reading or even attending plays or movies were cast as a means through which a wife could enlarge her frame of reference and keep up with her husband, that is not to say that all forms of popular culture were recognized as potential instruments for a wife's amelioration. In this discourse, television and radio—but especially radio—are routinely identified as obstacles, not aides, to a wife's ongoing growth. Riesman, for example, in noting the suburban wife's lack of stimulation, points out that, during the day, besides her children, television and radio are her "only companions." *A Letter to Three Wives* is decidedly more hostile and more specific in its criticism. In that film, radio is identified as the source of all strife between Rita (Ann Sothern) and her husband George (Kirk Douglas). Despite their history as childhood sweethearts, Rita's decision to not only write for a radio soap opera, but perhaps worse, defend the decision, opens a new breach in their marriage. A schoolteacher fond of quoting Shakespeare and playing Brahms to his children, George can accept her status as a breadwinner, but not the claim that her sponsor-dominated soap is the "literature of the masses." Their rift is repaired when she stands up to her overbearing bosses, refusing to make their

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[199] *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, both the novel and its adaptations as a magazine serial in *Collier's* and a Hollywood movie, also adhere to this template.

suggested changes, and encourages him to play his classical music records—that is, when she reaffirms his taste hierarchy.[200]

Women are People

Producers working in television and radio took note of these anxieties and the attendant criticisms of their industry. As Chapter One explained, one strategy for framing programs as instruments for the "growth" of women, but more specifically housewives, was to emphasize commonalities with women's service magazines. A different strategy, pursued by those working in both local and national broadcasting, was to enlarge their daytime programs by modeling them on general interest publications.

One of the most explicit examples of this strategy was *Close-Up* (WNBT/NBC, 1950 – 1952), an afternoon program that was initially broadcast on NBC's New York station and later carried by all the network's owned-and-operated stations. Hosted by Jinx Falkenburg and Tex McCrary, *Close-Up* was sponsored in part by Curtis Publications, the print publishing empire that included *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Holiday* among its titles. Each of the program's Wednesday broadcasts was devoted to coverage of the *Saturday Evening Post*, a title that appeared on newsstands that same day. Casting itself as a "living magazine," such broadcasts would open with a close-up of that week's *Post* cover, while Falkenburg and McCrary explained the featured stories of the week and how they would be animated on television in the segments that followed.

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[200] For examples of the routine castigation of soap opera in "quality" magazines in the 1940s, see Katharine Best, "Literature of the Air," *Saturday Review of Literature*, April 20, 1940, 12; "Soap Opera," *Fortune*, March 1946, 119-124, 146-148, 151-152. See, also, Allen's *Speaking of Soap Operas*, which provides a detailed and rich analysis of these criticisms. Robert C. Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 8 – 29. And, in order to appreciate an additional irony and dimension to the film's tirade against radio, see Jacob Smith, "Tearing Speech to Pieces: Voice Technologies of the 1940s," *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 2:2 (2008): 183 – 206.

Less than two years after *Close-Up* went on air, NBC introduced *Today*, a vastly more successful and more ambitious variation of the same idea. Indeed, in its early days, NBC's "walking, talking newspaper" drew on many of the same techniques as the producers of McCrary and Falkenburg's program, staking its claim to "news" on its remediation of print news sources.[201] The program's first broadcast included images of multiple newspapers that had been flown in overnight, from across the country to be there in time for the program's 7am start. Such programs expanded the world of daytime television by their foregrounding of "hard" news, that is, elements of print publications that were unlikely to be found on the woman's pages.[202]

In casting their shows as "general interest" programs, producers of daytime television were no doubt also drawing from the information that general interest weekly magazines made available about their sales and readership. Throughout the early postwar era, general weeklies promoted themselves as ideal advertising venues for corporations looking to reach women, especially more affluent women. One major advertising campaign of this sort was adopted by *Time* and entitled "What in the World Interests Women?" Each of the ads published as part of this campaign offered the same answer: "Practically everything and so almost as many women as men are reading TIME!" Central to this campaign was the claim that women read all sections of the magazine—not just the usual suspects—so each ad also included a breakdown of the magazine's many departments, complete with their "average ratios of women readers to men."[203]

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[201] The phrase "walking, talking newspaper" comes from an early ad for the program. "NBC Television," *Broadcasting*Telecasting*, January 7, 1952, 68.

[202] In the case of *Today*, this expansion was also given a spatial dimension, in that the subjects discussed were presented as emanating from different parts of the country and the world. "This is not a program from New York, to you, some place, if you don't live in New York," is how Garroway puts it in that premiere broadcast as he stands in front of a wall full of newspapers from different cities across the country. "This is a program from America, to America."

[203] See, for example, "What in the world interests women?" *New Yorker*, June 17, 1947, 78 – 79; "What in the world interests women?" *New Yorker*, July 5, 1947, 48 – 49; "What in the world interests women?" *New Yorker*, June 19, 1948, 46 – 47; "Are women different from men when it comes to buying magazines?" *New Yorker*, October 8, 1955, 86 – 87. For other examples of ads from this same campaign,

Programs that spotlight their association with and indebtedness to a print original had one major drawback—they raised the question of what exactly was gained by choosing the remediated, rather than original, source. In the wake of *Today*'s initial broadcast, for example, one journalist cast the program as little more than a middle-man, noting that the camera at times caught staff in the background, combing through newspapers for an item to discuss on air.[204] For obvious reasons, television classified as "news" was particularly vulnerable to such complaints—and mockery.[205] In the case of *Today*, NBC addressed the charge of being derivative (and visually under-stimulating) by de-emphasizing its print connection, spotlighting "gadgets" and incorporating elements of variety. Musical performances were a routine feature on the show (and already a part of daytime shows like *Kate Smith*), as were fashion shows.[206] Such strategies for "enlivening" general news, however, required significant resources and could not be reproduced by network programs on more constrained budgets. In the next section I explore how producers of network drama were employing a different strategy for magnifying the world of their viewers, men and women both.

People are Women

At the conclusion of the 1952-1953 broadcasting season, *Variety* ran a fawning profile of Fred Coe on its front page. *Television Playhouse*, the journalist explained, had finished the

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see "Who has the final say in buying – husband or wife?" *New Yorker*, May 25, 1956, 65; "Why more people <u>take home</u> the Post than any other general weekly magazine," *New Yorker*, September 24, 1955, 62; "Who buys the most single copies of magazines – men or women?" *New Yorker*, February 25, 1956, 95.

[204] "'Today's' Face Reddish As Hungry Camera Picks Up Some Unexpected Items," *Variety*, January 30, 1952.

[205] An April 1952 satirical cartoon published in the *New York Herald Tribune* gives a sense of television's initially precarious hold on this program category. It depicts a man watching television as he holds his daily newspaper. The newspaper's headline contains the same information as the "breaking news" that the man on his television screen is announcing.

[206] Spigel, *Make Room for TV*, 81 – 82.

season with a string of plays so successful in their execution that "in the general trade opinion [the series] has forged far ahead of its competitors." Akin to a victory lap, the article provided Coe with the opportunity to explain why recent broadcasts like Horton Foote's "A Trip to Bountiful" and "A Young Lady of Property," or Paddy Chayefsky's "Marty" were such good theater, that is, what distinguished them from other dramas then being shown on television. Coe's response was as follows:

> [This is] television is microscopic theatre in terms of detailed analysis, with every character functioning in terms of one another. Plot is secondary. Character is very important, and the relationship of one character to another is important. We want to say something, but not a big, broad message.[207]

Later in the same profile, Coe elaborates, explaining that a play like *A Trip to Bountiful* is microscopic not just in the sense that the scale of its presentation and analysis is small, but also in that its storytelling magnifies seemingly insignificant or mundane personal interactions to the point that their complexity and intensity can be felt by viewers. "Our plays deal with people," Coe is quoted as saying, "the hearts, minds, and souls of people. We want to get close to the 30,000,000 people who are our viewers, and we do that through an intimacy in story, not through closeups."[208]

In identifying the *Television Playhouse* drama as microscopic theatre, Coe gave a name to a characterization of the series that was already being put forward by critics in their reviews of individual plays. In her review of "A Young Lady of Property," for example, *Washington Post* critic Sonia Stein raved about the broadcast, particularly, Kim Stanley's "beautiful, incandescent, alive" performance, but also emphasized the limitations of the medium for which it was made.[209] "The medium is flat and colorless," Stein writes, "it does not envelop the audience as a large

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[207] "Playwrights Now Find TV Drama Better Outlet, Creative, Coin-Wise," *Variety*, June 10, 1953, 1.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Sonia Stein, "Strong Young Lady Scores Solid Hit in a TV Drama," *Washington Post*, April 9, 1953, 37.

motion picture screen can do, the play is limited in length, interrupted with commercials and subject to extraneous living room interruptions."[210] Part of Horton Foote's achievement, she goes on to explain, is that his play uses those constraints to its advantage. "He has a talent for writing dramatic material expressly for the television medium. His scenes are small, his casts are small, the plots are simple. By comparison, his actors are large and their emotions almost overwhelming."[211]

Reviews such as Stein's shed light on some of the difficulties encountered by Coe, Foote and others working to produce theater for television in the late 1940s and early 1950s. While this era of television production is now commonly characterized as "the golden age of television drama," during the period itself, producers like Coe had to contest the perception that plays written for the "small screen" were by definition worse than those written for the Broadway stage (or the "large motion picture screen"). They also sought to "elevate" the class connotations (and feminize) a medium that was then associated with baseball, wrestling and tavern-viewing.[212] In its earliest seasons (1947 – 1952), the series established high-profile partnerships with the

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[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] As discussed in Chapter 1, in the late 1940s and into the early 1950s, the broadcasting industry perceived "lower-income" groups as those who were most interested in television and therefore the most-likely to become consumers. That said, they were not the industry's preferred consumer group; there was worry that if television antennas became too associated with "undesirable neighborhoods," more affluent consumers would be put off. The solution the industry seems to have worked out is a promotion strategy that presented television as a means through which the less-affluent could become more like their "superiors" in income and education. For examples of television's masculine and lower-income connotations in the late 1940s, see these *New Yorker* cartoons: "Hot Dogs," *New Yorker*, May 5, 1948, 64; "General Store," *New Yorker*, May 22, 1948, c. For industry discussion of its "hot-dog audience," see Joseph M. Guilfoyle, "Television Hucksters: Advertisers Go After Video's New Mass 'Hot Dog Audience,'" *Wall Street Journal*, October 22, 1948, 1; Wayne Oliver, "Lower Income Groups Best Television Prospects," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 7, 1948, 15B. And for reference to drama as a means to change television's class connotations, see "NBC's 'Come Away From That Swinging Door' Tele Bid Via 6 Guild Airers," *Variety*, October 8, 1947, 27; Mike Mashon, "NBC, J. Walter Thompson, and the Struggle for Control of Television Programming, 1946-58," in *NBC: America's Network*, ed. Michele Hilmes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 135 – 152. And on the gender and class connotations of television spectatorship in the tavern, see Anna McCarthy, *Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 29 – 62.

Theater Guild and the Book-of-the-Month Club, casting itself as a venue for adaptations of plays and books that had already been vetted by these respected cultural institutions.[213]

While those collaborations were relatively short-lived, lasting for not more than a season each, their efforts to align the series with literariness and the legitimate theater was maintained throughout subsequent seasons via the program's title art. A slide shown at the start of each broadcast in the series includes a mask for tragedy and a mask for comedy, symbols associated with Greek theater. The next slide in this opening sequence depicts a book cover on which the title for that week's play and the name of its playwright are written. Through such imagery, the producers of *Television Playhouse* seem to suggest that the viewing of the following play would be an aesthetic experience analogous to the reading of a good book or a night out at a Broadway theater.

Such efforts to magnify television drama, that is, to contest its reputation for "small-ness" by associating it with respected cultural producers working in other industries, were more or less ineffectual.[214] It is only in the end of the series's 1952-1953 season, in the wake of a string of broadcasts that began with "A Trip to Bountiful," "A Young Lady of Property" and "Marty," that the scale of the medium was re-conceptualized as a creative opportunity, rather than a promise of inferiority. Pivotal to this reevaluation of television drama was a concurrent discourse circulating in Broadway theater criticism about realism. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, plays

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[213] For newspaper discourse on *Television Playhouse*'s early collaboration with the Theater Guild, see Jack Gould, "The News of Radio," *New York Times*, October 7, 1947; Wayne Oliver, "Stage Plays Expected to Fill Television Role," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 7, 1948, 15B. On the program's tie-ins with the Book-of-the-Month Club, see "Inside Television," *Variety*, June 22, 1949, 28; "Philco 'Stable' Assures Scripts; TV Seen Rivaling Coast on Story Bids," *Variety*, May 17, 1950, 27; Philip Hamburger, "Television," *New Yorker*, July 1, 1950, 53.

[214] See, for example, statements made by Sylvester "Pat" Weaver to the trade press at the tale end of 1950, in which he indicates that drama is one of the most aesthetically impoverished categories of television. Bob Stahl, "'Pat' Weaver Sees Tele Networks Moving Into Black Ink Era in '51," *Variety*, December 27, 1950, 21; Harold Brown, "Television Today," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 31, 1950, D5.

such as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Picnic, The Member of the Wedding,* and *Come Back, Little Sheeba* were ascribed a quasi-ethnographic value, with New York-based theater critics hailing them for the vividness and accuracy with which they portrayed life in New Orleans (*Streetcar*), St. Louis (*Sheeba*), Kansas (*Picnic*), Georgia (*Wedding*), or other far-flung parts of the US (that is, far-flung in the eyes of these critics). Importantly, what these playwrights were credited with achieving—thanks to their "sensitivity" and "perception"—was an evocation of place in terms of characters and relationships. Labeled as "mood pieces," or "character studies," these plays were praised as vehicles through which theatergoers could come to know the "typical" ways of thinking, feeling and relating that obtained in a different part of America.[215]

In this discursive context, television's "small-ness" was reinterpreted as an affordance. Foote, Chayefsky, Coe and others working in television drama framed the small sets, abbreviated running-time and small casts as ideally suited to the character study or mood piece format that was then so critically venerated and financially successful on Broadway. For example, in "Marty," the "small" play is a love story between a lower-middle-class butcher (Rod Steiger) living in the Bronx and a blue-stocking type girl Clara (Nancy Marchand) that he meets in a crowded dance hall. Written in an Italian-American idiom specific to that part of New York, the play concerns relatively mundane events. The big source of suspense concerns whether Marty will be dissuaded by his friends from calling Clara for another date—they think she is a "dog"—or trust his own judgment and continue the courtship.

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[215] See, for example, Brooks Atkinson, "Streetcar Tragedy: Mr. Williams' Report on Life in New Orleans," *New York Times*, December 14, 1947, X3; Howard Barnes, "A Long-Run Trolley," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 4, 1947, 25; "'A Streetcar Named Desire': A Play by Tennessee Williams," *New York Herald Tribune*, November 30, 1947, C1; Brooks Atkinson, "Three People," *New York Times*, January 15, 1950; Harvey Breit, "Behind the Wedding," *New York Times*, January 1, 1950; "Picnic," *Variety*, February 25, 1953, 1956; Harold Clurman, *Lies Like Truth: Theatre Reviews and Essays* (New York: MacMillan, 1958), 59 – 64, 72 – 80.

Television playwrights argued that the "intimate nature" of television drama, the fact that it was seen by people in their homes rather than in a Broadway theater, both demanded and justified a focus on "ordinary" people navigating "mundane" situations, that is, ways of thinking, feeling and relating that were even more typical than what could be experienced by attending a performance of *Streetcar* or *Picnic*.[216] What resulted were plays that were "small in scope but profound in terms of the audience's recognition"—or at least this is what practitioners like Chayefsky claimed and what many television critics affirmed.[217]

In making such statements, Coe, Foote, Chayefsky and others involved in the discursive revaluation of television drama as microscopic theatre were drawing on, perhaps unwittingly, a strategy that television manufacturers had deployed years earlier in advertisements for television consoles. Confronted with the marketing challenge of the console's small screen, manufacturers emphasized the fidelity of their receivers's sound and pictures, suggesting that the resulting viewing experience exceeded what one might expect from a reproduction, approaching instead the dimensions of direct, on-site viewing. For example, a 1948 ad entitled "How <u>wide</u> is Broadway?" depicts two actors performing a scene from *Angel Street* before an RCA camera. Below this scene of recording is on one side a drawing of Broadway, ablaze in lights and traffic, and on the other a man and woman in their home, watching a miniaturized version of the same *Angel Street* scene on their own RCA set.[218] The implication is that, thanks to the picture quality

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[216] See, for example, Horton Foote, "Consider the Case of the TV Writer," *Variety*, July 29, 1953, 35; Paddy Chayefsky, "Good Theatre in Television," in *How to Write for Television*, ed. William I. Kaufman (New York: Hastings House, 1955), 44 – 48.
[217] Paddy Chayefsky, "Consider the Case of the TV Writer," 40. For examples of reviews reaffirming this statement, see Jack Gould's review of *Marty*, "Television in Review," *New York Times*, May 27, 1953, 43; Val Adams's review of *Expectant Relations*, "Television in Review," June 24, 1953, 35; *Variety*'s review of *The Big Deal* and *Death of the Old Man*, "Tele Follow-Up Comment," *Variety*, July 22, 1953, 31; *Variety*'s review of *Ernie Barger is 50*, "Tele Follow-Up Comment," *Variety*, August 12, 1953, 24.
[218] "How <u>wide</u> is 'Broadway'?", *New Yorker*, July 3, 1948, 33 (emphasis in the original).

of RCA's monitor, this well-dressed white man and woman can get as good a viewing experience at home as they can inside the theater itself.

In the microscopic theater discourse, fidelity is similarly cast as a means of magnification, only in this context the tools or instruments that achieve that high-quality reproduction are not a picture tube, but instead the people involved in the play's production.[219] In reviews and related promotion, it is playwrights and actors who are especially singled out, with both groups credited for an "intelligence," "sensitivity," and "perception" that allows them to see the depth and complexity in seemingly humdrum relationships and interactions and, just as importantly, to bring all those conflicts and feelings to life in their writing and acting.[220] What resulted was a play that, despite focusing on "everyday occurrences", rather than the kind of "extraordinary incidents" one finds in a play by Tennessee Williams, all the same provoked an intense emotional response in viewers, one that was purportedly comparable to that of viewing *A Streetcar Named Desire*.[221] Such intense feelings of recognition are at one point summarized by Chayefsky as taking the form of increased self-knowledge. The goal of microscopic theater, he explained, was to provoke the exclamation, "My God, that is just like me."[222]

People are Women the World Over

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[219] The phrase "keen-eyed camera" comes from that RCA ad. "How wide is 'Broadway'?" *Broadcasting*Telecasting*, August 9, 1948, 100.
[220] See, for example, reviews of "Bountiful," "A Young Lady of Property," "Marty," "The Big Deal," "Expectant Relations," "Tears of My Sister," "Death of the Old Man," "The Gift of Cotton Mather."
[221] The person who most extensively and emphatically argued this view is Paddy Chayefsky. See Chayefsky, "Good Theater in Television"; Paddy Chayefsky, *The Collected Works of Paddy Chayefsky: The Television Plays* (New York: Applause Books, 1994),
[222] Chayefsky, *The Collected Works of Paddy Chayefsky: The Television Plays*, 185. For similar comments, e.g., the purpose of television drama is "show the audience some fresh meaning to some part of their lives," Chayefsky, "Good Theatre in Television," 46.

In their laudatory reviews of plays written by Horton Foote, Paddy Chayefsky, JP Miller, Robert Alan Aurthur, Tad Mosel, Sumner Locke Elliot and others associated with Coe and *Television Playhouse*, critics favored the words "sensitive," "perceptive," "fragile," "intelligent," "character," "detail," "nuance," "delicate," "introspective," and "tender." As that language perhaps indicates, the success of the microscopic theater iteration of television drama came with some risks for the men who were credited with creating it. Sensitivity and perception regarding the details and nuances in everyday human interactions are, to borrow Charlotte Brunsdon's widely reproduced term, "feminine competencies."[223] To be even more specific, given that Brunsdon coined this term via an analysis of a soap opera, we might say that in addition to being gendered, such expertise also has a class inflection; it is women who have less money and less formal education who are thought to be its best practitioners. On the one hand, these men were hailed for their fluency in the idiom of the personal. On the other hand, the gender and class connotations of that fluency were incriminating and threatened to undermine the value or stature of the work that resulted from it. Put simply, if these men were dramatizing mundane or ordinary events in such a way that they provoked intense feelings of recognition on the part of viewers, then what exactly differentiated their work from that much maligned cultural category – the soap opera? To say the same thing slightly differently, what, in effect, distinguishes general culture like *Picnic* from popular culture associated with lower-income, low-on-formal-education housewives?

The instability of microscopic theater's claim to stature is perhaps best exemplified by the nose-dive that Horton Foote's reputation as a television dramatist takes. While two of the

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[223] Charlotte Brunsdon, "'Crossroads': Notes on Soap Opera," *Screen* 22:4 (December 1981): 32 – 37. With regard to this concept's applicability to the early postwar era, it seems relevant that these same terms were also applied to Kim Stanley, Lillian Gish, Eva Marie Saint, Kim Hunter and other actresses credited with creating the "intense" impact of microscopic theater.

first plays he wrote for *Playhouse*, "A Trip to Bountiful" and "A Young Lady of Property," were held up as exemplars of what television drama should be, critics were less enthused about some of his subsequent plays and soon began to accuse him of repeating himself. Every play, they lamented, was about neurotic women in Texas, heavy on mood, but offering little else.[224] Foote's aesthetic commitments—the fact that he set each of his plays in the same fictional Texan town and often wrote stories that centered on relationships between women—were seemingly too reminiscent of defining attributes of daytime dramatic serials—female-dominated narratives and the continued elaboration of the same diegetic world.

Perhaps in effort to deflect or contest the associations with soap opera, other *Television Playhouse* writers and producers leaned on machine imagery to explain their writing process and the effect their writing produced. Chayefsky, for example, wrote in the commentary to a published collection of his television plays, "I tried to write the dialogue as if it had been wire-tapped. I tried to envision the scenes as if a camera had been focused upon the unsuspecting characters and had caught them in an untouched moment of life."[225] Much like Coe's likening of playwrights to microscopes, such comments aligned the *Television Playhouse* dramas with objectivity, science and documentation. In other words, the precision and vividness of their writing was less a matter of feminized skills such as keen listening, empathy or thoughtful interpretation of interpersonal encounters, and instead comparable to investigative journalism or detective work.[226]

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[224] See, for example, *Variety*'s reviews of Foote's "Tears of My Sister," and "The Midnight Caller." "Tele Follow-Up Comment," *Variety*, August 19, 1953, 29; "Television Followup Comment," *Variety*, December 16, 1953, 30.
[225] Chayefsky, *The Collected Works of Paddy Chayefsky: The Television Plays*, 183.
[226] In her analysis of 1950s Hollywood melodrama, Jackie Byars notes a similar dynamic at work in the film industry. She argues that social problem films organized around male protagonists (and their problems) temper the genre's inherent melodrama with "realism," in that they cast "society" as "unpleasant, but scientifically manageable," as opposed to the "irrational forces" view articulated in their

Similarly, promotional statements for *Television Playhouse* defined the series in terms of regional and ethnic diversity, suggesting an ethnographic value akin to Broadway "mood pieces" like *Picnic* or *The Member of the Wedding*. Here's how this thinking went: While one dramatist's plays might be solely devoted to the exploration of a small town in East Texas (Foote) or a borough in New York City (Chayefsky), the work of all the *Playhouse* dramatists, when taken together, gave some sense of the different styles of living that obtained in different parts of America. The goal of the program, as one *Variety* article put it, is that "real people are revealed to the audience." And just as importantly, those "real people" are not all of the same ethnicity or region, but rather "of Jewish, Italian, and southern backgrounds," as well as other communities that "tend to have strong family roots."[227]

Ironically, in adopting these two strategies for disassociating the series from one kind of women's culture (soap opera), *Television Playhouse* was aligning itself with another—the women's service magazine. That is, in foregrounding regional and ethnic diversity and casting their ongoing exploration of American styles of living and relating as a journalistic endeavor, Coe's dramatic series defined itself in much the same terms as *Ladies' Home Journal*'s well-known and long-running non-fiction series, "How America Lives." Initiated in February 1940, "How America Lives" cast itself as "continued story" of America, with one installment per issue, and each structured as a portrait of a single family. In a retrospective account of the series, Bruce Gould and Beatrice Blackmar Gould, the *Journal*'s editors, emphasized their interest in capturing the diversity of American styles of living, a diversity that was defined, at least in part, by geography. "Each month we would tell about an actual family, their necessities and struggles,"

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women's weepie counterparts. Jackie Byars, *All that Hollywood Allows: Rereading Gender in 1950s Melodrama* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 83 – 85.

[227]"Playwrights Now Find TV Drama Better Outlet, Creative, Coin-Wise," 59.

the Goulds wrote, "the drama of daily living set out on the stage of our pages. In a year's time we could by carefully choosing our families reveal a tapestry of American life—small town, city, farm; poor-to-rich; California-to-Maine-to-Alabama."[228]

Despite its decades-long run and its focus on familial relations—two attributes it shared with soap opera—"How America Lives" was spared the kind of negative press that attended soap opera and instead applauded for expanding its readers' frames of reference. That said, it is worth attending to how this expansion was in fact enacted, both in the magazine series and the dramatic anthology program that in practice (if not necessarily in design) emulated it.[229] As the *Journal*'s editors announced in the first installment of "How America Lives," the magazine conceived of the American family as "the heart of American democracy" and as the instrument "that makes American democracy work."[230] In its inaugural appearance, that heart is exemplified by the Griffins, "a [white] family of four—parents in their middle thirties, two children, income around $2000." As the article narrates, the magazine's editors began with a vision of what the ideal-typical American democratic heart would be—"not rich, not poor, in the center of this country…would own their own home, but would have to be careful about dime and quarters, would be in love, would be sacrificing for their children's education" and then searched throughout Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to find a group of people that best matched that description. Each subsequent installment of the series effectively followed the same protocol, beginning with

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[228] Bruce Gould and Beatrice Blackmar Gould, *American Story* (New York: Harpers & Row, 1968), 203.
[229] To be clear, I am not claiming that Coe, Foote, Chayefsky or anyone else involved in the production of *Television Playhouse* was consciously using "How America Lives" as a template. That said, there is some evidence that the long-running, high-profile magazine series was the inspiration for a short-lived television series that was produced by NBC's Chicago station and broadcast throughout its network in 1949. Entitled *Portrait of America*, the TV series was over-seen by Ted Cott, who went on to serve as executive producer for NBC's *Home*. For more on *Portrait of America*, see Barbara Wilinsky, "Before the networks reinvented the family: Chicago television's *Portrait of America*," *Quarterly Review of Film & Video*, 16:3-4 (1999): 271 – 287.
[230] "Elected…to represent 6 million American families," *Ladies' Home Journal*, February 1940, 48.

this same definition of the family and then seeking out variations on that theme—with "variation" defined, over time, in a variety of metrics, including, but not limited to, region, family-size, age, wealth, religion, ethnicity and race.[231] Put simply, while the series aimed to show the scope and breadth of America, it organized the thousands of people it reported on in terms of the definition of "family" that it already possessed and believed that its readers shared.

The at times absurd dimensions of this approach to interpreting and reporting family life are perhaps best captured by international variants of "How America Lives" that the *Ladies' Home Journal* ran in 1948-1949. The first installment, which featured photographs by Robert Capa and text by John Steinbeck, focused on "day-to-day life" in Russia and included a photo of a "Stalingrad housewife," who, according to the text, was representative of Russian women's impressive ability to not only "survive and triumph" in cities that had been decimated during the war, but also "to remain feminine."[232] Dedicated to the purpose of demonstrating that "Russians are People, too," as an editor's note explains, the article implicitly defines personhood in terms of religious conviction, self-reliance, dedication to one's children—that is in much the same terms that it defined the Griffins of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. It concludes by casting Russian women as less fortunate and affluent than the *Journal* reader, but striving to achieve the same goals as any American housewife: "Their hopes are not foreign to us. They want to raise fine children and to educate them. They want to live a better and more comfortable life. They work incredibly hard to that end."[233]

[231] This language of "variation" is informed by Lynn Spigel's discussion of the urban ethnic working-class sitcom, an iteration of the family sitcom defined by George Lipsitz. Lynn Spigel, "Domestic Space to Outer Space: The 1960s Fantastic Family Sitcom," in *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 118. See also George Lipsitz, "The Meaning of Memory: Family, Class, and Ethnicity in Early Network Television Programs," *Cultural Anthropology* 1:4 (November 1986): 355 – 387.
[232] John Steinbeck, "Women and Children in the U.S.S.R.," *Ladies' Home Journal*, February 1948, 45.
[233] Ibid., 58.

The "universal" (or at least planet-wide) applicability of this particular way of thinking personhood and the familial is even more starkly stated in a photo-essay series that grew out of the Russia feature. Entitled "People are People the World Over," the series opens with the following explanatory note: "In the past few months the *Journal*, like a magazine on Mars, has sent photographers to inquire into the lives of families the world over."[234] What they found, via reporting on twelve families, each cast as representative of a part of the world (aka planet Earth), is that "deviations," aside, "life on the familiar level of the hearth and home continues with the constancy of the tides."[235] Similar to the "domestication" of space travel that Lynn Spigel finds in general weekly magazines like *Life* about a decade later, journalistic features such as these went in pursuit of the unknown and unfamiliar—whether it was found in Akron, Ohio, Russia, or "Equatorial Africa,"—only to make it less strange, by organizing it according to the conventions of the white, Christian, American, middle-class family.[236] Or, to say the same thing in slightly different terms, they set out to prove that "people are pretty much people, no matter where you find them."[237]

Addressed to a woman who wants to read about family, but in such a way that she learns more about the world while doing so, series like "How America Lives" and "People are People the World Over" might be thought of as the woman-specific equivalent of the world-tour photo

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[234] John Godfrey Morris, "People Are People the World Over," *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1948, 43.
[235] The political-geographical regions used to define the twelve families are mostly, but not exclusively, nation-states. The first installment identifies these twelve families by name and lists their homes as Japan, China, Pakistan, Egypt, Equatorial Africa, Czechoslovakia, Italy, France, United States, England, Mexico and the American zone of Germany. Each installment in the twelve-part series also features a color illustration of a globe, with arrows pointing out where each of these different homes is located. That imagery, of course, reinforces the underlying argument that political/geographic differences aside, these families belong to the same world. Ibid., 42 – 43. For another example of that same globe imagery and its association with women as world homemakers, see "What in the World Interests Women?" *New Yorker*, July 5, 1947, 48 – 49. This ad depicts one woman loading a globe onto another's back.
[236] Spigel, "Domestic Space to Outer Space," 120 – 121. The exact phrase that Spigel uses is "domestic explanations for space travel."
[237] John Godfrey Morris, 43.

essays routinely published in general weeklies like *Life* and *Look*.[238] This woman was similarly targeted by "family" or general programs like *Television Playhouse*. The key-difference, though in the general culture context—whether it is exemplified by a television drama or a weekly news magazine--is that she is imagined as one facet of a larger totality that includes others, like her husband and children. This generally feminine address—to her, but not to her only—is perhaps best captured by *Television Playhouse*'s commercials. Sponsored by a rubber company (Goodyear) and a home appliances company (Philco), the plays broadcast as part of *Television Playhouse* featured announcements for specific consumer items (e.g., the latest, best refrigerator) as well as institutional ads that extolled the sponsoring corporation's virtues in more general terms. Both categories of ads were directed at promoting consumerism—another feminine expertise—but the idiom in which they made their pitches was one of science, machinery and experimentation. These pitches are designed to appeal to women (and men) who, in addition to caring about how things look, want to be told how they work.

An ad from *Television Playhouse*'s 1952-1953 season serves as a particularly spectacular example of this hard-hatted approach to persuasion. The spot opens with the display of a couch cushion being repeatedly pummeled by a large-scale machine that the announcer introduces as "The Ironman." The Ironman, we are told, is exacting on this couch cushion more wear and tear than it would normally be forced to withstand in a lifetime. Post-beating, the cushion emerges unscathed—thanks to Airfoam, a Goodyear product that is used by all the best furniture manufacturers. After explaining how Airfoam works—its special particles—the ad concludes

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[238] It seems telling, for instance, that when Museum of Modern Art mounted "The Family of Man" exhibition a few years later, those who disparaged the exhibit compared it to *Life*, not *Ladies' Home Journal*, despite its obvious similarities with "People are People the World Over," in terms of thematic organization, intent and reliance on Capa and other Magnum photographers. For an example of one of these world tour features, see "Report by Adlai Stevenson," *Look*, May 19, 1953, 29 – 35.

with a scene of a well-dressed, white woman shopping in a furniture store with her husband. She inspects the cushions carefully, having been primed by Goodyear, and notes the sign for Airfoam that the store has mounted near its entrance, taking this as further evidence of the couch's quality. In commercials such as this, the virtues of the sponsor's product are explained in terms of conventionally feminine concerns—the fear that your furniture will look worn or shabby—but the explanation for how those desirable effects are achieved is articulated in terms of "science," technology and heavy-duty machinery. Other ads in the series similarly "open-up" the practice of consumerism, taking their viewers to a factory in Brazil or in Akron, Ohio, places that document the world-wide dimensions of local, familial practices like buying a new couch or set of tires.[239] Indeed, every broadcast in the series, whether it is sponsored by Philco or Goodyear, begins with an image of a globe and a male voice intoning that the sponsoring corporation's products are the best, not just in America, but in "the world over."

Conclusion

In July 1953, *Variety* announced that the Theater Guild, in partnership with Fred Coe, would produce a stage version of "A Trip to Bountiful" that it intended to bring to Broadway in the fall. Noting that Chayefsky's script for "Marty" had also been acquired by "an independent film company" (Hecht-Lancaster's production company), the article frames "A Trip to Bountiful" as the first of many instances in which television drama would be expanded through its remediation in other industries.[240] While "A Trip to Bountiful" was ultimately a commercial

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[239] This reading of the representation of the company's factory spaces is informed by Anna McCarthy's discussion of institutional advertising in *Citizen Machine*. Anna McCarthy, *Citizen Machine: Governing by Television in 1950s America* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 31 – 83. Regarding institutional advertising, see also William L. Bird Jr., *Better Living: Advertising, Media, and the New Vocabulary of Business Leadership, 1935 – 1955* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1999).
[240] "Coe's 1-Big-Show-Biz Future," *Variety*, July 29, 1953, 27.

disappointment for its Broadway producers (in addition to being a critical success for Lillian Gish), *Marty*'s adaptation to film was vastly more successful, resulting in festival screenings at Cannes and Karlovy Vary, as well as Academy Awards.[241] In an article published just weeks after *Marty*'s win at Cannes in 1955, the *New York Times* took note of the television's industry's new stature. "Drama on television is making giant strides—in its artistry, its diversity, its popularity. Its increasing importance is evidenced in the fact that hardly a week goes by in which one Hollywood studio or another does not buy an original TV play for production."[242] The article goes on to spotlight the *Playhouse* iteration of "Marty" as a "high point in TV drama when it was seen… in May, 1953" and to note that the "full-length version" on film is "even more effective."[243] As the above press discourse indicates, the "expansion" of television plays via adaptation to other media in the mid-1950s had the perhaps unforeseen consequence of diminishing the stature of the form in which they originated.

The *New York Times* review of the film adaptation of *Marty*, published in April 1955, nicely captures this dynamic. Written by Bosley Crowther, the article takes note of the very same qualities in the film that TV columnists had lauded in the television broadcast and other examples of microscopic theater, namely its "sensitive observation" and the feelings of "sympathetic recognition" its "realness" provokes. Yet the review, which bears the headline "The Little Picture," also makes a point of explaining that, those qualities notwithstanding, *Marty* "is not what you'd call a great movie." A "small-scale" film, its virtues are construed by

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[241] On the expansion of "Marty" the television drama via its circulation in other media, see Jon Kraszewski, *The New Entrepreneurs: An Institutional History of Television Anthology Writers* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2010), 92 – 102; Jindriska Blahova, "Political Significance of a Butcher in Love: the 1956 Karlovy Vary international Film Festival, *Marty* (1955) and the Restoration of Contact between Hollywood and Czechoslovakia during the Cold War," *Studies in European Cinema* (November, 2019): 1 – 16.
[242] Seymour Peck, "TV to L.A.: Plays for Sale," *New York Times*, May 15, 1955, SM26.
[243] Ibid.

Crowther as more in the vein of anthropology. By watching it, readers of the *New York Times* can come to understand the "frankly middle-class people" Chayefsky has chosen to write about and "the horribly confining and unstimulating atmosphere in which [they] move[ ]." Crowther concludes by marveling that this insightful social portrait "should come from TV!"[244]

In a review published the following year, theater critic Walter Kerr engages in the same boundary-policing, praising Chayefsky's talents yet making sure to note their decidedly "small-scale" status. Occasioned by the Broadway premiere of *Middle of the Night*, a play based on another of Chayefsky's *Television Playhouse* broadcasts, Kerr's review praises at some length the performance of star Edward G. Robinson. He then notes that the play is "television-writer Paddy Chayefsky's Broadway debut" and laments "the insistent smallness, the tight-range of Mr. Chayefsky's camera." Compressing the microscopic drama even further, he compares Chayefsky's play to the "clutter of snapshots" used in the set's design. Like them, the play is "minute, confined, randomly composed." He concludes by turning *Television Playhouse*'s mechanistic metaphors against the playwright, suggesting that for a stage play to have "size" it can't be "merely accurate," that is, a recording; it requires some interpretation. The implication is that, with regard to television, "merely accurate" is sufficient.

At the same time that plays originally written for *Television Playhouse* were transcending their original television industry context through their recirculation in theater, film and book publishing, NBC and CBS were aggressively pursuing another version of expansion. As Lynn Spigel notes in *TV By Design*, both networks introduced the new program format of spectaculars in their 1954-1955 season. "These productions," Spigel writes, "demanded large stage areas, increased variation in camera set-ups, more mobility of action, rapid art changes, and color-

[244] Bosley Crowther, "The Little Picture," *New York Times*, April 17, 1955, X1.

keyed lighting, all of which required additional studio space."[245] As Spigel goes on to detail, such innovations in programming were soon followed by the construction of expansive new production facilities. Other efforts at magnification in this period took the form of technological innovations, like the use of color and the reliance on mobile production units.[246]

In this new production context, criticisms that were once wielded against specific iterations of the television drama—that they had failed to transcend the cramped, closet-like conditions in which they were produced—were retroactively applied to all dramas of that prior period. As the statements cited by Sarnoff at the outset indicate, television producers were also eager proponents of this view, casting their industry as one that had "evolved" and "matured" beyond the "interior" dramas of the past. From this newly expanded viewpoint, the similarities between "microscopic theater" and soap opera were perhaps even more apparent and incriminating.

One significant consequence of this now-dominant way of thinking magnitude—that it is defined by production values, studio size, and technology—is that interiority became more insistently and explicitly feminized within the industry. In the next chapter I explore how this gendering of interiority informed subsequent network efforts to make specials that were specifically addressed to women.

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[245] Lynn Spigel, *TV by Design: Modern Art and the Rise of Network Television* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 117.
[246] For more on these innovations, see Chapter One, as well as Susan Murray, *Bright Signals: A History of Color Television* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018); Meenasarani Linde Murugan, "Exotic Television: Technology, Empire, and Entertaining Globalism," Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 2015.

CHAPTER THREE

Feeling Trapped

In November 1960, *McCall's* ran an ad for *Purex Specials for Women*, a new NBC daytime television series whose first installment had been broadcast a month earlier. The series was something of a deviation from that network's past practice. Produced by NBC News, it was scheduled during the afternoon, a period associated with soap operas, commercialism and the housewife audience. What's more, as the inclusion of the detergent company sponsor in its title indicates, this product of NBC News highlighted, rather than obscured, the participation of a corporation in its realization. Perhaps because of these departures from industry convention, the ad placed in *McCall's* goes to some trouble to explain what the series is and what, according to the network, it will accomplish. Dominated by a photograph of a white, heterofeminine woman that is accompanied by a column of text, the two-page ad could easily be mistaken for one of the magazine's feature stories. With her pale complexion, straight nose, carefully styled hair and elaborate eye make-up, the model in the photo conforms to the industry's definitions of "classical" beauty and glamour. At the same time, the hunched forward, semi-fetal posture in which she holds her body and the downcast expression of eyes also communicate despondency, perhaps even depression. What, we are meant to wonder, could possibly be amiss in the life of someone so perfect-looking? The accompanying text both answers that question and explains the series's premise and format. Referred to simply as "she," this woman, we are told, is representative of "a great number" of American women. "She is," the copy explains, "the most privileged woman in the world. She can vote, drive a car, speak her mind. She has club memberships, college degrees, and a kitchen full of appliances." Yet, despite all this good fortune, "she" is "in distress." It is this conundrum, the fact that The American Woman can have

every right and every *thing* and yet not, all the same, have the feeling of contentment, that NBC News, via *Purex Specials for Women*, proposes to investigate.

As the copy goes on to explain, the network has put considerable personnel and expertise toward achieving that goal. Some of those resources are exactly what one would expect of a news and public affairs series. The network has deployed "NBC reporter teams" to speak to "psychologists and sociologists thought the country" in order to determine what the major themes of the series should be. Those reporters have also gone to the trouble of interviewing "the people involved," getting the input of men and women who are suffering, as well as audiotaped recordings of their "verbatim remarks." As a result of such preparation, each of the one-hour programs, the ad promises, will be organized around a "subject[ ] of vital importance to women." But other talents enlisted by the network might come as a surprise. In addition to the journalists, experts and ordinary people, each special, the copy explains, will also be the product of playwrights, actors, directors and other experts in television drama. "To protect the individuals" interviewed by the reporter teams, these experts in drama will work from the journalists' research to create and perform a "dramatized case study,"[247] that is, a fictional drama based on the news division's reporting. The result of this innovative collaboration between network drama and network news, the copy implies, are programs that provide viewers with new insights, but also, just as crucially, new feelings. This last point is underlined by the ad's title and photograph. In case readers neglect to read the copy, the network's new, self-appointed role as dispenser of sympathy and counsel to women is indicated by a headline that asks "Who Cares?" and the

[247] This phrase is not actually in the *McCall's* print ad. It was, though, used in a press release distributed by NBC. NBC Television Network News, "'The Cold Woman,' A Dramatized Case-Study of Sexual Frigidity in the U.S., Is First 'Purex Special for Women,' on NBC-TV," *NBC Trade Releases*, September 1960.

answer not-so-subtly pointed to by one of the model's lacquer-tipped fingernails: "NBC Network Television."[248]

Broadcast intermittently throughout the 1960-1961 and 1961-1962 seasons, *Purex Specials for Women* initially aired on NBC in the late weekday afternoon and then, in the summer months, were repeated during the primetime portion of the network's schedule. Six hour-long specials were produced in the first season, five in the second. Framed as a succession of in-depth reports, each special was cast as a "dramatized case study" of a different type of "problem" femininity. In most instances the particular problem under examination is announced by the special's title: "The Cold Woman," "The Trapped Housewife," "The Working Mother," "The Single Woman" were the first four specials broadcast in the series. In another sense, though, this emphasis on discretion and variety was misleading. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that *Purex Specials for Women* was an eleven-part examination of one woman, with each special exploring a different manifestation of the same underlying problem. The condition this white, college-educated, affluent, married, and heterofeminine woman suffered from was a "trapped feeling." This term, which recurs throughout the series, referred to a sense of being stymied or thwarted in the supposedly life-long project of maturity and amelioration. Prepared by a liberal arts education for a "big" future of intellectual challenges, college-educated white women found themselves "trapped" by the small but endless obligations entailed in caring for their husband, children, home and local community. Endlessly called upon to look after others, this frustrated intellectual had little time to develop her own thoughts or interests, that is to "grow" or realize her own individual self. That underlying problem, according to the series,

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[248] "Promotion and Publicity, 1960-61," "Purex Special for Women," Programs, NBC, Series I. Professional Activities, 1931 – 85, Box 13, Folder 10, Pauline Frederick Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.
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was the source of a variety of prevalent “social” problems, such as frigidity, inter-generational fighting, and alcoholism.

In this chapter, I read the dramatized case studies of *Purex Specials for Women* as one facet of the “arty documentary,” a new category of television developed by the networks in their ongoing efforts to appeal to white, married, college-educated women. While examples of this program category had previously been produced and broadcast by NBC, it is only in the early 1960s, in the wake of the quiz scandals, that the networks were able to find corporations willing to sponsor them on a semi-routine basis. The arty documentary, I argue, is defined by its purpose. Generated in the wake of an industry scandal and in the context of ongoing complaints about the inferior quality of industry product, this new category of egghead television for women was designed with a view toward refuting what had become oft-repeated criticisms—that network television was in a “creative rut,” that it had been stymied in what should have been its evolution and inexorable, linear trajectory toward creative maturity. Put simply, network television, much like “the American woman”, was conceptualized in the late 1950s and early 1960s as “trapped.” To reassert its vitality and capacity for “growth,” NBC and CBS, shortly followed by ABC, broadcast a succession of documentary reports in the early 1960s that were promoted as “experimental,” “innovative,” “provocative,” or otherwise boundary-defying. In what follows I focus on the *Purex Specials for Women*, examining how the case for one medium’s need to grow and mature was made through the exploration of another’s.

My reading of the arty television documentary is informed by the groundbreaking research and insightful conclusions of William Boddy and Michael Curtain on television news and public affairs programs in the years directly preceding and following Newton Minow’s famous Vast Wasteland speech of May 1961. As their histories attest, the three major

networks—NBC, CBS and ABC—faced increasing criticism in the late 1950s, culminating in what Boddy refers to as a "public relations crisis," a tarnished reputation that was informed by the quiz scandals but not restricted to it.[249] This crisis entailed charges from both the press and government officials that the networks had abdicated their responsibility to serve the public and, rather than making decisions based on what was best for their viewers, instead made decisions based purely on their private commercial interest of maximizing profit. As Curtin has shown, one response to such charges was that, beginning in their 1961-1962 season, NBC, ABC and CBS dramatically increased their production of news documentary specials and devoted more of their primetime schedule to such programs.[250] Curtin reads this increased output of news specials, particularly news specials relating to foreign policy, in relation to the network's efforts to grow or expand their commercial empires via overseas investments. Drawing on these insights about the industry investment in growth and expansion and putting them in conversation with Susan Murray's excavation of colorcast public affairs programs during the early 1960s, I am looking at a related but slighty different object and making a related, but slightly different claim.[251] In contrast to the news special reports on "hard-hitting" topics that Curtin reads as being addressed to a white, middle-class, male viewer, I focus on documentaries that were praised for their "experimentation" and "creativity," that is, their enlistment of new techniques that, it was assumed, would facilitate an address to an audience of white, affluent, college-educated, married women. Similarly, such innovation was meant to serve as evidence of industry "growth" and

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[249] William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp. 214 – 233.
[250] Michael Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995).
[251] Susan Murray, *Bright Signals: A History of Color Television* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 176 – 216.

"maturity"—not necessarily in the sense of more assets and profit, but instead with regard to the quality of the programs constituting each network's service.

This chapter also intervenes in scholarship examining the white Christian feminine ideal articulated by American network television in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Informed by Elaine Tyler May's reading of the early post-WWII era as a period of domestic containment, that is, as an era in which caring for a home, husband, young children and a local community were cast as the main activities through which a woman could participate in America's global fight against communism, feminist cultural historians such as Mary Beth Haralovich have tracked the role of the television industry, along with other social institutions, in "positioning women as homemakers."[252] Working from the case studies *Father Knows Best* and *Leave it to Beaver*, Haralovich reads a homemaker positioning as both "containing and liberating"; domesticity is both a privilege, in terms of consumer power and financial security, but also a curtailment of the possibilities for individual self-expression. Similarly, in her readings of *Peyton Place, The Avengers* and other 1960s popular culture texts featuring unmarried female characters, Moya Luckett has tracked the circulation of a new conceptual figure – the swinging single girl – and framed her emergence in the early 1960s in relation to feminist texts published by Betty Friedan and Helen Gurley Brown just a few years earlier.[253] Taken together, these influential and informative texts suggest a binaristic, dichotomous organization of the idealized white femininities articulated in the 1950s and 1960s, one in which the static, confined, immobile, suburban, self-sacrificing, married white woman is opposed to a mobile, liberated,

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[252] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); Mary Beth Haralovich, "Sit-coms and Suburbs: Positioning the 1950s Homemaker," in *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*, eds. Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1992), 111 – 41.

[253] Moya Luckett, "Sensuous Women and Single Girls: Reclaiming the Female Body on 1960s Television," in *Swinging Single: Representing Sexuality in the 1960s*, eds. Hilary Radner and Moya Luckett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 277 – 301.

individualistic, unmarried, metropolitan and generally younger white woman who is, at least chronologically, her successor. In a slight departure from this scholarship, I do not read the transition from the late 1950s to early 1960s in progressive terms, that is, as a linear trajectory towards increasing "mobility," with movement signifying freedom. Instead, building on the insights articulated by Meenasarani Linde Murugan in her examination of Dinah Shore's cosmopolitan versatility, I emphasize the idealization of *flexibility* in egghead television programs for women produced and circulated in the late 1950s and early 1960s.[254] Exemplified by Lee Remick, Mary Tyler Moore, Jacqueline Kennedy, Grace Kelly, Aline B. Saarinen and countless other metropolitan, affluent, white, married women, the flexible wife was celebrated for her effortless good taste, unstudied sexiness, intellectual curiosity, and relaxed or easygoing attitude toward domestic responsibilities. Unhampered by the exacting, self-imposed demands for domestic perfection that tormented her vacuuming-in-high-heels counterparts, this new conceptual figure had sufficient time and energy to pursue her own self-realization, a process of self-discovery that included, among other activities, sex with her husband, international travel, direct participation in the paid labor market, art connoisseurship, writing, thinking and watching egghead television programs.

Dramatized Case Studies and other Arty Approaches to Documentary

In July 1960, *Variety* featured statements by Irving Gitlin and Fred Friendly on the front-page of its high-profile "Review-Preview" section. As its name suggests, the "Review-Preview" was a semi-annual feature in which powerful figures in the broadcasting industry offered their assessments of the past season and the one just ahead. The prominent place *Variety* accorded to

[254] Meenasarani Linde Murugan, "Exotic Television: Technology, Empire, and Entertaining Globalism," Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 2015.

Friendly, executive producer of the celebrated public affairs series *CBS Reports*, and Gitlin, the newly appointed head of Creative Projects at NBC News and Public Affairs, was itself a statement about the direction of the coming season. Entitled "When the Chips Are Down," Gitlin's think-piece opened with a lament. The nation, he argued, was in crisis—and, to make matters worse, nobody seemed to be particularly worked up about it. "Whatever happened to Sputnik?" he wrote. "Where has the sense of national concern gone? Those days when defense, education, and the future of the nation were being widely and hysterically discussed have once again receded into the relative calm of business as usual."[255] Echoing then-prevalent criticisms of television as a national tranquilizer, Gitlin pushed his readers to take responsibility for the nation-in-crisis by reflecting on their past failures of judgment and how they might do better in the future. "What can we do—we who presume to talk to the whole nation in the evening? What do we have to say? That all is well? […] Or are we going to exercise national leadership in our own areas, to give people a chance to confront the facts of life? Are we going to give them what they want, or are we going to tell them what they have to know: that we face a world in revolution, that we are in a terrible fix, that we will need new ideas, new approaches, and sacrifice if we are to make it."[256]

While its tone is that of a *cri de coeur*, Gitlin's article was also a concise and direct statement about the network's plans for the upcoming season and what Gitlin expected from his main partners, enumerated as "sponsor, agency, salesman, producer, executive."[257] Those industry participants, the main targets of his address, would most likely have recognized that when he wrote "new ideas," Gitlin meant that NBC News and Public Affairs intended to create

[255] Irving Gitlin, "The Chips are Down," *Variety*, July 27, 1960, 33.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid.

programs that discussed topics commonly labeled "controversial"; similarly, that "new approaches" meant they would be trying out new production formats, ones that were not guaranteed to succeed with audiences, and finally that "sacrifice" was a reference to the lower ratings and, presumably, smaller profits that an increase in news and public affairs program would necessarily entail for network, ad agency and corporate sponsor.

In offering these details, Gitlin provided an introduction to a program category that would achieve new prominence on NBC in the 1960-1961 season, and, shortly afterward, would be taken up by CBS and ABC, and endure throughout the first half of the decade: the arty documentary. While my discussion of this category pays particular attention to the dramatized case studies, also known as "drama-documentaries", broadcast as part of *Purex Specials for Women*, the arty documentary was also exemplified by the specials broadcast as part of *NBC White Paper* (1960 – 1980) and the *World of…* (1961 -1963), as well as the succession of one-off documentary specials organized as a tour, with a public figure serving as both expert and entry point into a subject that might otherwise seem esoteric or uninteresting. "The Tour of the White House with Mrs. John F. Kennedy," broadcast on all three networks is February 1962, was probably the most celebrated example of the "televisual tour" iteration of the arty documentary, but it was not the first. Preceding Jacqueline Kennedy in the role of televisual expert and tour guide were William Holden ("Report on Hong Kong" [1961]) and Janet Flanner ("Paris in the Twenties" [1960]). Despite the diversity of subject matter and production format, the broadcasts that exemplify this category were defined by the same objective—to make television viewers *feel* about public affairs. Controversial subjects and new production techniques were perceived as ideal mechanisms for achieving that goal.

This might seem odd, a network announcing its intentions to make factual programs designed to elicit an emotional response. Gitlin, after all, first publicized this new vision for network public affairs programming at the tail end of the 1959-1960 season, that is, the season in which congressional inquiries into the production practices of another supposedly factual program category – the quiz show – provoked widespread condemnation of the broadcasting industry. As William Boddy has noted, much of that criticism was directed at the practices of "rigging" and "lying."[258] High-profile critics, President Eisenhower included, lambasted the networks and other industry figures for engineering the outcome of contests that were mis-represented to the public as demonstrations of superior intellect and composure under high-stakes, nerve-wracking conditions.[259] Given this context, one might expect the networks to be especially sensitive to charges that they were failing to clearly distinguish between factual programs, that is, those designed to inform and educate, and the rest of their offerings. In fact, one network did have exactly this reaction. As Michael Curtin relates in his history of network news documentaries in the early 1960s, CBS president Frank Stanton responded to the criticisms by publicly disavowing techniques that, in his view, amounted to manipulating or doctoring reality. One result of this policy was that producers of *CBS Reports*, the network's prestigious public affairs series, were prohibited from using "nondiegetic music or sound effects to enhance the visual image."[260]

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[258] William Boddy, "The Seven Dwarfs and the Money Grubbers: The Public Relations Crisis of US Television in the Late 1950s," in *Logics of Television*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 98 – 116.

[259] Ibid.

[260] Curtin, citing Friendly's 1967 memoir, explains that CBS responded to the quiz scandals by introducing a policy that prohibited "manipulations of the sound track," including the practice of "sweetening" audience responses via "[d]ubbed laughter and applause." See Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland*, 238; 302, note 63. Fred W. Friendly, *Due to Circumstances*, 109.

This was not, however, NBC's response. In contrast to CBS's efforts to reassert a clear distinction between information and entertainment, NBC double-downed on the "enlightenment through exposure" program philosophy first introduced by Sylvester "Pat" Weaver roughly a decade earlier. In other words, the network reaffirmed its commitment to making programs that, it argued, would accomplish the dual objective of entertaining and informing. The differences in those responses in some ways speak to their respective reputations and the different challenges each network faced in light of the same public relations crisis. Long defined by its celebrated news division in general and its association with Edward R. Murrow in particular, CBS seems to have interpreted the scandal and the public criticism as significant threats to its reputation for quality and integrity.[261] Policies such as the prohibition against "manipulative" sound design in public affairs programs were therefore directed at regaining public trust. In contrast, NBC seems to have been most interested in addressing charges of complacency and materialism. Rather than promising to put its manipulative techniques to rest, the network effectively responded to critics by suggesting that those same skills could be retained and put in service of a greater good: creating an "involved" audience for news and public affairs.[262] "[We have to] rid ourselves of those tired old clichés that it's got to be dull to be good" is how Gitlin put it in his *Variety* article.[263]

If this strategy for achieving public and critical redemption seems reckless, there was some precedent for it. In the second half of its 1959-1960, NBC presented two television plays as part of its prestigious and expensive *Sunday Showcase* series that it promoted as both

[261] See, for example, a January 1952 CBS ad that ran in *Fortune*. Entitled "Ambassador to Television," the ad extolls the talents of Edward R. Murrow.
[262] The "involved audience" is Gitlin's term. I discuss it in more detail below. For examples of his use of it, see John Crosby, "Gitlin Lucky Man," *Boston Globe*, May 1, 1960, 48.
[263] Gitlin, 33.

"dramatizations" of "factual content" and as "drama-documentaries" : "The Margaret Bourke-White Story" and "The Sacco-Vanzetti Story." The kind of programs that might now be encapsulated by the phrase "based on a true life story," both television plays were fictional treatments of events from the recent past. In the same period, the network broadcast "The Living End" as part of *Wide World 60*, a short-lived public affairs series introduced in the wake of the quiz scandal. A program about the everyday life of senior citizens, "The Living End" was billed as a "dramatized documentary." Like other dramas, the program was scripted and acted. The difference was that, according to the network, writer-producer George Lefferts had generated his script only after consulting the mountain of research on old age that NBC News and Public Affairs had amassed for him. Significantly, critics did not respond to these broadcasts by castigating the network for further muddying the distinction between the factual and the fictional; instead, each was praised as an "innovative," moving and truthful—if not necessarily objective—treatment of a subject of significance, one that more conventional methods would likely have rendered as uninteresting or otherwise unappealing to viewers.[264]

In the lead up to the 1960-1961 season, NBC framed its upcoming public affairs programs as a continuation of those past successes. Putting particular emphasis on the popular and critical reception of "The Sacco-Vanzetti Story", network executives said that, going forward, NBC would eschew the "dull" approach and instead design public affairs programs that took "recognition of the deeper emotional needs of people."[265] Explicating this policy in his own

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[264] Cecil Smith, "NBC Project Relives Sacco-Vanzetti Case," *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 1960, L3; Lawrence Laurent, "Playwright Rose Takes on Sacco-Vanzetti Case," *Washington Post*, May 29, 1960, G3; Marie Torre, "Television Review," *New York Herald Tribune*, June 4, 1960, 9; Cecil Smith, "Public Asked for This Rerun Show," *Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 1960, A10; "Tele Follow-Up Comment," *Variety*, April 13, 1960, 31.

[265] "Dull" is the term Gitlin consistently uses to disparage the conventional approach to public affairs, that is, programs that seek to simply inform, rather than inform *and involve* viewers. See, for example, Gitlin, "The Chips are Down,"; Marie Torre, "Soap Opera Giving Way To 'Adult, Daring' Fare," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 23, 1960, 23. Advocacy for programs that combine "serious ideas and plain human

contribution to *Variety*'s 1960 "Review-Preview", David Levy, an NBC Vice President, made the case for programs that "seek out not only heads [that is, ratings] but hearts, minds, and souls."[266] It was Irving Gitlin, though, who was the most high-profile advocate of the "emotional" approach to public affairs. In an interview with syndicated TV columnist John Crosby that was published just weeks before Gitlin's new position as head of Creative Projects at NBC News and Public Affairs was announced, Gitlin identified "involvement" as the viewer response his past programs had been designed to provoke.[267] Good public affairs programs, he argued, were "constructed in such a fashion that an audience can relate to them and get something from them."[268] Seven months later, speaking at an industry forum entitled "The Quality Look in TV, and the Men Behind It," Gitlin reasserted this view, albeit in somewhat more apocalyptic tones. "We live in a crazy age of abstractions," he is quoted as saying. "Part of [TV's] responsibility is to *relate* these abstractions to us (personally) or we're going to be in trouble."[269]

While the creation of an "involved audience" for public affairs was presented as an objective that had obvious merit, the question of how best to achieve that goal was depicted in less strident terms. What methods were most likely to provoke "involvement" was a matter of

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emotions" was articulated by Stockton Helffrich. See Helffrich, "Please, A Little More Emotion," *Variety*, July 27, 1960, 34.

[266] David Levy, "Launching Pad Ready, The Countdown Is On," *Variety*, July 27, 1960, 37.

[267] Gitlin was speaking to Crosby in his capacity as the executive producer for the CBS public affairs series *Woman!* , *Twentieth Century* and *Conquest*. In the interview he asserted that, in addition to winning critical approval, these series had succeeded in provoking "involvement" in their viewers and that the provocation of involvement required a particular skill-set. Here's the quote in full: "Most people who talk about audiences don't understand that audience and audience involvement are two different things. Audience involvement requires a producer who is quite a different animal from a producer who just attracts an audience. That different animal is not a song-and-dance man or a showman but a reporter who is an artist of insight. Escapism just doesn't work as a motivation for these programs." Gitlin quoted in John Crosby, "Gitlin Lucky Man," *Boston Globe*, May 1, 1960, 48.

[268] Ibid.

[269] Gitlin's remarks were quoted in a *Variety* report on the forum. Art Woodstone, "Shoe's on the Other TV Foot in Client Vs. CBS 'Image' Appraisal," *Variety*, December 21, 1960,19. Emphasis in the original. See also "Endorsement for Public Affairs," *Broadcasting*, December 19, 1960, 39.

ongoing investigation. To that end, the network consistently aligned itself with "experimentation," explaining that its public affairs programs would make use of "new techniques," "innovative techniques," "experimental forms." Among those most consistently endorsed were the use of a "human focus"; the incorporation of "expressive" music and other "modern" art forms likely to elicit an emotional response; and the exploration of "topics that are unusual but relate to daily experience."[270] Exemplified by "Report on Hong Kong," a public affairs documentary filmed on location in Hong Kong and narrated by William Holden and by "Story of a Family," a documentary that purported to "recap the story of the country by concentrating on episodes in the life [of] an American family," the "human focus" technique was defined by Gitlin as a "method for building structure" and for attracting an audience.[271] "In doing [public affairs shows that involve the audience]," he is quoted as telling one interviewer, "you must start out with a human center—an individual or group of individuals through whom you can tell the story."[272] In that same interview, Gitlin acknowledges that the advantage of having a celebrity like Holden in the role of "human center" is that audiences were more likely to watch. "We'll use Holden shamelessly to popularize the show but once we get the audience, it's up to us to instruct and inform."[273] Documentaries broadcast as part of *NBC White Paper* as well as *The World Of…* series were among the most high-profile and critically lauded network programs that made use of these "innovative" techniques in the early 1960s.[274]

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[270] "New Status for Serious Programmers," *Broadcasting*, September 12, 1960, 28.
[271] This description of *The Story of a Family* is provided in the trade publication *Broadcasting*. "Big Swing to Information Shows," *Broadcasting*, September 12, 1960, 29. Gitlin's explication of the need for a "human focus" in public affairs documentaries comes from his interview with Crosby. John Crosby, "Gitlin Lucky Man," *Boston Globe*, May 1, 1960, 48.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Ibid.
[274] See for example, "Panama Danger Zone," the third documentary in *NBC White Paper*. Filmed on location in Panama, the broadcast includes footage of a performance by a local (and unidentified) musician. The extent to which this use of musical performance deviated from conventional news documentary practice is attested to in one reviewer's comments. After praising the use of "calypso

The *Purex Specials for Women* amounted to the most ambitious and extensive of these efforts to create, via ongoing experimentation, a new, more "artistic" kind of television documentary. Beginning with its premiere, "The Cold Woman", a study of frigidity that NBC first broadcast on a Friday afternoon in October 1960, the series defied many of the norms and conventions used to organize and make sense of network television. Its format was not a drama or a documentary, but rather a dramatization of documentary material. Not a series or a one-time only broadcast, *Purex* was instead a succession of erratically scheduled reports on the same subject—women. While often referred to in the press as "daytime television," each special in the series, following its initial broadcast in the afternoon, was shown again, months later, during primetime. Despite being initially promoted as reports expressly designed to appeal to women in particular, the specials were later billed as being "significant to men" as well. Cast as the brain-child of Irving Gitlin and funded by Creative Projects, the division of NBC News and Public Affairs that Gitlin oversaw, the series consisted of broadcasts that were written and produced by George Lefferts, a veteran of network television drama. Conceived and promoted as an educational alternative to the so-called "soapers" that defined daytime television, the series was funded by Purex, the corporation behind Sweetheart Soaps, Beads o' Bleach and other hand soaps and detergents, and, despite being cast as "intellectual" in approach, it treated seemingly sensationalist topics like frigidity, promiscuity, and adultery. While past program offerings had posed a challenge to one or another of the industry's rules and distinctions, *Purex* was anomalous in that it failed to abide by *any* of them.

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singers" as "novel," the critic for *Variety* all the same suggested that such "faces and voices…seemed alien to this serious presentation." "White Paper," *Variety*, February 22, 1961, 36.

Described by Executive Producer Donald Hyatt as a series of "in-depth closeups of famous living personalities, presented against the background of the respective 'worlds' within which they achieved eminence," *The World Of…* included documentaries organized around Bob Hope, Billy Graham, Jacqueline Kennedy, Sophia Loren, Jimmy Doolittle. Donald B. Hyatt, "NBC-TV Special Projects Division Loaded With Assorted 1961 Entries—From Dietrich to Lincoln Memorial," *Variety*, August 24, 1960, 29.

Given these deviations from industry logic and expectation, it is perhaps unsurprising that in the view of some critics the series soared past "innovative" and "groundbreaking," landing squarely in the realm of "incoherent." While certain specials—e.g., the ones devoted to frigidity and promiscuity—were especially popular with reviewers, one common complaint made about the *Purex Specials for Women* is that it was neither fish nor fowl. In their reviews of individual specials, critics—the vast majority of whom were male—lauded the series as ambitious, but also suggested that in trying to both create exciting drama and provide information and analysis about a pressing social concern, the series failed to fully deliver as either education or entertainment. The more sympathetic suggested that the "gimmicks" of documentary "elevated" what would otherwise be run-of-the-mill daytime fare, making it more interesting, if not entirely successful in achieving its lofty goals.[275] The more antagonistic accused the producers of pretension; in addition to all the standard failings of soap opera, they argued, the series had the added disadvantage of pretending to be something better.[276]

And yet, despite making little or no sense to many in the industry, the *Purex Specials for Women* had an internal logic. In fact, perhaps because they deviated so wildly from industry-wide convention, Lefferts and the others involved directly in *Purex*'s production were remarkably faithful to the conventions they established for the series. Chief among these was the format. Each special opened with the presentation of a problem cast as a matter of urgent concern to women in particular and, by extension, to society as a whole. The person charged with stating and explaining that problem was Pauline Frederick, the network's United Nations news analyst and, perhaps more importantly, the only female news commentator employed by

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[275] See, for example, "Mother & Daughter," *Variety*, March 15, 1961, 50.
[276] See, for example, "The Single Woman (Purex Specials for Women)," *Variety*, February 15, 1961, 38; Morrie Ryskind, "Mawkish New TV 'Documentaries' Recall Old Days of Soap Opera," *Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 1961, B5.

NBC full-time.[277] Frederick's statement of the problem was followed by a dramatization of the problem. That is, a television play written by George Lefferts that was purportedly based on one of many case studies amassed during an extensive period of research and reporting. Dramatization of the problem was followed by a discussion segment in which Frederick interviewed a guest designated as an expert, usually someone with a degree in the human or social sciences. Interspersed throughout this 60-minute program were four commercials for Purex products.

Another attribute held in common by all of the specials was the kind of topic selected for discussion. In each instance, the subject was framed as pushing the boundaries of what constituted an acceptable topic of discussion for a family medium *and* as being reflective of the latest findings and insights of scientific researchers. While this might suggest that the series was "racy," it must be noted that the majority of these "incendiary" subjects did not conform to most people's definition of titillating. For example, the last special in the first season, entitled "Change of Life," was an "investigation" of menopause. The majority of the broadcast was structured as a one-woman play, with Sylvia Sidney performing the role of a woman who, in her late forties, experiences her loss of the ability to reproduce as a sign that she is no longer valued by her husband, her family or by society in general. Via commentary provided by Lena Levine, a psychologist and sexologist who had recently published a book on menopause, the discussion portion of the special attacked the idea that women's worth be reduced to their ability to

[277] A routine contributor to *Meet the Press* and *Today*, Frederick would also have been familiar to television viewers from the commentary she provided during the network's special coverage of the UN, an especially newsworthy subject during the late 1950s and early 1960s. She was also the only women employed by NBC News and Public Affairs as a full-time, on-camera news analyst. There's a great NBC ad that gives a sense of how exceptional this status was. The ad is titled "60 REASONS WHY MORE AMERICANS FOLLOW THE NEWS ON NBC THAN ON ANY OTHER NETWORKS' and it includes photos of each of those "reasons." The people depicted include those who work behind and in front of the camera. It is 59 men and Pauline Frederick. See *Broadcasting*, May 8, 1961, 38 – 39.

procreate. While these statements and the manner in which they were articulated were unquestionably "off-the-beaten-path" for public affairs television, it is all the same a far cry from the "sexy" treatment of menopause that Paddy Chayefsky had famously proposed in the course of his public complaints about industry censorship.[278]

The specials were also remarkably consistent with regard to aesthetics. Each special was taped in color and, presumably for budget reasons, recorded on the same set. Described by more than one reviewer as "stark," the set design was meant to evoke associations with contemporary theater, particularly *Death of a Salesman* and other productions designed by Jo Mielziner. To that end, the domestic interiors that serve as the setting for the vast majority of the specials are organized into the expected subcomponents—kitchen, bedroom, living room—and filled with recognizable props like beds, telephones, armoires, sofas, bookshelves, but those spaces, instead of being subdivided by actual walls, are differentiated by isolated beams indicating where a wall *should* be. What results looks less like the interior of a particular single-family suburban home or unmarried woman's metropolitan apartment and more like a theatrical representation of such places.

In commentary published alongside a collection of the series's television plays, Lefferts described the thinking behind this aesthetic as part of his commitment to represent the "essence of reality" : "We are not striving for realism. The walls, like the people, should be solid and yet capable of turning transparent so we can see their inner workings."[279] In keeping with that aim,

[278] In his appearance with other television writers on a 1958 episode of *Open End*, Paddy Chayefsky explained that he no longer wanted to work in the medium because the ideas he was interested in writing about were not considered appropriate for television. One example he gave was, in the words of Jack Gould, "about a woman who relieved her anxiety over menopause by carrying on a flirtation with one of her son's friends." This comment seems to have made a big impression on George Lefferts. In his discussion of *Purex Specials for Women*, he repeatedly invokes "Change of Life" as evidence that the industry is again "growing" and that writers are no longer constrained by taboos.
[279] George Lefferts, *Special for Women* (New York: Avon, 1962), xxi.

much of the camera work and sound design were conceived with the objective of representing interiority, or the "inner" world of thoughts and feelings. Experimenting with a technique that network promotional materials label as a "parallel" soundtrack, the dramatic portions of the specials sometimes demanded that the viewer make sense of two different and competing conversations being articulated all at once.[280] One conversation corresponded to the present—the scene unfolding on the set and before the camera—while the other was meant to capture a future consultation between the female protagonist and a psychoanalyst or social worker. Through the questions posed by this masculine-voiced expert, who is heard but never seen, the subject of the case study explains what she had been thinking and feeling while the events of the "present" drama unfolded. Such emphasis on interiority is reinforced by the camera work for the series. An extreme close-up of the face of the female protagonist is the signature shot of the series, the one that the directors consistently incorporate. In some specials, high-contrast lighting and dramatic face and eye make-up are also employed, design choices that help denaturalize the woman being depicted so that she looks less like the neighbor from the house next door (or in the soap opera broadcast an hour earlier) and more like an abstraction. In their most theatricalized iteration, these images of pale, stylized female faces—enormous eyes, nose, lips filling an otherwise empty frame—look like excerpts from a surrealist film.

In his public commentary on the series, Lefferts explained that these thematic and aesthetic choices, along with his decision to "integrate" other arts into the specials, including poetry, dance, and music, were all guided by the same objective—to "heighten[ ] the emotional impact of the program's message."[281] In his view, that emotional response, what others affiliated with NBC called "involvement" was what the standard or "bloodless type" of television

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[280] Ibid.
[281] George Lefferts, "Video Bids Fair to Mend Her Ways," August 15, 1961, A6.

documentary was so woefully lacking. "Everyone in television steers clear of emotion," he is quoted as saying in one 1962 interview. "I think this is wrong. We have tried to present the attitudes and emotions as well as the facts. Here we try to capture the essence of reality."[282] In a guest-column that ran in the *Los Angeles Times* in the summer between *Purex*'s first and second seasons, he offers one of his most extensive and lucid explications of what he hoped such emotionalism and artistry would accomplish. "Television needs to develop its own counterpart of the artistic documentary filmmakers such as Robert Flaherty and Jean Renoir. They were not striving for objectivity or photographic realism. Like fine painters, they tried to impart the essence of the subject with artistry and feeling." It is only after the industry gets over its "fear of being too 'arty'" and embraces "experimentation," "originality" and "individual artistry" that "the medium will once again be on its way toward [its] unique maturity."[283]

The Completed Society and the Trapped Housewife

In September 1959, William Lippmann used his nationally syndicated newspaper column to warn readers about the dangers of American complacency. Writing in the middle of Nikita Khrushchev's 13-day visit to the United States, Lippman praised the ambition and purposefulness of the USSR—qualities that, in his view, had once characterized American culture and society but were now no longer in evidence. In contrast to its remarkable past, present-day America was plagued by a "critical weakness," one that Khrushchev and the Soviets had thus far been adept at exploiting. This "critical weakness," Lippmann explained, "is that for the time being our people do not have great purposes which they are united in wanting to achieve. The public mood of the country is defensive, to hold on and to conserve, not to push

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[282] John Crosby, "TV Women's Shows Lark for Producer," *Boston Globe*, April 29, 1962, A6.
[283] Lefferts, "Video Bids Fair to Mend Her Ways, A6.

forward and to create. We talk about ourselves these days as if were a completed society, one which has achieved its purposes, and has no further great business to transact."[284]

In the months following the column's publication, the phrase "completed society" was widely reproduced and journalists and politicians voiced similar concerns about American stagnation. An editorial in the *Washington Post*, after noting the U.S.'s "second-best position in certain aspects of defense," went on to suggest that the competitive threat now posed by "the prowess of Soviet science, and the dedication of Soviet education, ought to be strong antidotes to complacency."[285] Similarly, an article bearing the headline, "State of the Nations: Khrushchev's Goals–and Ours," the *Christian Science Monitor* cast the United States as a victim of its own misplaced priorities; preoccupied with "'consolidating' past reforms and digesting its ponderous prosperity," America, unlike the USSR, had failed to do the intellectual work of developing a strategy for the near and long-term future.[286] Other reverberations of the "completed society" complaint extended beyond the isolated editorial or opinion article. Days after Lippmann's column was first published, the Republican National Committee announced that, with President Eisenhower's blessing, it had formed a subcommittee dedicated to determining the "party's philosophy" and that, among other objectives, this statement would provide a party-specific response to the concerns raised by Lippmann in his column.[287] And, a few months later, when the Council on Foreign Relations decried the absence of long-term strategic planning in American foreign policy and the "signs of a self-centered and shortsighted complacency in the

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[284] Walter Lippmann, "The Confrontation," *New York Herald Tribune*, September 17, 1959, 20.
[285] "The Pitfalls of 'Peace,'" *Washington Post*, October 6, 1959, A18.
[286] William H. Stringer, "State of the Nations: Khrushchev's Goals—and Ours," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 22, 1959, 1.
[287] Edward T. Folliard, "GOP Seeks Philosophy Restatement," *Washington Post*, September 26, 1959, A9.

national mood" in a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, those findings were considered frontpage news.[288]

It was through a collaboration between the photojournalism magazine *Life* and the *New York Times* that the completed society complaint achieved a considerably higher profile and wider circulation. Beginning in late May 1960, both of these national publications devoted significant space to a series of articles entitled "The National Purpose."[289] Consisting of think-pieces by Adlai Stevenson, Billy Graham, Archibald MacLeish, David Sarnoff and others designated as opinion leaders, the series opened with a citation of Lippmann's concerns and each piece was cast as an effort to challenge American stagnation by articulating the objectives that the nation still hoped to achieve.

If concerns about American complacency acquired a new intensity and public prominence in the spring of 1960, thanks to *Life* and the *New York Times*, it is important to acknowledge that they had by that point been voiced for some time. The USSR's successful launch of Sputnik, the first world satellite, in October 1957 had instigated a similar wave of commentary and speculation regarding American stagnation.[290] Reporting on the mood in Washington days after the launch, one journalist emphasized that Sputnik was a negligible achievement in terms of weaponry, but nevertheless asserted that this "toy" had succeeding in "br[eaking] the sound barrier of American complacency."[291] A *Life* article of the same period

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[288] E.W. Kenworthy, "Report is Critical of Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, November 25, 1959, 1.
[289] John K. Jessup, "National Purpose: Starte of a Debate," *New York Times*, May 19, 1960, 34.
[290] The report submitted by the Council on Foreign Relations in November 1958 originated in January 1958 and was purportedly initiated by the Senate's interest in determining "the impact which Soviet scientific achievements might have upon our relations with the rest of the world." "Basic Aims of United States Foreign Policy," November 25, 1959, p. V.
[291] Richard L. Strout, "Debate Trails Orbiting Sputnik," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 11, 1957, 5. See also "'Crash Program' Out?" *Christian Science Monitor*, October 11, 1957, 5. These two articles ran side-by-side, under the seven-column headline "Missile Test Step-Up Seen—U.S. Complacency Jolted." For a detailed discussion of the American press's response to Sputnik, see Yanek Mieczkowski,

asserted a more insistent note of alarm. Published under the headline "Arguing the Case for Being Panicky," the *Life* article predicts a near future in which "Russia is going to surpass us in the mathematics and the physical sciences."[292] In seeking to explain this disconcerting turn-of-events, until recently all but unimaginable, the writer pointed to America's misplaced priorities. "[A] nation," he writes, "like an individual, is apt to get the things that it values most. And so we will probably continue to have the world's best TV comedians and baseball players, and in a few years Russia will have the world's best teachers and scientists."[293] Getting back on track and avoiding this nightmare future would entail "fundamental changes in our scale of values and our purposes in life," beginning with a reprioritization of education over a low-tax rate and the attendant consumer purchasing power. "We will have to learn to be more concerned about giving our children a good education than about keeping property taxes low, more concerned about who wins the Nobel prize in physics than about who wins the World Series, more concerned about whether we will live in freedom than about whether we can afford a new car next year."[294]

In the same vein, social scientists and other commentators, particularly those writing about postwar suburban developments and their inhabitants, had long voiced similar concerns, depicting excessive materialism and diminished ambition as postwar America's defining attributes. William H. Whyte, editor of *Fortune*, which, along with sister publications *Life* and *Time*, constituted Henry R. Luce's publishing empire, was one of the most influential proponents of this view. In a series of articles that first appeared in *Fortune* in 1953 and a few years later achieved a far wider and more enduring circulation as part of Whyte's era-defining bestseller,

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Eisenhower's Sputnik Moment: The Race for Space and World Prestige (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2013).

[292] George R. Price, "Arguing the Case for Being Panicky," *Life*, November 18, 1957, 125 - 126, 128.

[293] Ibid.

[294] Ibid.

The Organization Man, Whyte offered a portrait of "the future heads of management" and the newly created suburban developments where these men, along their wives and children, were concentrated. In his rendering, this rising generation of leaders—both the men climbing the corporate ladder and their young, ambitious wives--was so focused on obtaining and maintaining financial security and in getting along well with others that they were failing to develop other, equally necessary attributes, like the imagination, creativity and daring that major accomplishments entailed.[295]

In an essay entitled "The Suburban Sadness" published a few years later, David Riesman built on and reinforced this characterization of the postwar American suburb as a space of affective and intellectual impoverishment. Arguing that "the American scene" in general was now defined by a lack of purpose, "an aimlessness, a pervasive low-keyed unpleasure," Riesman asserted that this problem, while pervasive, was at its worst in the suburbs.[296] Exacerbating this problem was the "withdrawal of the elite," or what we would now call white flight—the fact that more white Americans were choosing "suburban cosiness" and its "trivial and small-scale" concerns (and racial, ethnic and class homogeneity), over urban living, which in Riesman's

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[295] William H. Whyte, Jr., "The Transients," *Fortune*, May 1953, 112 – 117, 221 – 222, 224, 228; William H. Whyte, Jr., "The Transients II: The Future, c/o Park Forest," *Fortune*, June 1953, 126 – 131, 186, 188, 190, 192, 194, 196; William H. Whyte, Jr., "The Transients III: The Outgoing Life," *Fortune*, July 1953, 84 – 88, 156 – 158, 160, 162; William H. Whyte, Jr., "The Transients IV: How the New Suburbia Socializes," *Fortune*, August 1953, 120 – 122, 186, 188 – 190. Some of the ideas articulated in this series, particularly the concept of "rootlessness," were first explored in an article that *Fortune* had published a few years earlier on the relationship between corporations and wives. See William H. Whyte, Jr., "The Corporation and the Wife," *Fortune*, November 1951, 109 – 111, 150, 152, 155 – 156, 158.

[296] David Riesman, "The Suburban Sadness," in William Dobriner, *The Suburban Community* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), 378 – 379. Some of the criticisms about the loss of individuality occasioned by social conformity had been previously articulated by Riesman in *The Lonely Crowd*. Yet, as Riesman notes throughout "The Suburban Sadness," in the years since *The Lonely Crowd*'s initial publication, he had become much less optimistic about the possibilities of individual Americans achieving a less constraining or what he would call "more autonomous" style of conformity. It is implied that the shift from the city to the suburb as the primary dwelling space for the expanding (white) middle-class was one reason for his new, more dismal take on the effects of the American style of social belonging on individual self-expression.

terms, offered greater "culture and opportunity," but also "crime, dirt, and race tensions."[297] What resulted was "a tendency to lose in the suburbs the human differentiations which have made great cities in the past the centers of rapid intellectual and cultural advance. The suburb is like a fraternity house at a small college, in which like-mindedness reverberates upon itself as the potentially various selves within each of us do not get evoked or recognized."[298] This contraction of individual self-expression was, in Riesman's view, particularly striking in the case of the suburb's adult female inhabitants. Adapting his earlier characterization of suburban women as "psychological prisoners," Riesman warned that the "captivity of the housewives" was having detrimental effects on their emotional and intellectual development.[299] This problem, he argued, was particularly acute for white women who were "sensitive or well-educated." Deprived of a "breadth of view and nourishing experience," such women "feel trapped, aware of falling behind their own ideals."[300]

First articulated during a period of relative détente for US-USSR relations, these various critiques of American complacency—the preference for low taxes, consumer pleasures and smaller-scale endeavors over better public education, big-picture thinking and ambitious undertakings—took on a new urgency in May 1960.[301] It was at this time that US-USSR relations dramatically deteriorated: the USSR shot down an American U-2 plane engaged in the act of spying in Soviet air space and, when the Eisenhower administration attempted to cover-up

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[297] Ibid., 381 – 384.
[298] Ibid., 386.
[299] Ibid., 388.
[300] Ibid., 389.
[301] Given the circulation of civil defense training films like *Duck and Cover* throughout the decade, I do not want to overstate the cordiality of U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations before 1960. That said, in the years leading up to Sputnik, fears of a conflict with the Soviet Union were likely tempered within the U.S. by an unshaken confidence in the superiority of the American military and technological prowess. And then, following Sputnik, it seems notable that Khrushchev engaged in a public relations tour, promoting the idea that the Soviet Union wished to be America's competitor, rather than its enemy. It was in fact in response to this very PR message that Lippmann wrote his "completed society" column.

the plane's purpose of espionage, caught the administration in a lie. A source of public embarrassment for the US, the U-2 incident took place just days before the start of the Paris Summit. Scheduled months earlier, this meeting between the United States, the USSR, France and England was intended to be the first stages of talks directed at ending the cold war. Instead, the summit collapsed, Khrushchev rescinded his invitation to Eisenhower to visit the USSR, and the meeting was widely reported on as being an unqualified disaster that had greatly increased the chances of a hot war. "No vision so chilling had thrust itself before the world since Hitler" is how *Life* began its report of the press conference in which Khrushchev ended the summit.[302] Frederick, in her capacity as NBC's UN commentator, cast the months following the summit as a period of non-stop activity at the United Nations, or "[r]eal chaos," to use her exact phrase.[303]

Jointly published in the *New York Times* and *Life* in the wake of these crises, "The National Purpose" series, presumably commissioned, written and prepared for publication months in advance, took on a different cast, with the familiar charges of stagnation, short-sightedness, and excessive materialism reinvented as threats not just to the nation's prestige but instead to its survival. In his contribution to the series, Adlai Stevenson was particularly explicit in making the case for financial sacrifice in the form of higher taxes and more government spending, but also for imagination and ambition. Suggesting that America had, until recently, been indulging in a "cozy nap," Stevenson implied that the collapsed peace talks had provided the necessary wake-up call. "[W]e have had our rest," he writes, "and I sense the stirring of a new vitality, possibly the beginning of…a new concern for the nation's broader purposes."[304] He

[302] "A Fist Shaken in Rage that Shook the World," *Life*, May 30, 1960, 18.
[303] Margaret McManus, "Woman In Top News Beat," *The Sun*, September 25, 1960, SF9.
[304] Adlai Stevenson, "Our Goals: National Purpose Part II, 'Extend our vision… to all mankind,'" *Life*, May 30, 1960, 97, 99.

continues, explaining that this new vitality would entail the very qualities widely considered to be lacking—intellectualism and creativity:

> At home we must ask ourselves again what *quality* of life we want…as citizens of this great republic. Education and the arts are the starting point, for it is only here that the citizens of tomorrow can learn to demand and live a fuller life. […] By education and the arts we mean something more than better school buildings, higher teachers' salaries, and more scholarships for the intelligent. We mean a reorientation of our ideals and tastes, the strenuous stretching of mental and artistic talent, the exaltation of excellence above social approval, and of mental achievement above quick material success. We mean, in short, new standards of respect and reward for intellect and culture.[305]

In this context, longstanding discourses about the television industry and about women shift slightly. With regard to television, the industry's astonishing success had made it an easy target for those who identified excessive materialism as the source of America's new insecurity. In fact, television and other domestic appliances often served as a shorthand for the nation's misplaced priorities. For example, in the *Life* article published in the wake of Sputnik, the author framed scientific achievement in satellite technology and the acquisition of consumer goods as an either/or proposition: "What do we want most? A Cadillac? A color television set? Lower income taxes?—Or to live in freedom?"[306] In the wake of the U-2 incident and the collapse of the Paris Summit meeting, this complaint is reinforced and extended. In addition to hurting viewers at home by encouraging them to value things over ideas, the industry is now accused of misrepresenting America abroad, that is, of highlighting the nation's thriving economy and consumer splendor, but little else. Bemoaning the vision of the nation disseminated abroad via corporate-sponsored television, Stevenson writes as follows:

> The face which we present to the world—especially through our mass circulation media—is the face of the individual or the family as a high consumption unit with minimal social responsibilities—father happily drinking his favorite beer, mother

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[305] Ibid.
[306] George R. Price, "Arguing the Case for Being Panicky," *Life*, November 18, 1957, 128.

> dreamily fondling soft garments newly rinsed in a wonderful new detergent, the children gaily calling from the barbecue pit for a famous sauce for their steak.
> No doubt many of the world's peoples want and mean to get more of this. But it is not *all* they want, and they have to look hard to find the balancing picture of America's wider purposes and to learn that high private consumption Is not our ultimate aim of life, nor our answer to all man's evils and disorders in a time of breathtaking social change.[307]

With regard to women, the discursive shift was decidedly more dramatic. In the years following the end of World War II, mass-circulation magazines, including *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Charm*, *Glamour*, *McCall's*, and *Woman's Home Companion*, but also *Life, Look*, *Fortune* and other national magazines whose address was not gender-specific, routinely published articles on "the working woman," that is, the fact that the number of women in positions of paid employment continued to increase.[308] In this ongoing exploration of what *Life*, in a 1947 article, variously termed "the woman problem" and "the American woman's dilemma," the real subject of interest was not working women in general, but instead the more specific category of white, college-educated women who continued to participate in the paid labor market even after they were married and, even more significantly, after their children were born.[309] Here is how *Life* summarized the "problem" in the text that accompanies its 1947 photo-essay:

> The friendly young lady in the picture above is Miss Gwenyth Jones, 23, secretary to an investment counselor in New York City. […] She would consider marriage quite a

[307] Adlai Stevenson, "Our Goals: National Purpose Part II, 'Extend our vision… to all mankind,'" *Life*, 94.
[308] This is in no way an exhaustive list: "Our Own Young Marrieds," *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1950, 54-55, 232 – 234; "The Older Woman Goes to Work," *Glamour*, February 1952, 128 – 131, 152 – 154; Katharine Hamill, "Working Wife: $96.30 a Week," *Fortune*, April 1953, 158 – 160, 162, 164, 166, 168; "A Purpose for Modern Woman" Dossier, *Woman's Home Companion*, September 1955; Daniel Bell, "The Great Back-to-Work Movement," *Fortune*, July 1956, 90 – 93, 168, 170, 172; Elizabeth Pope, "Is a Working Mother a Threat to the Home?" *McCall's*, July 1955, 29, 70, 72 – 73; Mary Scott Welch, "The Married Woman Goes Back to Work," *Woman's Home Companion*, October 1956, 42 – 43, 101 – 103; "A New Look at the American Woman," *Look*, October 16, 1956, 35 – 54; "The American Woman: Her Achievements and Troubles," *Life*, December 24, 1956. As I note below, *Charm*, a Smith and Street competitor to Conde Nast's *Glamour*, was reinvented during this period, no longer addressing its readers as "business girls" supporting themselves until they got married, but instead treating "working women" as a market that included married women and married women with children. The subject of working and domesticity is explored in this magazine throughout the 1950s.
[309] "American Woman's Dilemma," *Life*, June 16, 1947, 101.

> complete future, and her one big decision would be the choice of a husband. But being a typical young lady of 1947 she has a good degree and a range of interests that make her situation more complicated. She is just as interested in getting married and having children as she would have been a few decades ago. But housework and child care alone no longer seem interesting enough for a lifetime job.[310]

In the multi-part feature story that follows, *Life* presents full-time professional employment and full-time homemaking as respectable, viable options, but also indicates that a middle path between these two extremes was the ideal solution for young, college-educated, white women like Gwenyth. "Miss Jones," we are told, "has… a third choice. It is to combine part-time work with housekeeping while she is young and to use this experience more fully when her children have left home."[311] A "part-time career," the journalist goes on to elaborate, can be initiated as soon as the mother's youngest child is old enough to attend school. "It is usually possible for a housewife, once her children are off to school, to find a few hours a week to begin a program of absorbing work. As her children grow independent, she can give more and more time to her outside interests."[312] Through this middle path, women can fulfill their caretaking responsibilities but also ensure that they will not, later in life, be plagued by "boredom" and "idleness." Such an outcome is portrayed as benefiting the woman in question, but also the various other people in her life. "When she finds really satisfying work to do," the article concludes, "she will discover that she is more interesting to her friends, to her husband and to herself."[313]

In subsequent years, this endorsement of white, college-educated, married women's participation in the paid labor market, both before and after the birth of their children, was made in increasingly strident terms. In August 1950, for example, *Charm* changed its slogan from

[310] Ibid.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Ibid., 110.
[313] Ibid.

"The Magazine for the BG," that is the "business girl," to "the Magazine for the Women Who Work."[314] To make clear that this new slogan signified a new, more inclusive address, the inaugural issue of its rebranding (and new editorship) included first-person essays by *Charm* staff members who wrote about their decision to remain in their jobs after getting married and after their children were born. In December 1956, *Life* returned to the subject of "the woman problem." This time, though, the various viable solutions to the problem were explored in an issue whose cover featured the words "The Working Mother" and a photo of a heterofeminine white woman smiling at the adoring toddler-age daughter who looks up at her. As a first-person essay included in the issue explains, this woman, Jennie Magill, works full-time in the fashion industry, and, in the words of her husband, "Jennie's full-time job is good for her, good for him, good for their children—and good for the budget."[315] One through-line of this press discourse is the assertion that women's participation in the paid labor market was welcomed—provided they maintained their caretaking responsibilities by finding an exceptional "surrogate" to look after their children in the hours they were not in school and, of course, that they made enough money to afford such surrogacy.[316]

It is this generally (if not universally) agreed upon view—that a woman can hire a qualified "replacement" to look after her children and there will be no negative consequences, either for the children or for society —that is called into question in the wake of Sputnik. In this new context, the issues of "bored housewives," domestic monotony and the choice of certain educated, married white mothers to pursue professional employment were recast as new,

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[314] See *Charm*, August 1950, particularly "We Work Too"; "I have a husband a young son"; "I have been married for two years"; "My children depend on me alone."
[315] Jim Magill, "My Wife Works and I like It," *Life*, December 24, 1960, 140 – 141.
[316] The rhetoric of "mother-surrogate" and "mother-substitute" was commonplace in the early postwar era. See, for example, Elizabeth Pope, "Is a Working Mother a Threat to the Home?" *McCall's*, July 1955, 29, 70, 72 – 73.

destabilizing elements in a faltering society, changes whose long-term consequences were at best incompletely understood and at worst threatening the future security of the nation and the "free world." The disinterest in caretaking and the preference for participating in work "outside" the home were now re-interpreted by some commentators as evidence that mothers were under-investing in what should be their primary responsibility—ensuring the growth and maturity of the individual citizens who, taken together, constituted the nation's future. In some instances, failure to enthusiastically embrace this responsibility was portrayed as evidence that there was something wrong with American women.[317] While women were discouraged by some commentators from "shirking" their domestic obligations by working while their children were still young (particularly during the years before their children started school), they were also warned that choosing to be full-time homemakers, yet remaining unhappy or unfulfilled by that choice, was no solution: a mother who was always at home but hated every moment of being there would pose a different, but equally serious, threat to her child's "healthy" development.[318]

It is these twin problems—television's reputational tail-spin and the social threat posed by the "trapped" mother—that corporate-sponsored public affairs series such as *Purex Specials*

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[317] See, for example, Florida Scott-Maxwell, "The Greatness of the Task," *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1958, 61, 166. To get a sense of the shift in the discourse about when and how white, college-educated, married mothers should pursue positions of paid employment, it is instructive to compare a *Ladies' Home Journal* forum that was published in February 1956 with one that was published in November 1958. In both instances, women's work "outside" the home is recognized as a legitimate and viable pursuit, but by the second forum nearly all participants agree that a mother whose children are toddler-age or younger needs to look after them herself—or the consequences will be dire. Similarly, the abrupt end to Helen S. Valentine's tenure as Editor-in-Chief of *Charm* suggests a significant shift in what was considered an acceptable position in the working mother discussion. With regard to the *Journal* forums, see "The Plight of the Young Mother," *Ladies' Home Journal*, February 1956, 60 – 63, 107, 108, 110 – 113; "Should Mothers of Young Children Work," *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1958, 58 – 59, 154 – 156, 158 – 160. For the shift in focus and editorship at *Charm*, see "The Two-Paycheck Marriage: The Experts Talk it Over," *Charm*, September 1958, 130 – 133. Clearly modeled on the *Ladies' Home Journal* forums, this feature was structured as a roundtable discussion between women and "experts" exploring problems relevant to women who work. The feature is framed as the introduction to a year-long series on such problems. That series was never realized and the following month Eleanor Bruce, formerly the magazine's Fashion and Merchandising Editor had succeeded Valentine as Editor-in-Chief.

[318] See, for example, "Should Mothers of Young Children Work," *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1958, 58 – 59, 154 – 156, 158 – 160; "The Gift of Self," *Good Housekeeping*, May 1960, 70 – 71+.

for Women were designed to resolve. In the following section I will explore the solution that this series identified.

The Flexible Wife

At the conclusion of "The Trapped Housewife," the second special in the *Purex* series, Sociologist William C. Dobriner, the expert guest, tells Pauline Frederick that excessively high standards are at the root of the housewife problem. "The problem of the American housewife," Dobriner asserts, "stems largely from her attempt to conform to some 'perfect image.' She is bound to fail in this impossible task, and she feels guilty and inadequate as a result." What's more, the negative feelings generated by her unrealistic expectations won't only be directed at herself. According to Dobriner, "She will often try to blame her failure on her husband, her children, or society."

If this seems like a dismissive or condescending treatment of "trappedness," a topic that had generated a significant amount of discourse by the time "The Trapped Housewife" first aired in November 1960, that is not how the special was received. In an edited collection of the series's television plays that was published in July 1962, George Lefferts claimed that "in terms of audience response," "The Trapped Housewife" was "the most successful of the programs," setting off an "unexpected explosion" of letters and phone calls.[319]

Perhaps just as significant was the response from television critics. It was decidedly more negative. While the first special in the series, "The Cold Woman," was praised in reviews as a "mature" and "sensitive" treatment of a daring but important subject (sexual frigidity), "The Trapped Housewife" was criticized as a less adept combination of drama and reporting. A

[319] Lefferts, *Special for Women*, 49.

"public affairs soap opera" is the label used in *Variety* by a reviewer who complained that Lefferts had made the mistake of choosing the "detergent idiom", thereby "washing out the documentary purpose of his story," and that the housewife-protagonist of the dramatized case study seemed "unduly sorry for herself."[320] More approving but equally revealing was a review that ran in the *Christian Science Monitor*. That paper's critic, Frederick H. Guidry, worried that the "harrowingly well-acted" drama about "a suburban couple struggling to stay above discouragement and weariness" would be too much for housewife-viewers, that its all-too vivid depiction of discontent "might impress the problem on susceptible women who otherwise might be able to cope with their fears."[321]

In his promotion of the series via interviews and commentary, Lefferts implies that this bipolar response—gratitude from at least some viewers and contempt or fears from reviewers—was generated by the dramatization segment of the drama-documentary.[322] That is, what provoked viewers to the point that they felt the need to communicate a response was the same element of the special that troubled critics: the vivid, sympathetic and detailed treatment of one iteration of the "trapped feeling." In the drama, Willie (Phyllis Thaxter), is a twenty-nine-year old, white, college-educated housewife living in Levittown with Mike (Michael Strong), her organization-man husband, and their five-year-old son Johnny and the baby. Willie dreads the moment Mike is picked up by his carpool each morning and taken away to the train station and then the city, leaving her behind to the seemingly endless task of keeping their home and lawn in order, ferrying Johnny to and from school, and fulfilling the demands placed on her by the PTA

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[320] "Purex Special for Women (The Trapped Housewife)," *Variety*, November 16, 1960, 35.
[321] Frederick H. Guidry, "Television," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 12, 1960, 16.
[322] In his April 1962 interview with John Crosby, Lefferts indicates that the discussion and dramatization of "problems" seemed to resonate with viewers then any answers supplied for dealing with them. In other words, being told that someone cared, even if that someone is the National Broadcasting Corporation, was perhaps more important than the advice offered by experts. Crosby, "TV Women's Shows Lark for Producer," A6.

and “the girls”, that is, her suburban neighbors. These diverse, small and uninspiring activities taken all together are more than she can handle. None of it is what she imagined her life would be when she was an English major writing poetry in college. By the end of each day, she’s had no time to think and even less time to write. Feeling that there is no break and no end to her drudgery, she drops her children off at her sister-in-law’s, tries to get some rest and ends up taking too many sleeping pills—perhaps accidentally, it is never really made clear. A fortuitous phone call from Mike results in his discovering what has happened and rushing home to make sure Willie has not seriously harmed herself. The next morning, at his prompting, she articulates in detail her feelings of suffocation and under-stimulation and she enumerates her many responsibilities—none of which she feels are adequately appreciated by him or anyone else. He counters by explaining his own hardships at the office, and his own feelings of being expendable and under-appreciated. Once aired, neither’s grievances are addressed or resolved. The argument is cut off abruptly by their children waking up and demanding their attention. The dramatic portion of the special ends with the house in chaos--Mike asking for help finding his wallet, Johnny demanding her attention, the baby crying—all of which Willie has chosen to ignore. Instead of helping them, she sits down and finishes writing a poem she started in college.

While it registered with critics as overwrought or oppressively dispiriting, “The Trapped Housewife” did actually point to a method for dealing with “the housewife problem.” Articulated in both the drama and the discussion portion of the special, the solution offered was that women should relax their standards and demand less of themselves and their families and communities. In other words, suburban housewives should be able to have time to write poetry or engage in other forms of creative and intellectual self-expression. All that is required is that they say no to some of the demands that are placed on them, whether it is a pile of dirty laundry or a husband

unable to find his keys. It is implied in “The Trapped Housewife,” and also stated explicitly in “The Cold Woman” and “What’s Wrong With Men,” that by adopting a more forgiving attitude toward herself, the wife will be able to feel more love and more passion for her husband.

In addition to offering suggestions to women on how to feel and think differently about themselves and their ways of relating, “The Trapped Housewife” also engaged in media criticism—particularly criticism of television advertising. In other words, the “perfect image” that women were told to relinquish, the image of the glamorous, capable housewife whose home is always spotless and children are always self-sufficient and smiling, is cast as a product of “mass circulation media” in general, and “television commercials” and women’s magazines in particular. This criticism of advertiser-based media as offering an unattainable and unrealistic depiction of domesticity is articulated in the discussion, but also in the drama portion of the special. During that segment there is a sequence in which Willie imagines a “perfect” version of herself. Unlike “real Willie,” who is exhausted and unkempt by the end of the day, “Perfect Willie” is wearing a beautiful evening gown when her husband walks through the door and greets him with a freshly-made martini. With their children nowhere to be seen, Willie and Mike, in this fantasy incarnation, spend the evening in a passionate embrace. The disparity between what such advertising media suggest her life *should* be and what her life actually is, it is implied, makes it all the harder for the trapped housewife to accept her own imperfections, but also the mundane, uninspiring or just plain icky facets of everyday life.

More than one critic remarked on the fact that “The Trapped Housewife”—a television program paid for by commercials for a soap company that featured cheerful, glamorous housewives in spotless homes—identified television advertising as a contributing factor in the

housewife problem.[323] Such criticism was deemed audacious at best, hypocritical at worst. Yet what such readings fail to attend to is that the target of the *Purex Specials for Women* was not advertising in general, but rather the kind of relationship that, it argued, existed between housewives and these advertisements. To that end, the commercials featured in the *Purex Specials for Women* assert a different relationship between viewer and program, one that is in keeping with the media criticism articulated in "The Trapped Housewife." Exemplified by the slogan "You'll find the woman's touch in every Purex product," each commercial asserts that the defining attributes of Sweetheart Soap, Beads o' Bleach, Dutch Cleanser and the various other hand soaps and detergents are all derived from the corporation's vigorous efforts to speak with housewives and solicit their feedback. In the case of Purex and the *Purex Specials for Women*, it is not a corporation telling women what to think and feel, but instead women telling a corporation how to best be of service to them.

Conclusion

In addition to drawing on critiques of America's excessive commercialism that were circulating in publications like *Life* and the *New York Times*, "The Trapped Housewife" was also informed by a related but slightly different discourse concerning American women and materialism. Exemplified by Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *Gift From the Sea*, a bestseller published in 1955, texts in this discourse were similarly critical of white, middle-class, American suburbia and the styles of living with which it was associated. However, while sociologists like

[323] "Purex Special for Women," *Variety*, November 16, 1960, 35; Guidry, "Television, 16. Earlier the same year, CBS had broadcast a documentary special, *The Fabulous Fifties*, that also included criticism (this time of a satiric sort) of television commercials. For an analysis of that satire, see Lynn Spigel, "Back to the Drawing Board: Graphic Design and the Visual Environment of Television at Midcentury," *Cinema Journal* 55:4 (2016): 41, 50 – 51.

Riesman construed the "aimlessness" or purposelessness of affluent, college-educated, white suburban women as a direct result of their intellectual and emotional impoverishment, Lindbergh put forward a somewhat different interpretation of the same problem. In her view, what such women suffered from was not a dearth of intellectual and emotional stimulation but in fact the opposite. Called upon to think, feel and do too much by a social context that had taken on "planetal" proportions, "rumbling and erupting in ever-widening circles around us," American women had used up all their emotional and intellectual resources.[324] Borrowing from William James, she diagnoses the resulting problem as "Zerrissenheit—torn-to-pieces-hood."[325] Pulled in too many directions by their various obligations, women were now denied the necessary time and space to engage in spiritual contemplation. Such a lifestyle is, in her words, "out of grace."[326]

Gift from the Sea was clearly a source of inspiration for Lefferts. In the dramatic portion of the "The Trapped Housewife," Willie explains to Mike that she suffers from "torn-apart-hood," and that "William James has one of those ugly German words for it. *Zerrissenheit*." Strikingly, though, in adapting Lindbergh's interpretation of American women's problem, Lefferts also secularizes it. In the view of Lindbergh, the solution to the problem of distraction and fragmentation is that women say no to the many demands placed on their time and attention—including, or maybe especially, those they find intellectually stimulating. Such small-scale refusals are supposed to ensure that women retain the necessary time for reflection, and thereby remain sufficiently "nourished" spiritually to be capable of facilitating others. In the

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[324] Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *Gift from the Sea* (New York: Pantheon, 1955), 125.
[325] Ibid., 56.
[326] Ibid., 24. The magnitude of the book's impact is also indicated by the fact that it was adapted by Charles and Ray Eames as films that were produced and broadcast as part of *The Fabulous Fifties*. See Spigel, "Back to the Drawing Board: Graphic Design and the Visual Environment of Television at Midcentury," 49 – 50.

concluding portion of the drama, the drama-documentary adapts this idea, depicting Willie's serene refusal to acknowledge the questions, chaos and mess that surrounds her. That said, neither in this ending or any other portion of the documentary is any mention made of spirituality, Christianity or religious contemplation. The following chapter examines an iteration of egghead television for women that was more explicit regarding the religious dimension of this same feminine ideal.

CHAPTER FOUR

Dramatic Inspirational Television

In February 1957, the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Boston Globe* and other big city newspapers ran an advertisement for an upcoming television broadcast of *The Lark*.[327] An English-language adaptation of *L'Alouette*, Jean Anouilh's retelling of the Joan of Arc story, *The Lark* had been a major critical success on Broadway the previous season. Critics raved about Jo Mielziner's stark, minimalist set design, Leonard Bernstein's expressionist rendering of the voices heard by Joan, and Lillian Hellman's acerbic, moving translation. It was Julie Harris's performance as Joan, though, that drew the most praise. To take just one of several effusive reviews, Brooks Atkinson, the *New York Times* drama critic, ascribed to Harris a "radiance," and argued that her "modesty of person," "splendor of spirit" and "love of theater" had infused spiritual fervor in a play that, in its original iteration, bordered on "over-rationalization." The result, Atkinson argued, was "a triumphant performance."[328]

Despite the year-plus lag time between *The Lark*'s Broadway opening and its presentation on television, those involved in the broadcast's production and promotion clearly assumed that readers of the various metropolitan papers would be familiar with the play and the accolades bestowed on its star. To that end, the print ad is dominated by an image of Julie Harris as Joan in a moment of divine revelation. Or, to be more precise, the ad is dominated by an image of the sword that Harris/Joan is holding as she experiences this revelation. Graphically, the sword joins with Harris/Joan's outstretched arm, forming a long, thin diagonal line that cuts

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[327] "triumph!," *New York Times*, February 10, 1957, 12X; "triumph!," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 10, 1957, W6; "triumph!," *Daily Boston Globe*, February 10, 1957, A57.

[328] Brooks Atkinson, "St. Joan With Radiance," *New York Times*, November 18, 1955, 20. See also Edwin F. Melvin, "Julie Harris Starring in 'The Lark,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, October 29, 1953, 11; Walter F. Kerr, "The Lark," *New York Herald Tribune*, November 18, 1955, 12; Murray Schumbach, "Shaping a New Joan: Miss Hellman Discusses Adapting 'The Lark,'" *New York Times*, November 13, 1955, X1.

across an expanse of empty space, connecting the copy at the very top of the ad to the image of Harris/Joan's face, eyes widened in a look of awe and terror, at the very bottom. Through the one-word, lower-case headline of "triumph!," the ad copy reminds readers of the praise that attended Harris's performance as Joan. Above that headline, encased in and illuminated by a small white box, are the logistical details of the broadcast—its title, date, time, network, and stars and its history of performances in such cosmopolitan cities as Paris, London and New York. Taken together, the various elements of the ad and their arrangement communicate the following message: Julie Harris, as a result of inspiration—divine or otherwise—will deliver yet another of her celebrated performances in this modern, sophisticated take on the well-known story of Joan the Maid. The spiritual power of Harris-as-Joan will be its own source of revelation for those who watch NBC's production, broadcast as part of *The Hallmark Hall of Fame*.

I chose to begin with a description of this ad for the NBC/Hallmark iteration of *The Lark* because I think it captures the ambiguity and inclusivity of *Hallmark*'s conception of spirituality. The ad promises the television play will be of high quality ("triumph!") and, via its bold, minimalist graphic design, suggests that modernist aesthetics will be one reason for that success.[329] *The Lark*, in other words, is cast as a television broadcast designed to appeal to lovers of modern art. In fact, with its positioning of the broadcast's title and logistics at the top and as a source of light shimmering down on an awestruck Harris-as-Joan, the ad implies that for a certain kind of female viewer, this aesthetic experience will be akin to a divine revelation. In this construction of spirituality, the act of witnessing Harris-as-Joan is comparable to a religious experience. Of course, the ad also allows for another, arguably more straightforward

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[329] The modernism of the ad's graphic design is particularly vivid when you compare it to other ads that Hallmark's advertising agency, Foote Cone Belding, prepared for a different, i.e., less art-savvy audience. See, for example, "The Lark," *Scholastic Magazines*, February 8, 1957.

interpretation. To a certain kind of Christian believer, it might suggest that Harris's triumphant performance is the result of divine inspiration. According to this reading of the ad, Harris-as-Joan is not analogous to a revelation from God; it *is* a revelation from God, one that will be accessible to all those who tune in to NBC on the right date and time, thanks to Hallmark.

In this chapter I attend to the spiritual inflections of network television's intellectualist address to women. My principal object of study is *The Hallmark Hall of Fame*, a collaboration that began between Hallmark Cards and NBC in December 1951 with the production of Gian-Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, billed as a "Christmas opera," and continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s.[330] Throughout the first two decades of this long-running series, critics lauded *Hallmark* for the quality of its productions, pointing to its lavish production values and its willingness to present material that others had dismissed as inappropriate for television. This roster included plays associated with Europe and culture with a capital "C", such as Shakespeare, Shaw, and Ibsen, as well as more recent works by American playwrights like Garson Kanin, Lillian Hellman, and Elmer Rice, that is, plays that had been both popular and critical successes on Broadway in the recent past. In addition to this reputation for artistic excellence, the *Hallmark* series was also praised for being inspirational in a more specifically Christian sense. Beginning with *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, an opera whose libretto was inspired by the biblical story of the three kings, many of *Hallmark*'s most acclaimed productions dealt with explicitly Christian themes. In lauding those broadcasts, critics often suggested that

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[330] The longevity of Hallmark's involvement in television is remarkable. For an insightful discussion of more recent examples of Hallmark cultural properties, see Mimi White, "Nostalgic Off-Modernism on the Hallmark Channels," Cultural Studies Now! Symposium, University of Pittsburgh, September 2017; Mimi White, "Adapting Culture on the Hallmark Channel: Hallmark Movie Books," Society for Cinema and Media Studies, March 2019.

the series's artistic achievement had a religious dimension, providing viewers with access to the divine.

In what follows I attend to these two different constructions of spirituality—the religious and the aesthetic. I argue that television programs like *Hallmark* were cast as a means through which to experience intense feelings and to gain new insights. While those involved with the promotion and production of this kind of television never explicitly claimed that the inspiration provided by their programs was divine, such an interpretation would have been available to their consumers. In fact, given the associations of its sponsor with inspirational literature—one of Hallmark's most high-profile authors was Methodist minister (and bestselling author) Dr. Norman Vincent Peale—that interpretation would have been likely, particularly for the greeting card industry's target audience: women who celebrate Christmas. In an effort to capture the ambiguity of *The Lark* and other *Hallmark* productions—the fact that the nature or origins of its promised revelations are never specified—I am labeling this category of spiritual media as "dramatic inspirational television."

A second, related object of study in this chapter is the anti-communist anxieties about intellectual women that informed *The Lark* and other examples of dramatic inspirational television. As discussed in the previous chapter, throughout the 1950s, large-circulation magazines like *Fortune*, *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Life* repeatedly drew attention to the fact that increasing numbers of women were choosing to retain their positions of paid employment after marriage and even after their children were born. Similarly, these same publications also depicted a liberal arts education, on the secondary school and college level, as an increasingly common experience for girls and women and raised questions about the suitability of that education for women's social responsibilities of caretaking. Once trained to think, what would

future homemakers do with that training? In the view of some commentators, the intellectual housewife, in the absence of proper guidance, was likely to pose a threat to American democracy, either by failing to sufficiently devote herself to the important task of facilitating the growth of her children, husband and community, or by turning to an anti-American ideology to supply the intellectual and affective intensity her life as homemaker was otherwise lacking. In order to forestall such developments, producers of service media, within and beyond the broadcasting industry, sought to put forward safe alternatives. They identified and publicized suitable passion projects for their readers and viewers, that is, activities through which educated women might strengthen American democracy *and* gain access to the kind of "romance" that ideologies like communism were thought to offer.[331] With its combination of corporate sponsorship, the arts, and Christian spirituality, dramatic inspirational television was one of these alternatives.

Literature Review: Spirituality and Popular Media

"[N]o one has ever wanted spirituality to succeed," Kathryn Lofton writes in *Oprah: Gospel of an Icon*. Within her disciplinary home of religious studies, Lofton explains, "spirituality as an object of inquiry has been consistently pressed to the margins of intellectual appraisal."[332] According to Lofton and other feminist scholars of popular religion, spirituality's illegitimate standing extends beyond the confines of the academy. A "debased religious impulse" to more orthodox adherents of official denominations, spirituality is similarly dismissed by secular critics as "anachronistic and magical thinking," a relic of an earlier, outmoded era whose

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[331] In using the term "romance," I am alluding to Vivian Gornick's oral history, *The Romance of American Communism* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).
[332] Kathryn Lofton, *Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 57.

endurance signals a lack of maturity and an unwillingness to face the world as it is, disenchantment and all.[333]

In this chapter, I follow the lead of these feminist scholars. In an effort to disassociate spirituality from its connotations of watered-down religion or pre-modern holdover, I draw on Courtney Bender's understanding of spirituality as a peculiarly modern and secular phenomenon. A sociologist of religion, Bender characterizes spirituality as a "discourse and set of practices" that emerges in the late nineteenth century, "thanks to the extensive professionalization and rationalization of the market, psychology, the state, the law, and even religion." Despite the disenchantment brought about by such transformations, "individuals nonetheless encounter the world and its effects as uncanny, evocative of new possibilities, moods, and affects." In a rationalized capitalist culture, she explains, we experience the world as guided by forces whose complexity and interrelation defy individual comprehension, let alone mastery—"[e]verything in modern life appears to be connected by hidden networks that shape our daily life in ways that no individual can measure, control, or understand." A response to this modern, secular condition, spirituality emerges as "one modern language with which we speak of the secular promise (or peril) of these unseen connections." It is also a coping strategy, or a "set of practices with which we manage those connections' effect."[334]

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[333] These quotes are taken from Courtney Bender, "Spirit," in *Rethinking Therapeutic Culture*, eds. Timothy Aubrey and Trysh Travis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 46. See also Lofton, *Oprah*, 57 – 59; Kathryn Lofton, "Gospel," in *Rethinking Therapeutic Culture*, 34 - 45; Courtney Bender, "The Power of Pluralistic thinking" in *Politics of Religious Freedom*, eds. Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, Saba Mahmood, Peter G. Danchin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 66 - 77; Trysh Travis, "It Will Change the World If Everyone Reads This Book': New Thought Religion in Oprah's Book Club," *American Quarterly*, 59:3 (September, 2007): 1017-1041. For a related critique of a slightly different object, see Smith-Shomade's summary of the "deluge" of scholarship on Christianity and media and the lack of discussion of "what it means to deal with the spirit through media" in that body of work. Beretta E. Smith-Shomade, "Dance, Dance, Dance, Dance, Dance, Dance, Dance All Night! : Mediated Audiences and Black Women's Spirituality," in *Cupcakes, Pinterest and Ladyporn: Feminized Popular Culture in the Early Twenty-First Century* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 157 – 158.

[334] Bender, "Spirit," 46 – 47.

While Bender's definition of spirituality as a response to the conditions of secular, modern life serves as my starting point, I also want to draw attention to a few other connotations and attributes attested to by feminist scholars. To begin with, women and consumerism have been pivotal to spirituality's past and present. As Beryl Satter notes in her history of New Thought, this late nineteenth century movement was founded in "thought-as-power" theories articulated by Phineas Parkhurst Quimby and Warren Felt Evans, but it took on the trappings of organized religion via the coordinated efforts of various bourgeois white women.[335] Those associations, discrediting in the eyes of many male cultural critics, endured into the mid-twentieth century, with critics of inspirational literature holding housewives to blame for the bestseller status of Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952) and similar titles.[336] Relatedly, although it is derived from and grounded in liberal Protestantism, spirituality's rhetoric is purposefully vague. As Lofton notes in her study of Oprah, the inclusivity of the spiritual address demands generality and flexibility; Oprah might name God as the source of inspiration, but she also asserts that other terms—love, peace, divine, sacred, power—are equally legitimate.[337] Finally, spirituality is emphatically individualistic; it is, in Lofton's words, "an exuberant affirmation of individual ambition."[338] If secular modernity is perceived as containing uncanny, that is, unpredictable or inexplicable effects, adherents of this worldview all the same remain optimistic regarding the capacity of individuals to navigate them.

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[335] Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 6-7; Travis, ""It Will Change the World If Everyone Reads This Book': New Thought Religion in Oprah's Book Club," 1022 – 1023.
[336] In a 1962 discussion of inspirational literature, for example, Richard Hofstadter identifies housewives as the principle consumers of bestsellers like Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking*, a finding for which he provides zero evidence. Hofstadter, 266 – 269. See also Louis Schneider, *Popular Religion: Inspirational Books in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).
[337] Lofton, *Oprah*, 51 – 81.
[338] Ibid., 43.

As the above discussion perhaps indicates, feminist scholarship on spirituality and popular media has primarily focused on the late nineteenth century and the late twentieth/early-twentieth century, with Ralph Waldo Trine of New Thought and Mind Cure and Oprah of Change Your Life TV inspiring particularly thoughtful analyses.[339] The little scholarship there is on the mid-century era has been concerned with print culture, attending to the inspirational literature of Norman Vincent Peale and others.[340] To begin to fill in some of these gaps, my discussion focuses on spiritual discourse articulated via television, specifically the *Hallmark Hall of Fame* series.

In shifting the focus from print to televisual articulations of mid-century spiritual culture, I also hope to productively nuance accounts of spirituality's disreputable status. Unlike Peale's books on spiritual power, which, despite (or because of) astonishing sales, were derided by critics, the *Hallmark* series was routinely lauded by reviewers, both within and beyond the broadcasting industry. In the view of these cultural commentators, the virtuosity of the source texts and those involved in their production for television amounted to an aesthetic excellence or power that would have a transformative effect, for the better, on viewers. In other words, the presentation of *Hamlet* or *The Lark* on NBC was promoted and in some instances described as revelatory. In the following section I will unpack in greater detail the promises of revelation and enlightenment routinely put forward by industry producers and commentators in the early postwar era.

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[339] Regarding Trine, see Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 143 – 180.
[340] Regarding Peale, see Bender, "The Power of Pluralistic thinking," 66 – 77; Matthew S. Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 2012).

The Art of Dramatic Inspirational Television

Dramatic inspirational TV was one answer to the debates about TV's purpose that circulated throughout the industry in the early postwar era. It represented a vision of covertly educational entertainment in which TV was supposed to make people both think and feel. During this period, a variety of commentators routinely, some might even say ceaselessly, discussed television's purpose, that is, the medium's contribution—or lack thereof—to the public good. As William Boddy, Lynn Spigel and others have shown, much discourse was generated by the broadcasting industry's critics.[341] However, those working in network television production, particularly at NBC, were also quite vocal on this subject. As noted in Chapter One, in articles and interviews published in industry trade journals, it was commonplace for Sylvester "Pat" Weaver, NBC's president, to ruminate on television as an "instrument for maturity" or to detail the network's efforts to fulfill the medium's "*purpose*," which he defined as "*the general self-realization of the public*."[342] Such ambitious claims on television's behalf were in no way restricted to Weaver. Davidson Taylor, Albert McCleery and other NBC executives echoed Weaver's rhetoric.[343] The pronouncements by Weaver et al. must be recognized for what they were—good public relations. As Vance Kepley, Pamela Wilson, Lynn Spigel, and others remind us, extensive discussion of television's ameliorative purpose cannot be divorced from the industry's regulatory context, the fact that stations affiliated with NBC and other networks were required to demonstrate their contributions to public good in order to maintain their broadcasting

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[341] William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990) ; Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[342] Sylvester L. Weaver, "Television: Case for the Networks," *Television*, January 1953, 18; Sylvester (Pat) L. Weaver, Jr., "'Enlightenment through Exposure,'—Weaver's Public Service Theme," *Television*, January 1952, 28, italics in the original.
[343] Davidson Taylor, *The Educational Record*, July 1952, 392 – 396; Walter Ames, "Producer Says TV Snobs Look 'Out Window' When Good Shows Arrive, *Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 1954, 22. See, also, Thomas Whiteside, "The Communicator," October 23, 1954, *New Yorker*, 31 – 43.

licenses.[344] By enumerating how the programs broadcast on their network fulfilled those obligations, executives like Weaver were engaging in a form of network self-promotion, one directed at a variety of industry participants, including station license-holders, those who regulated them, advertising agencies and potential sponsors.

Yet, while they were certainly a form of PR, such statements were not *only* PR. The volubility of Weaver and other NBC executives on the subject of how television might improve its viewers also speaks to differences in the educational philosophy espoused by each network. At CBS, the distinction between programs meant to provide escape and those that were supposed to edify was treated as self-evident. While the Tiffany network claimed that its offerings in both program categories were superior to NBC's, only the latter category was cast as relevant to its public service obligation. NBC, in contrast, claimed that the goal of education, or, to use its preferred term, "enlightenment," was furthered not just by a particular subset of broadcasts, but rather by all of its program offerings. "Every show can inform, enlighten, inspire our people" is how Weaver at one point explained this view of televisual pedagogy.[345] Put differently, the network had—or, at least, presented itself as having—two categories of educational programming: broadcasts that were "explicitly" pedagogic and those that were more covert or "sugar-coated" in their approach, "inform[ing], enlighten[ing], inspir[ing]" viewers without their knowing it.[346]

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[344] Vance Kepley, "From 'Frontal Lobes' to the 'Bob-and-Bob Show': NBC Management and Programming Strategies, 1949 – 65," *Hollywood in the Age of Television*, ed. Tino Balio (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 41 – 61; Pamela Wilson, "NBC Television's 'Operation Frontal Lobes': Cultural Hegemony and Fifties' Program Planning," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television*, 15: 1 (1995): 83 – 104; Lynn Spigel, *TV by Design: Modern Art and the Rise of Network Television* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 27 – 28.

[345] Weaver, "Enlightenment through Exposure," 28.

[346] The language in quotations is Weaver's. Ibid.

With regard to the "explicitly" educational, examples include *Home*, *Dr. Joyce Brothers* and other how-to programs discussed in Chapter One. The covertly or sugar-coated iteration, which I am labeling "dramatic inspirational television," requires some unpacking and will be the focus of this chapter. To begin with, such broadcasts were exceptional. That is, in contrast to routine or regular television which viewers could expect to encounter at the same time every week or every day, broadcasts belonging to this program category were infrequently and, in some instances, erratically scheduled, appearing once a month, once every six weeks or whenever a sponsor and time slot could be found. To that end, it is telling that to the claim cited above that *all* television can be enlightening, Weaver added the addendum—"[just] not all the time."[347] Secondly, as the term "sugar-coated" indicates, dramatic inspirational television was designed to be appealing to a general audience of the uninitiated. Eschewing what Weaver caricatured as a "teach-n-preach" or dull style of presentation, such broadcasts benefitted from the "showmanship" skills of NBC's producers, people who, it was claimed, knew how to make the otherwise forbidding or stultifying into entertainment.[348]

An early and influential example of dramatic inspirational television is *NBC Opera Theatre*. Overseen by Samuel Chotzinhoff and Peter Herman Adler, the series debuted in January 1950 and its initial season consisted of four broadcasts, each devoted to a presentation of an opera that ran one-hour or less. Clearly concerned that the term "opera," in and of itself, would have a hopelessly eat-your-vegetables connotation to some (or most) of their potential viewers, Chotzinhoff and Adler cast their series as an attempt to "modernize" a "moribund" art form.[349] To that end, the series favored American composers, new or recent compositions and

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[347] Ibid.
[348] Ibid.
[349] Peter Herman Adler, "NBC Opera Theatre, Legit Menotti Bids Give Proof of Medium's Mass Growth," *Variety*, January 2, 1952, 273.

translations, younger performers who had "low-neck[line]" good looks and a more naturalistic acting style than established stars, streamlined running times and production costs, and a shooting style that relied heavily on close-ups. Perhaps most importantly, all the operas in the series, no matter what language they were written in, were sung in English, a language that NBC presumed its viewers would be able to understand. In virtually all of these production choices, Chozinhoff and Adler deviated from the dominant practices of the time—in other words, *NBC Opera Theatre* presented itself as the antithesis of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, an institution that both defined American opera and was regularly pilloried in the press as being low on innovation, experimentation or imagination.[350] By distancing itself from the Met's aesthetic, the series also set up a contrast with rival networks; the initial forays into televising opera on both ABC and CBS involved the participation of Met personnel, associations that each network's promotion took care to highlight.[351]

In what might come as a surprise, *NBC Opera Theatre* was wildly successful—especially in its initial years and, in particular, with journalists. Newspaper critics, both those at the opera and the broadcasting desks, praised the series for its commitment to experimentation and for its perceived accessibility. In an article entitled "Opera Taken Out of the Mothballs, Given Exciting Vitality by NBC," *Billboard* critic Jerry Wexler praised NBC for eschewing the "stale acting, ancient costumes, tired sets, indifferent direction of the usual opera performance at the Met." The

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[350] See, for example, Winthrop Sargeant, "'Medium's' Success Raises Hopes of Reviving a Moribund Art Form, *Life*, June 6, 1947, 98; See also Howard Taubman, "Good Opera Need Not Be Grand Opera," *New York Times*, December 11, 1949, SM14; Robert Lewis Shayon, "Public Slow to Demand Video Operatic Programs," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 24, 1951, 10.
[351] See, for example, "The Met Opens," *Life*, December 13, 1948, 45 – 46; "Radio and Television: Performance of 'Carmen' on Jan. 1 to Launch New Video Opera Series Over C.B.S.," *New York Times*, December 13, 1949, 62; Val Adams, "Streamlining Opera for Television," *New York Times*, December 18, 1949, X11; Larry Wolters, "Opera Over TV Can Be Enjoyed in Homey Way," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 19, 1950, C6. ABC's television agreement with the Met was preceded by network's longstanding radio series devoted to Saturday afternoon performances at the opera house.

result was "opera…[as] it was originally intended to be—a play with music," or what Wexler elsewhere describes as "opera… as living, dynamic theater."[352]

The glowing critical response to *NBC Opera Theatre* sheds light on another defining attribute of this program category, namely, its dual purpose: dramatic inspirational television was designed to make viewers think but also to make them feel. To achieve this objective, NBC's programming executives looked to "high" cultural forms associated with the Metropolitan Opera House, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New York City Ballet and other "temples" of art, but, in a departure from those institutions, the network's treatment of operas, ballets, and other "sacred" source texts was often a far cry from reverential.[353] In addition to forgoing pageantry and mannered performance styles, for example, *NBC Opera Theatre* made drastic cuts to many of the operas it presented, only to then append new scenes or a narration designed to fill the gaps in logic created by the edits. Rather than decrying such changes and abbreviations as aesthetic manhandling, critics, for the most part, applauded the network for presenting art in such a way that even the uninitiated could enjoy it.

Undergirding such cheerleading was a set of assumptions regarding the tastes and formal education of television viewers. What network executives like Adler and Chotzinhoff and critics like Taubman seemed to have assumed is that the "general" audience for television was

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[352] Jerry Wexler, "Opera Taken Out of Mothballs, Given Exciting Vitality by NBC," *Billboard*, October 13, 1951, 3. As multiple journalists took care to note, *NBC Opera* was also popular, or relatively popular with viewers; *Madame Butterfly*, the second broadcast in the series, received a 20 rating in a time slot where it was in competition with *The Goldbergs*, which earned a 28. But perhaps the greatest indication of the series's positive reception was the response it provoked from the Metropolitan. Following the close of *NBC Opera*'s widely praised second season, the Met announced its plans to develop a television department. "Met Opera TV Unit Planned for 1951-52," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 3, 1951, A6; Albert Goldberg, "The Sounding Board," *Los Angeles Times*, August 13, 1950, D5.

[353] This rhetoric of "sacred" and reverential is informed by Lawrence Levine, specifically the chapter tracing the sacralization of culture at the end of the nineteenth century in the US. Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

something like the audiences for opera that could now be found at colleges and universities across the country.[354] In part due to the GI Bill, that demographic was perceived in the late 1940s and early 1950s as one that was undergoing a dramatic expansion. Such an audience, they assumed, was unlikely to possess the specialist training or innate ability needed to appreciate "traditional" opera and would therefore avoid it. In such a context, critics welcomed NBC's efforts to "modernize" or streamline productions, believing that such changes would enable even those with the untrained ear or eye to comprehend what opera is *really*—a kind of theater.

Significantly, "theater" did not have the same forbidding connotations as "opera," at least in the view of mid-twentieth century critics writing for mass-circulated publications. Instead, terms like "drama" and "theater" signified Broadway and artistic productions designed to be seen and heard by those with no prior training or specialized knowledge.[355] Perhaps most importantly, drama, in this context, was associated with an emotional or visceral response; it was, as Taubman wrote in one think-piece from the late 1940s, an art form that "makes direct contact with an audience."[356] Put simply, *NBC Opera Theatre* and other iterations of dramatic inspirational television were perceived as affording something more than cerebral gratification. As critic John Crosby put it in his review of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, one of *NBC Opera Theatre*'s most

[354] In the late 1940s and early 1950s, many of the operas broadcast as part of *NBC Opera Theatre* were also performed on college campuses. H.W. Heinsheimer, "Right Kind of Opera Has Market in America: Down in the Valley," *New York Times*, May 29, 1949, X7; "Theatre Telecast in Opera Debut," *New York Times*, January 16, 1950, 19. My use of the term "general" here is informed by Janice A. Radway's discussion of the "general reader," i.e., reader who is distinguished from the expert. See Janice A. Radway, *Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 211 – 241.
[355] Winthrop Sargeant, "American Opera on Broadway," *Life*, June 8, 1947, 95; Howard Taubman, "Labeling 'The Consul,'" *New York Times*, March 12, 1950, X1; Olin Downes, "Opera on Broadway," *New York Times*, April 2, 1950, 103.
[356] Taubman, "Labeling 'The Consul,' X1.

celebrated productions, the goal of such television was to "inflame both the mind and the heart."[357]

Spiritual Women, Modern and Otherwise

With its repeated invocation of the "non-connoisseur," the discourse generated by NBC and recirculated in the press indicates that *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and other dramatic inspirational television broadcasts were aimed at viewers in general. Yet within this general category, a special expectation attended women, or to be more exact, white women married to men with some college education.[358] Producers of dramatic inspirational television worked from the assumption that such women were their most likely viewers and that, once their interest was secured, these women would wrangle the rest of their families to watch with them. Informed in part by discourses discussed in Chapter Two—that such women were in danger of and/or concerned about being "out-classed" by their husbands—the association between women and cultural uplift programming was also informed by a larger conversation taking place at the time in women's service media concerning women and their spiritual responsibilities. In an effort to provide context to the development and elaboration of dramatic inspirational television and its address, I will unpack aspects of that larger discourse about women. My discussion will focus in particular on how participants in this discourse thought the relationship between women's spiritual and material obligations to others, and the role of the arts in resolving any conflicts or incompatibilities between the two.

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[357] John Crosby, "A Low Bow All Around," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 2, 1952, 13.
[358] As I discuss in more detail below, Hallmark Cards was a key sponsor for this category of television. Their products were aimed at women who were married and 25 and older. Norris Willatt, "Christmas Spirit," *Barron's National Business and Financial Weekly*, November 24, 1952, 11.

In the years following World War II, women's service publications routinely spoke to their readers on the subject of public service, offering advice and ruminations on how a "modern woman" might make a meaningful contribution to the community that extended beyond her immediate home and family. One facet of this world housekeeping discourse, which I discussed in Chapter One, adopted a DIY view of public service, another was more focused on the indirect route of instigating others. That is, via profiles of virtuoso female leaders working in "helping" professions such as medicine, social work, teaching and governance, the roundtable discussion forums devoted to current affairs and the "how-to" features which both celebrated individual community organizing efforts and explained how to replicate them, women's service magazines advised their readers on how each might make her own individual contribution to public good. A different but compatible strain of this discourse framed public service as a social obligation that could be fulfilled indirectly. Readers of publications like *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Charm* were told that while their service as doctors, psychologists or administrators was welcome, college-educated homemakers had a duty that extended beyond such direct contributions to social amelioration; they were also responsible for inspiring others—husband, children, friends—to become servants of public good.

A dossier published in the September 1955 issue of *Woman's Home Companion* gives a sense of these two aspects of world housekeeping discourse and their compatibility. Entitled "A Purpose for Modern Woman," it opens with a statement by Adlai Stevenson, then the unofficial head of the Democratic party and a vocal advocate for the US strengthening its ties to and support for internationalist organizations like the United Nations. Stevenson addresses the *Companion*'s readers as a group of educated and under-stimulated housewives, women who, after years of training in the liberal arts, now feel that the moral and intellectual expertise they

worked so hard to acquire is going to waste, that there are virtually no opportunities in their domestic present to put those abilities to good use. Summarizing the problem, he writes:

> I am told that nowadays… many young women feel frustrated and far apart from the great issues and stirring debates for which their education has given them understanding and relish. Once they read Baudelaire. Now it is the Consumer's Guide. Once they wrote poetry. Now it's the laundry list. Once they discussed art and philosophy until late in the night. Now they are so tired that they fall asleep as soon as the dishes are finished. There is, often, a sense of contraction, of closing horizons and lost opportunities. They had hoped to play their part in the crisis of the age. But what they do is wash the diapers.[359]

By way of solution, Stevenson proposes that college-educated housewives change the way they think about and enact caretaking. Rather than conceiving of it as a wholly materialist practice, one that consists of little more than ensuring the groceries are purchased, the family is fed and the diapers are washed, the *Companion*'s readers, he suggests, should instead recognize domesticity's spiritual dimensions, that is, that "the vocation of marriage and motherhood" also includes other, arguably more important responsibilities, such as the "cultivation" of "a new quality of mind and heart" in their "children, husband and friends." Importantly, such reconceptualizing is framed as an imperative for the future well-being of individual women, but also for that of "the West" and the world as a whole. Alluding to the cold war context, but in terms that were pointedly non-martial, Stevenson asserts that "this crisis will be won at last not on the battlefield but in the head and heart," and that "new, better ideas" that is, the kind that can "defeat totalitarian, authoritarian ideas," are the means through which that resolution will be accomplished. How exactly the *Companion*'s readers might go about inspiring those new, better ideas is explored in the four pieces of writing that make up the rest of the dossier. Designated as "four exciting women," the authors of these companion pieces—the novelists Han Suyin and

[359] Adlai Stevenson, "A Purpose for Modern Woman," *Woman's Home Companion*, September 1955, 30.

Pearl S. Buck, UN delegate Mary Pillsbury Lord, and Jer'e Merrit, a probation officer of the Indiana Juvenile Court—address their ideas to housewives, giving advice for how the non-professional, public-service minded woman can serve her purpose, yet, via their shared stature as accomplished and in some cases celebrated career women, they also attest to the compatibility of "the vocation of marriage and motherhood" with at least some other vocations.[360]

In some respects, this mid-twentieth century ideal of "modern women" as world-homemakers, each responsible for both the material and spiritual development of the world around her, has a long history, one that can be traced back to the nineteenth-century domestic manuals written by and for well-to-do white Protestant women. In *The American Woman's Home*, for example, Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe cast the menial duties of housekeeping as a central facet of the spiritual objective guiding the endeavors of all good Christians—to make the terrestrial world more like the heavenly one. Bemoaning the fact that "manual labor has been made dishonorable and unrefined…especially the most important of all hand-labor, that which sustains the family," the authors not only provide detailed instructions on all aspects of housework (there is a whole chapter on "earth closets"); they also insist—repeatedly—that a woman cannot be considered a good Christian if she refuses to roll up her sleeves and get her hands dirty. In their view, the only way to fulfill that spiritual obligation is to adopt a certain style of living—a style that is unpacked and explicated, down to the last detail, by their book.[361]

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[360] Pearl S. Buck, "The Children Waiting," *Woman's Home Companion*, September 1955, 32 – 33, 129; Jer'e Merritt as told to Ruth and Edward Brecher, "Wanted: Someone to Trust," *Woman's Home Companion*, September 1955, 34 – 35, 93; Han Suyin, "Love…is a many splendoured thing," *Woman's Home Companion*, September 1955, 36 – 37, 51 – 63; Mary Pillsbury Lord, "They Know What Freedom Means," *Woman's Home Companion*, September 1955, 38 – 39, 79 – 81.

[361] Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home* (New York: J.B. Ford & Co., 1869), 17.

And yet, while nineteenth-century Protestant manuals are unquestionably an important and influential antecedent, there is at least one crucial difference between the ideal articulated in *The American Woman's Home* and the one circulated in mid-twentieth century texts like the 1955 *Woman's Home Companion* dossier. Although the Beecher sisters valorize physical labor in the form of nursing, cooking or home and farm management, their validation of the material elements of domesticity does not extend to other activities that a woman might do with her body. Put simply, there is no discussion of sex or eroticism in *The American Woman's Home*. In fact, according to the authors, the women who most successfully embody the Protestant ideal of American homemaking are neither wives nor mothers, at least not in a biological sense. As they explain in their book's closing chapters, "The woman who from true love consents to resign her independence and be supported by another, while she bears children and trains them for heaven, has a noble mission; but the woman who earns her own independence that she may train the neglected children of her Lord and Saviour has a still higher one."[362] Envisioning this noblest of Protestant homemakers as something like a Catholic nun who has been liberated from the unnecessary oversight of priests, they conclude with the prophecy that "a time is coming when the family state is to be honored and ennobled by single women, qualified to sustain it by their own industries; women who will both support and train the children of their Lord and Master in the true style of Protestant independence, controlled by no superior but Jesus Christ."[363]

By the mid-twentieth century, that is, after Freud, and a World War, the asexual ideal articulated by the Beecher sisters was no longer viable. In this new context of "sexual modernism," to use Mari Jo Buhle's term, a woman's obligation to devote herself to the needs of others took on new meanings; in addition to its Beecher-era connotations of self-sacrifice,

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[362] Ibid., 452.
[363] Ibid.

austerity and spiritual devotion, “giving oneself” came to evoke sensuality and fecundity.[364] Vera Caspary captures this adaptation in *Laura*, a 1943 potboiler that also serves as a fictional portrait of a new female type—the “cultivated, complicated modern woman.” A successful, stylish career woman living alone in a converted Victorian brownstone on the Upper East Side, Laura at first glance seems like the kind of “sophisticated” woman one might find in a George Cukor movie—the character who is pretty enough to catch Cary Grant’s eye, yet lacks the heart or imagination to keep him from ending up with Katharine Hepburn. But that is only at first glance. What the novel reveals is that Laura, in addition to possessing the metropolitan virtues of wit, ambition, knowledge of world affairs and the “right” taste in clothes, domestic furnishings and people, also has the kind of attributes so admired by the Beechers: she is financially self-sufficient and good at maintaining a budget; despite having a servant, she likes to do her own housework and is adept in the kitchen; when not out with her “smart set” friends, she enjoys an evening at home with a good book; she derives pleasure from “menial labor,” spending most of her weekends in rural Connecticut, working in the garden of her country home. These two distinct, but not incompatible, facets of the “cultivated, complicated modern woman” are perhaps best summed up by Caspary’s description of Laura’s hands: “They were soft to the touch, but strong underneath.”[365] But wait, there’s more. In addition to this seemingly endless list of traits and accomplishments, Laura is also defined by her love life: men are always falling for her. Her appeal, we are told, has little or nothing to do with these other qualities. Instead it is a product of her “generosity.” “A kind and generous woman,” Laura is either blind to or unconcerned by others’s weaknesses; rather, she “[finds] the real qualities [in a man] and made them

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[364] Mari Jo Buhle, *Feminism and Its Discontents: A Century of Struggle with Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 85 – 124.
[365] Vera Caspary, *Laura* (New York: Sun Dial Press, 1944), 163.

important."[366] Seduced by her flattering vision of who they are or what they might be capable of, men do their best "to grow to that stature."[367] Finally, while it takes a certain kind of man to light the flame, once provoked, Laura is a "jade…giving [herself] with wayward delight."[368]

While not necessarily as explicit as *Laura*, a "psychothriller," in industry parlance, that was perceived as being sufficiently appealing to men to rate an Armed Services paperback edition, mid-twentieth century women's service magazines similarly endorsed carnality as a legitimate and important facet of modern women's public responsibility. Wartime issues of *Mademoiselle*, for example, encouraged the magazine's target audience of "smart young women" to remain "well worth looking at… for the duration," whether or not they were in uniform.[369] Such maintenance, the magazine explained, was necessary for the "incomparable moment when your soldier catches his first glimpse of you at the station."[370] While quotes such as that one alluded to the war's end, imaging maintenance as a long-term endeavor and a postwar reunion (or wedding) as reward, the magazine's readers were also made aware of their shorter-term obligations. Leading up to the postwar "glimpse of you at the station," in other words, were the wartime glimpses women were expected to provide of themselves in the form of personal snapshots. At least some of these, suggests Robert B. Westbrook, were modeled on the sexy-but-not-too-sexy "pin-ups" Hollywood distributed of stars like Betty Grable, Rita Hayworth and Lana Turner.[371] Indeed, a feature included in *Mademoiselle*'s April 1943 issue acknowledges such for-the-duration duties. Formatted as a love letter to a soldier-husband who has just been stationed overseas, the article frames routine letter-writing as one facet of home-front service.

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[366] Ibid., 41.
[367] Ibid.
[368] Ibid., 200.
[369] Dorothy Parker, "Salute," *Mademoiselle*, November 1943, 20.
[370] "Red Letter Day," *Mademoiselle*, April 1943, 45.
[371] Robert B. Westbrook, "I Want a Girl, Just Like the Girl that Married Harry James: American Women and the Problem of Political Obligation in World War II," *American Quarterly* 42:4 (1990): 587 – 614.

Tellingly, the letter is signed not with the name of an individual woman, but instead attributed to a kind of woman—the "war wife."[372]

In the years following World War II, service culture continued to construct women's public responsibilities as compromising both material and spiritual components. However, if the necessity of both was now more or less taken for granted, the question of how a woman might give herself to the world's material and spiritual needs still generated substantial discussion. By the mid-1950s, one prevailing view among self-appointed experts was that American women had come to place too much importance and emphasis on the material aspects of their lives as world-homemakers. In some instances, like the 1955 *Woman's Home Companion* dossier on the "Purpose for Modern Woman," the response was to remind housewives that homemaking wasn't just diapers and dishes, that it also entailed moral and intellectual challenges. Another strain of this commentary was decidedly more polarized and sex-specific in its conclusions, framing "spiritual and cultural enrichment" as responsibilities that were "distinctly feminine" and that deserved to be prioritized over all else in a woman's life—especially in a cold war context. The 1955 edited collection *The Spiritual Woman*, for example, addresses its readers as white, college-educated, married women who have the opportunity to concentrate their considerable talent and energy on wealth accumulation. Similar to Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *Gift from the Sea*, which was published the same year, the volume constitutes a warning against "excessive materialism," with various contributors outlining the dangers it poses to the spiritual health of the nation, and by extension, the world.[373] Indicative of the collections' anti-war undertones, here, as in the

[372] "Love is Not Time's Fool," *Mademoiselle*, April 1943. In her essay on Carson McCullers and the novel *Member of the Wedding*, Elizabeth Freeman reveals that McCullers was the author of this article. Elizabeth Freeman, *The Wedding Complex: Forms of Belonging in Modern American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 45 – 69.

[373] Marion Turner Sheehan, ed., *The Spiritual Woman: Trustee of the Future*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955); Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *Gift from the Sea* (New York: Pantheon, 1955).

Woman's Home Companion dossier, excessive materialism is exemplified by American corporations that think only of their private financial success, but also by the "godless" system of "dialectical materialism" practiced by the Soviets. Lamenting materialism's "domination" of spiritualism, the contributors to *The Spiritual Woman* instead advocate for a style of living in which materialism and spiritualism are in "association," that is, in a relationship of "reciprocal, compatible exchange," as the best path forward for American women and, it is implied, the world as a whole.[374]

The question of how exactly to get that relationship right, of what, in other words, constituted "compatible" "association" between the spiritual and the material, remained a favorite topic of discussion in women's service culture. Despite other differences of opinion, among midcentury women's service culture texts there seems to have been general agreement that some fields were more conducive than others to the pursuit and achievement of this ideal. Along with literature, social work, the social sciences, and medicine, "the arts" is routinely identified as fertile ground for the "distinctly feminine" responsibility of "spiritual and cultural enrichment." In "Woman in the Arts," for example, Eloise Spaeth's contribution to *The Spiritual Woman*, Spaeth admonishes her readers to cultivate their gift for art appreciation, an ability that while "natural" and God-given, will only lay dormant if women do not study, read, think, write and otherwise apply themselves.[375] Spaeth goes on to outline some uses to which that competency, once achieved, might be put. One set of examples fall under a category that Russell Lynes famously dubbed as "tastemaker" professions—the newspaper art critic, the teacher, the museum director and others who are tasked with comprehending new developments in the arts

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[374] Sheehan, xvii – xviii.
[375] Eloise Spaeth, "Woman in the Arts," in *The Spiritual Woman*, 1 – 12.

and then "bringing [them] to life" for a wider public.[376] Another privileged example is the audience to which those tastemakers direct their efforts—the amateur mother and wife who shepherds her husband and children to art museums, concerts and other local arts and culture events.[377] Finally, yet another category is the kind of artist who, according to Spaeth, serves as "instrument" or vehicle for the articulation of another's creativity—musicians, dancers, and actors. Defining "art" as "the intelligible union of spirit and matter," she concludes by framing women as something like the broker of that union, the means by which the two are joined together.[378] "The artistic insight," she writes, in an explication of why such facilitation is not only helpful, but in fact essential, "does not really exist until the paint has been so arranged, the marble so hewn away, the bronze so cast, that the vision is recreated for the beholder."[379]

As the imagery of painting and sculpting here indicates, the "woman of the arts" is really a woman of the fine arts. What happens when the "intelligible union of spirit and matter" that she shepherds is mass-circulated on television, that is, when this "compatible" "association" is distributed by a commercial network, is the subject of the next section. Its focus is the *Hallmark Hall of Fame*, one of the longest-running and most-prestigious examples of dramatic inspirational television.

Christmas Art, Sponsored by Hallmark

The first major venture made by Hallmark Cards into its famed career as a television sponsor was a public affairs discussion program hosted by Winston Churchill's daughter, Sarah. In addition to her pedigree, Sarah Churchill had had some success as an actress in Hollywood,

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[376] Ibid., 11 – 12; Russell Lynes, "The Tastemakers," *Harper's*, June 1947, 481 – 91.
[377] Spaeth, 9.
[378] Ibid., 10.
[379] Ibid.

most notably in the Fred Astaire-Jane Powell musical *Royal Wedding*, released in March 1951, a few months before her show went on air. *The Sarah Churchill Show* emphasized these attributes—her England-as-seen-by-Hollywood glamour and world-leader ties—positioning Churchill as something like a budding (and more beautiful) Eleanor Roosevelt or a more genteel Faye Emerson. Critics were not impressed. Dismissed as an uninspiring rendition of a familiar theme—"celebrated-female-in-the-living-room" program—*The Sarah Churchill Show* ended only a few months after its October debut.[380]

In the midst of this failing venture with CBS, NBC aggressively pursued a partnership with Hallmark and ultimately succeeded: Hallmark agreed to serve as sponsor for *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, the second broadcast in *NBC Opera Theatre*'s 1951-1952 season. This commitment represented the first instance in which NBC had been able to secure even a partial sponsorship for its opera series. Importantly, the agreement was not for the season (or series) as a whole, but rather for this one particular opera, which was an original composition and had a religious theme. That decision by Hallmark proved to be a wise one. While most of the operas broadcast as part of *NBC Opera Theatre* were praised by critics, the response to *Amahl and the Night Visitors* was of a different order of magnitude. In the days following the Christmas eve, 1951, broadcast, papers all over the country ran rapturous reviews, with critics from opera, broadcasting and other desks positioning *Amahl* as a milestone in television history. "[T]elevision, operatically speaking, has come of age" is how *New York Times* opera critic Olin Downes put it in a glowing review that ran on the newspaper's front-page.[381] Responding to this

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[380] Both Eleanor Roosevelt and Faye Emerson had had successful television shows at the start of the 1950s. Perhaps in effort to underline the association, *The Sarah Churchill Show* booked Eleanor Roosevelt as its first guest. "The Sarah Churchill Show," *The Billboard*, October 20, 1951, 11.

[381] Olin Downes, "Menotti Opera, the First for TV, Has Its Premiere; Boy, 12, Is Star," *New York Times*, December 25, 1951, 1. See also, Jay S. Harrison, "Menotti's New Opera on TV," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 25, 1951, 16; "Amahl and the Night Visitors," *Variety*, December 26, 1951, 31; Jack Gould, "Radio and Television," *New York Times*, December 26, 1951, 30; Larry Wolters, "Television News

designation of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* as being in a class by itself, NBC deviated from usual policy and broadcast a follow up performance of the opera the following spring, to coincide with Easter, which Hallmark again agreed to sponsor. For the next three years, NBC's presentation of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* on Christmas eve, sponsored by Hallmark, was a reliable feature of the Christmas season.

In retrospect, the suitability of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* as a vehicle for publicizing Hallmark seems obvious. Written by Gian-Carlo Menotti, a wunderkind composer who had emigrated from Italy to the United States two decades earlier to study at the Curtis Institute of Music, the opera's libretto is based on the biblical story of the Three Kings.[382] Or, to be more exact, it is inspired by *The Adoration of the Magi*, the Hieronymus Bosch painting that hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. According to an origin story detailed by the composer himself in a brief television appearance preceding the opera's first broadcast, Menotti had accepted a commission from NBC to write a new opera for its series, only to find himself at loss for what to write about. "I just didn't have an idea in my head" is how he puts it in his TV appearance. With his deadline fast approaching, he decided to take a stroll in the Met, only to happen upon Bosch's painting, an image that in turn reminded him of his childhood in Italy. In Italy, he explains to his American television audience, the Three Kings are the equivalent of what Santa Claus is to American children—they are the source of gifts. Standing in front of the actual painting, he concludes his introduction as follows: "As I was looking [at the painting] … I suddenly realized that they [the Three Kings] had come back to me, and that they had brought me a gift. And the

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and Views," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 28, 1951, 14; Aline B. Louchheim, "Television Opera and the Artist," *New York Times*, December 30, 1951. One of the striking aspects of the broadcast's reception is that critics from three different desks at the *New York Times*—music, opera, and visual arts—reviewed it.

[382] Menotti was, in fact, personal friends with the Curtis family of Curtis Publishing. For biographical sketches of the composer, see "Talk of the Town," *New Yorker*, June 7, 1947, 23 – 24; "'Medium's' Success Raises Hopes of Reviving a Moribund Art Form," *Life*, June 6, 1947, 98.

opera you will hear tonight is the gift of these Three Kings. I now hand it to you and I hope you like it."[383]

For at least some viewers of *Amahl*'s first broadcast, particularly those who were literate in the activities of the New York art world, Menotti's creation myth would likely have brought to mind one of Hallmark's most successful and ambitious publicity initiatives—an international painting competition entitled "Portraits of Christmas." Organized by Wildenstein Galleries, but with a prize money purse that was supplied by Hallmark, the contest had been initiated in 1948, with Wildenstein Galleries inviting artists in France and the United States to submit a work "on any subject having a general, overall harmony with the spirit of Christmas."[384]
The resulting exhibition, which was culled from a purported 10,000 entries, consisted of 100 paintings that were first exhibited in Wildenstein's Paris gallery in the summer of 1949, and then in its midtown New York gallery throughout the December Christmas shopping season, before traveling to art museums in Boston, Washington DC, and other American cities.[385]

While its title is an echo of "Portrait of America," the art competition Pepsi had sponsored a few years earlier, Hallmark's "Portraits of Christmas" was a much more successful example of art-and-industry collaboration, at least according to newspaper art critics.[386] Whereas the Metropolitan Museum exhibition born out of Pepsi's competition was dismissed as

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[383] This broadcast can be viewed at the UCLA Film and Television Archive.
[384] Quoted in Jane Watson Crane, "When Yuletide Comes in March," *Washington Post*, March 5, 1950, L5.
[385] "Brush Strokes," *Los Angeles Times*, December 19, 1948; Carlyle Burrows, "Art in Review," *New York Herald Tribune*, September 4, 1949, C4; "Art to Aid Red Cross," *New York Times*, November 17, 1949. The judges for the American part of the competition included staff of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, Brooklyn Museum, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, as well as the editor of *Art News* and the art critic for the *Christian Science Monitor*. "Hallmark Gives $8750 in Prizes in Art Contest," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 6, 1949, 25; Dorothy Adlow, "Prize Winners On Exhibition In New York," *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 10, 1949, 12.
[386] For more on Pepsi's two art contests, see Russell Lynes, "Suitable for Framing," *Harper's*, February 1946, 162 – 9; Erika Doss, "Catering to Consumerism: Associated American Artists and the Marketing of Modern Art, 1934 – 1958," *Winterthur Portfolio* 26:2-3 (1991): 143 – 167.

unremarkable, especially given all the fanfare (and free publicity) the contest itself had generated, the initial Hallmark Christmas contest, as well as the four follow-up contests that took place over the next decade, were praised as having, on the whole, fulfilled Hallmark's purpose: "to broaden and deepen public appreciation of fine art by providing for it an ever-widening audience."[387] Or, as Dorothy Adlow, the art critic for the *Christian Science Monitor*, put it in an admiring review of Hallmark's 1952 gallery show, "every sophisticated innovation of modern technique can be found in the Hallmark paintings. Yet these pictures can reach people who have never heard of Picasso, or who would not know how to pronounce the name of Paul Klee."[388]

Following the success of that first, December 1951, broadcast of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Hallmark adhered to much the same game plan it had developed in its "Portraits of Christmas" contests. Such an approach to sponsorship dovetailed perfectly with NBC's pedagogic philosophy and its concomitant objective of reorganizing the broadcast industry so that networks had more discretion over what they transmitted and how that content was scheduled.[389] In the initial years of what ultimately became a decades-long partnership between sponsor and network, Hallmark, working through its Chicago-based advertising agency Foote, Cone, Belding, became associated with some of NBC's highest-rated and most critically lauded attempts at dramatic inspirational television. After three successive broadcasts of *Amahl*, Hallmark signed on to sponsor a special, one-time-only broadcast of *Hamlet*, produced by and starring Maurice Evans that aired in April 1953, that is, close to the Easter holiday. Billed as the play's television premiere, the Hallmark-sponsored NBC broadcast was based on a 2-hour

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[387] "The Hallmark Art Award," *Art News*, April 1949.
[388] Dorothy Adlow, "Second Hallmark Award Show," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 20, 1952, 6.
[389] On the connections between NBC's pedagogic philosophy and its efforts to consolidate control of broadcasting in network hands, see William Boddy, "Operation Frontal Lobes versus the Living Room Toy: The Battle Over Programme Control in Early Television," *Media, Culture & Society*, 9:3 (1987): 347 – 68.

version of the play that Evans had developed as entertainment for the troops during World War II. Often referred to as "G.I. Hamlet" in the press, the edited version had a short run on Broadway and a national tour after the war.[390] Following *Hamlet*, NBC, Hallmark and Evans collaborated on two more broadcasts of Shakespeare: *Richard II* in January 1954 and *Macbeth*, the following season. Finally, after years of organizing its sponsorship activities into two categories—a lower-profile weekly half-hour series hosted by Sarah Churchill and one or two high-profile, big-budget specials a season—the company collapsed the distinction at the start of the 1955-1956, reformatting its weekly series so that it instead became a series of 5 to 7 specials, each of which would be broadcast via NBC's compatible-color system and scheduled to coincide with a holiday.[391]

Hallmark's transition away from the weekly half-hour series advertising commitment in favor of the series of specials was clearly indebted to a wider shift in industry and network practice. As part of its intense efforts to engineer a boom in sales for color television sets, NBC devoted an unprecedented amount of its evening primetime schedule in the 1954 – 1955 season to big-budget, one-off, compatible-color broadcasts of plays and revues featuring Broadway and Hollywood performers. Due to the considerable expense involved and their unpredictable scheduling, this new program format, which Weaver named "spectacular," was cast in the press as a significant and daring deviation from conventional network practice, a reading that to a certain extent obscures antecedents like *The Ford Fiftieth Anniversary Show* and the *NBC Opera Theatre*. While some of the initial spectaculars failed to achieve substantial ratings or critical

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[390] Quentin Reynolds, "G.I. Hamlet," *Collier's*, March 24, 1945, 38 – 39; "Schaefer Will Direct Hilltop Productions," *The Sun*, March 13, 1949, MT7; Gordon Allison, "Maurice Evans' 'Hamlet' In 2-Hour Show Today," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 26, 1953, D1.
[391] Val Adams, "Evans to Produce 8 TV Color Shows," *New York Times*, January 28, 1955, 25.

praise, others like *Peter Pan* were landmark successes.[392] Beginning in the 1955-1956 season, NBC retained the programming strategy but began to move away from the term "spectacular." A September 1955 press release promoting the network's compatible-color programming, for example, uses the term "special" and "spectacular" interchangeably.[393]

And yet, while the *Hallmark Hall of Fame* has much in common with other examples of dramatic inspirational television, the plays broadcast as part of this series throughout its first decade also abided by an additional set of constraints. Sponsored by a greeting card company, that is, a company that derived almost 50% of its profits from Christmas card sales, the plays selected to be broadcast as part of the *Hallmark* series also had to appeal to the group that, according to conventional industry wisdom, accounted for 80-90% of Christmas card sales—married women over 25.[394] Or, to be even more specific, the kind of women who read *Woman's Home Companion*, *Charm* and *Ladies' Home Journal*. Put simply, the plays broadcast as part of *Hallmark*, much like the art selected for its fine arts contests, could be "on any subject," provided that the subject was "in general, overall harmony with the spirit of Christmas."

Such an imperative begs a few obvious questions: what, according to Hallmark, constituted "the spirit of Christmas"? Or what, exactly, did it mean to be "in harmony" with that spirit? The short answer is that the company's definition of "Christmas art" was inclusive. While many of the plays broadcast as part of *Hallmark Hall of Fame* in its compatible-color era did dramatize questions of faith, they were not necessarily *about* Christmas or even Christianity or religion more generally. Instead, these "fine plays," to borrow the rhetoric of Hallmark publicity,

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[392] For a detailed account of the development of the spectacular as a program format, see James Baughman, *Same Time, Same Station: Creating American Television, 1948 – 1961* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 82 – 120.
[393] "NBC-TV Steps up Emphasis On 'Special Programming,'" *NBC Trade Releases*, September 1, 1955.
[394] Willatt, 11; "Hallmark talk, September 27, 1961," Fairfax M. Cone Papers, Box 139, Folder 23, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

worked from the same expanded definition of "Christian" that their decades of marketing had helped to bring about.[395] In that context, the "spirit of Christmas" is not only exemplified by attending church, engaging in prayer, or religious study. Nor is it restricted to more secular, but still rarefied activities such as art appreciation. Instead, it can also be embodied by certain kinds of consumerism, such as remembering to buy and send cards to family and friends in December—ideally the best cards, the ones with the Hallmark and crown on the back. What's more, as Barry Shank reminds us in his history of the greeting card industry, it was thanks to the aggressive marketing practices of companies like Hallmark that Easter, not to mention Mother's Day and Father's Day, effectively became additional Christmases, that is, occasions for millions of Americans to "remember with a Hallmark Card" and show that "you cared enough to send the very best."[396] In the context of television, such a carnalizing approach to (Christian) spirituality is exemplified by an adaptation process that, in the words of one *Christian Science Monitor* review, transformed "problem play[s]," that is, plays about ideas, into "close-focus drama of human-relationships."[397]

Hallmark's presentation of *The Lark* exemplifies this televisual iteration of Christmas art. A rendition of the life of Joan of Arc, *The Lark* originated in Paris as a stage play by Jean Anouilh, first produced in 1953. The French play's success led to an English-language

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[395] For more on the history of the greeting card industry, see Barry Shank, *A Token of My Affection: Greeting Cards and American Business Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
[396] This is, of course, Hallmark's famous tagline and dates to the mid-1940s. See, for example, "Thoughtfulness Lives Here," *New York Times*, November 24, 1945, 46. Regarding the history of the greeting history and its lobbying efforts to create a card-buying holiday for every calendar month, see Shank, *A Token of My Affection*, 172 – 174; Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).
[397] M.M., "TV View of 'Doll's House,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, November 17, 1959, 7. In her review of Hallmark's first "Portrait of Christmas" exhibition, Emily Genauer discusses Hallmark's transformation of Christmas in remarkably similar terms. She notes that for "many millions" of Americans, Christmas "has no religious significance at all and serves merely as a happy time to remember friends." Emily Genauer, "Art and Artists: Christmas-Card Contest," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 11, 1949, C8.

production that opened in London in the spring of 1955. The following season, Kermit Bloomgarden mounted a production on Broadway that featured Julie Harris as Joan, a new translation by Lillian Hellman, a score by Leonard Bernstein and a modern, starkly minimalist set designed by Jo Mielziner. While Harris's status as Broadway star predated *The Lark*, this play and her performance in it resulted in a different kind of publicity.[398] Words like "purity," "unexceptionable," "transcendent," and "perfection" became a routine feature of reviews and profiles.[399] In one representative set of reviews, the *New York Times* theater critic initially settles on "luminous," "radiant," and "splendour of spirit" as sufficient to the task of capturing the quality of her performance.[400] Less than two weeks later, even those plaudits no longer sufficed: an "incandescence that illuminates the hearts of everybody in the audience" is how he describes her interpretation of Joan in a follow-up review.[401] With credit going largely to Harris and Hellman, the New York production of *The Lark* was lauded for adding a "spiritual" and "moral" dimension to what had, in other iterations, remained little more than an "intellectual drama."[402] It is this version, the one defined by Harris and Hellman, that serves as a source text for the Hallmark-sponsored broadcast that NBC aired on February 10, 1957, that is, in the days leading up to one of its designated card-buying holidays, Valentine's Day.

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[398] *I Am A Camera* is the first Broadway production in which Harris received star-billing. See Gilbert Millstein, "'Unexceptionable' Julie Harris," *New York Times*, November 6, 1955, SM14.
[399] See, for example, Millstein, "'Unexceptionable' Julie Harris,"; Jack Gould, "Television: 'The Lark,'" *New York Times*, February 11, 1957, 53; Lewis Nichols, "Pattern of a Career," *New York Times*, October 15, 1961, X1; Michiko Kakutani, "Not Just for Love," *Washington Post*, September 12, 1976, 336; Maureen Dowd, "Julie Harris at 65: Gossamer and Grit," *New York Times*, March 31, 1991, 134; Ben Brantley, "When These Two Chat, an Era is Speaking," *New York Times*, September 14, 1997, 58.
[400] Brooks Atkinson, "St. Joan With Radiance," *New York Times*, November 18, 1955, 20.
[401] Brooks Atkinson, "New Joan of Arc," *New York Times*, November 27, 1955, 145.
[402] See Atkinson reviews; Edwin F. Melvin, "Julie Harris Starring in 'The Lark,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, October 29, 1953, 11; Walter F. Kerr, "The Lark," *New York Herald Tribune*, November 18, 1955, 12. For comparison's sake, see also, Brooks Atkinson, "Anouilh's Joan," *New York Times*, May 13, 1955, 21.

An adaptation of Hellman's adaptation of Anouilh's account of Joan's life story, Hallmark's version of *The Lark* is like Hellman's, only more so. Where Hellman drastically condensed many of the lengthy discussions about "man" and his relationship to the divine that dominate Anouilh's version of the play, James Costigan, the *Hallmark* writer, cuts them altogether. Where Hellman had minimized the coquettishness that Anouilh ascribes to Joan, Costigan takes out almost all references to sex, aggression or even pique related to Joan; in his version she more closely conforms to the idea of a saint. As a result of these changes, the Hallmark version of *The Lark*, like the Broadway version of *The Lark,* is less a portrait of a heroic individual's battle against oppressive institutions (church, state) and more a study of interpersonal relationality. Structured as a series of encounters between Joan and men who are vastly more powerful—or at least, that is what they initially appear to be—the play, especially in its televisual iteration, amounts to a demonstration of different methods of persuasion. The spartan set design, copied from Mielziner's Broadway production, only adds to this effect in that it provides virtually nothing to distract from the actors and their performances.[403] We see Joan convince first one man, then the next, then the next, and so on, to do as she says, and, perhaps even that what she says is a communication from God. Whether her inspiration is in fact divine, the play, in every iteration, leaves open to interpretation. Yet it is in the Hellman and Hallmark iterations that this ambiguity takes on feminist implications. By showing Joan's conquests as a series of conversations in which a "girl says one word of good sense and people listen to her,"[404]

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[403] While the set-design for the broadcast exemplified one interpretation of "modern," the accompanying commercial constitutes another. Devoted to Hallmark's "modern, contemporary line," the cards spotlight funny or humorous cards—as opposed to the "traditional" ones of picturesque landscapes or reproductions of Americana produced by Grandma Moses or Norman Rockwell. For a rundown of the artists with whom Hallmark associated during this period and to gain some sense of how they publicized those relationships, see "Art and Artists Gain Greater Fame as Christmas Cards Become New Art Medium," *Life*, November 30, 1953, 114 – 115.

[404] Jean Anouilh, *The Lark,* adapted by Lillian Hellman (New York: Random House, 1956), 94.

the play raises an implicit question: what does it mean that such an achievement (still?) seems like nothing short of miraculous?

The kinds of edits and modifications that Costigan made to *The Lark* were commonplace and, perhaps in anticipation of criticism, those involved in the production of *Hallmark Hall of Fame* emphasized that their plays were intended for home-viewing and had to be adapted for such conditions. In advance of *Hallmark*'s first Shakespeare broadcast in April 1953, for example, Maurice Evans, the producer and star, went so far as to author an article for the *New York Times*, laying out his concerns as performer regarding the conditions in which his performance would be seen. "In the theater," Evans writes, "the audience is commonly well-mannered and is loath to leave even when what it is watching is something short of its heart's desire. TV? Any 6-year-old in the living room can obliterate an actor and play with a flick of the wrist and go on to more tonic pursuits."[405] A *New Yorker* cartoon published a few years later would seem to confirm Evans's fears. It shows a well-heeled couple in the back rows of a Broadway theater, their heads dutifully turned, like those of their neighbors, to the scene unfolding on stage. The caption, though, reads as follows: "If we were seeing this on television, we'd have switched to another channel."[406] Allusions to the differing standards for television and stage productions also made their way into the broadcasts themselves. In an introductory credit that preceded each special in its 1956-1957 season, for example, Hallmark emphasized the connections to Broadway, designating the subsequent broadcast as one of a "series of fine

[405] Maurice Evans, "An Actor Discusses His TV Debut," *New York Times*, April 26, 1953, X11. Further instruction on how to watch the plays in the series was provided by the commercials that accompanied the broadcast of *Hamlet*. The most extensive commercial is structured as an interview with the woman who is watching the program, at home with her family. An affluent, white family—husband, wife and two teenage children—the majority of the discussion concerns the upcoming special occasions in their life, including Easter, birthdays and a graduation, and what cards or other Hallmark products each plans to buy the others.
[406] *The New Yorker*, January 15, 1955, 22.

plays…performed by some of the outstanding people of the theatre." Thanks to Hallmark, that play would now reach a much wider audience—not necessarily in its original form, but rather "in the truest form possible on television."[407]

Conclusion: The Politics of Ambiguity

In the final act of *The Lark*, Joan is momentarily broken by her inquisitors. Abandoned by her soldiers, terrified by the threat of death, and confused by much of what is said during her trial, she agrees to recant her claims to divine witnessing. Relieved to be absolved of the responsibility of ending her life and creating a martyr, the priests sitting in judgment sentence her to prison. There she discovers that the kind of life that is now available to her is more intolerable than the death she was spared. Envisioning a long, purposeless future in which she clings to the edges of wealth and royalty and is "remembered as a crazy girl who rode into battle for what she said she believed, and ate the dirt of lies when she was faced with punishment," she recants her recanting. The play frames the decision as her choice of an honorable, heroic death over a life devoid of meaning, passion, or connection to the sacred.

At the time of the 1957 broadcast, it is likely that at least some viewers would have made a connection between the position articulated by Joan and the one that Hellman had publicly adopted with regard to McCarthyism. Called to appear before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) in 1952 and answer questions regarding her involvement with the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) in the late 1930s, Hellman provided a letter to the committee in advance of her appearance. In the letter, which was read into the record by members of the committee during her appearance before them and as a result received extensive,

[407] All broadcasts from this season can be viewed at the UCLA Film and Television Archive.

and generally favorable coverage in the press, Hellman stated her willingness to discuss her own history with Communism, but warned that she would not answer questions regarding anyone else's. In her letter she explains this position in terms of personal integrity, rather than politics. "I am not willing, now or in the future," her letter states, "to bring bad trouble to people who in my past association with them were completely innocent of any talk or any action which was disloyal or subversive. […] To hurt innocent people whom I knew many years ago in order to save myself is, to me, inhuman and indecent and dishonorable."[408] Indeed, it is easy to discern echoes of Hellman's letter in the response Joan repeatedly provides when pressed by her ecclesiastical judges: "What I am I will not denounce. What I have done I will not deny."

In the aftermath of her HUAC appearance, Hellman was labeled a "known Communist" and remained blacklisted in Hollywood throughout the rest of the decade. That said, productions of her plays, new and old, continued to be mounted on Broadway. And, as the *Hallmark* broadcasts indicate, she was able to work in television during a time when other writers associated with Communism and blacklisted by Hollywood, such as Arthur Miller, could not. The difference in the standing of Miller and Hellman during this period seems all the more remarkable given that both had authored plays that were stridently critical of orthodoxies, political and religious. Yet, in contrast to Miller's *The Crucible*, which was widely read at the time of its debut as a thinly veiled critique of McCarthyism, *The Lark* did not provoke such commentary. Whereas Miller's treatment of Puritanism and the Salem Witch Trials was seen as a simplistic and perhaps distorting vehicle for his analysis of the American political system,

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[408] For a detailed account of Hellman's appearance before HUAC and discussion of press coverage of that appearance and her letter, see Alice Kessler-Harris, *A Difficult Woman: The Challenging Life and Times of Lillian Hellman* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2012), 259 – 265.

Hellman's adaptation of *The Lark* was read as inspiring and timeless.[409] To the extent that it was interpreted as having relevance to the contemporary political moment, *The Lark* was perceived as shedding light on the dangers of totalitarianism (i.e., the enemy identified by the McCarthy and his allies) and the decadence and corruption of Europe. Working in an idiom and context that aligned spirituality with Americanism, Hellman was able to articulate and disseminate a critique of orthodoxy and comment on the dangers of suppressing dissent. Yet, what remains unclear is the degree to which, in that idiom and context, her commentary could be heard.

[409] For a discussion of both Miller and Hellman's experiences as blacklisted writers, see Richard Pells, *The Liberal Mind in a Conversative Age: American Intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 323 – 326.

CONCLUSION

From Female Intellectualism to TV Feminism

In January 1964, a two-part essay by Betty Friedan appeared in *TV* Guide. Entitled "Television and The Feminine Mystique," the essay enlists the eponymous concept of Friedan's bestselling book to explain how television programs represent women and what those representations say about the people who make TV and the women who watch it. To those familiar with Friedan's reading of women's service magazines, her reaction to network television will come as no surprise. Weeks of viewing sitcoms, game shows, soap operas have left her, she explains, with a "rather horrifying feeling." The industry, in her view, "has trapped itself in the feminine mystique." Unable to conceive of women as anything other than "man's wife, mother, love object, dishwasher and general server of physical needs," producers of network television make shows that either reduce women to a "stunted, dehumanized, sick image" (in the case of soap operas, sitcoms and other examples of "bad" TV) or fail to include any roles for women at all (in news documentaries, dramas and other "good" TV). The result is that network television as a whole is bereft of "images of women active or triumphant in the world," an absence that in turn contributes to the deterioration or "mindless"-ness of the women at home watching it. "[T]elevision's image of women is *creating* millions of unnecessarily mindless, martyred housewives," she concludes, "for whom there may never be a thrill or challenge greater than that dirty kitchen sink" (emphasis in the original).[410]

[410] Betty Friedan, "Television and the Feminine Mystique," *TV Guide*, January 24, 1964, 6 – 11. The second part of this essay was published the following week. Betty Friedan, "The Monsters in the Kitchen," *TV Guide*, January 31, 1964, 19 – 24. See also Lynn Spigel, "The Making of a TV Literate Elite," *The Television Studies Book*, eds. Christine Gerahty and David Lusted (New York: St. Martins Press, 1998), 78 – 79.

While I intend to discuss Friedan's characterization of network television in some detail, I first want to draw attention to its publication venue. Friedan's critique of television as a medium that has nothing to offer the women who watch it appeared in *TV Guide*—a magazine whose primary objective is to facilitate watching television. In a way, this is not surprising. As Lynn Spigel points out in *TV By Design*, *TV Guide* had a history of "talking up" to its readers, featuring commentary on modern art movements like objectivism, for example, to indicate the sophistication of television and its viewers.[411] What is interesting is that by the early 1960s, this effort to flatter television's viewers often entailed deriding television itself. In the years leading up to the publication of Friedan's piece, *TV Guide* also ran articles or reprinted speeches by Edward R. Murrow, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and Gilbert Seldes that offered withering assessments of the industry's output as a whole.[412] Such criticism was not restricted to the industry's promotional outlets but instead, as previously discussed, was also articulated in *The Fabulous Fifties, The Trapped Housewife* and other examples of television for women who think. What this suggests is that by the early 1960s, it had become commonplace for the industry to address the people who watch television as people who criticize television.[413]

In this conclusion, I offer some initial thoughts on the relationship between the female intellectualism enacted and promoted by network in the early postwar years and the feminist televisual discourse that emerges in the 1960s. By "feminist televisual discourse," I am referring to statements that feminists made about television but also the articulation of feminism on

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[411] Lynn Spigel, *TV By Design: Modern Art and the Rise of Television* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008, 19 – 67.

[412] With regard to Murrow, see Michael Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 22 – 23. On Schlesinger and Seldes as contributors for *TV Guide*, see Michael Kammen, *The Lively Arts: Gilbert Seldes and the Transformation of Cultural Criticism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 265 – 268.

[413] For more on the television programming as a form of television criticism, see Ethan Thompson, *Parody and Taste in Postwar American Television Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

television. The relationship between mass-mediated culture and feminist discourse is often characterized in oppositional or antagonistic terms. That is, feminists, particularly those associated with the publications and protests of the 1960s and 1970s, are framed as being "anti-media." As Charlotte Brunsdon has noted, the popular construction of feminists as in opposition to media has often extended beyond the media texts themselves to also include the women who watch them.[414] Feminists, in other words, are not only positioned as being against media; they are also against the "ordinary" housewives who consume that media. As is indicated by Friedan's *TV Guide* essay, such characterizations are not without some basis. And yet, they also depend on reductive understandings of what is meant by "feminist" "housewife," and "media," narrow interpretations that, I will suggest, feminist critics have at times encouraged. In the preceding chapters I have sought to contribute to a more nuanced account of what television was and how women were conceptualized in the early postwar era. In the following pages I will pursue how, armed with this more fleshed out understanding of television, women and the relationship between the two, we might arrive at new ways of thinking the relationships between television, women and feminism.[415]

Feminists' TV Literacy

The first intersection between female intellectualism and feminist televisual discourse to which I draw attention is a somewhat obvious one: feminists were not just analysts of subjects

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[414] Charlotte Brunsdon, "Pedagogies of the Feminine: Feminist Teaching and Women's Genres," *Screen* 32:4 (1991): 364 – 381.

[415] See also the critiques of Brunsdon, Spigel, and Mary Beltran of the waves paradigm and their articulation of alternative methods for thinking the history of feminism and representations of women. Lynn Spigel, "Theorizing the Bachelorette: 'Waves' of Feminist Media Studies," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30:1 (2004): 1209 – 1221; Charlotte Brunsdon, "Feminism, Postfeminism, Martha, Martha, and Nigella," *Cinema Journal*, 44:2 (2005): 110 – 116; Mary Beltran, "Bridging the Gaps: Feminist Generation Gaps and Feminist Media Studies in the US Context," *Feminist Media Studies*, 11:1 (2011): 21 – 26.

like television and the homemakers who consume it; in many instances they *were* those homemakers. As discussed in the first chapter and fourth chapter, the identity "homemaker" was not restricted to housewives in the early postwar era. Instead it was applied to all women in the position of caring for children and a husband, including those women who directly participated in the paid labor market. With regard to the homemaker part, Friedan was famously forthright about this, presenting her own personal history as the basis for her insights about normative femininity and its oppressive limitations. Interestingly, she was less forthcoming about her relationship to television. In her *TV Guide* essay, for example, Friedan notes at the outset that her conclusions about the industry are based on "several weeks of sitting in front of my television set," as well as conversations with those who work in the broadcasting industry. In other words, her expertise comes from reporting; not from routine viewing.[416] In fact, framed as a revelation produced after a finite period of research, her characterization of television reads like an expose of otherwise unfamiliar territory, evoking Michele Hilmes's description of soaps and other daytime media as the lower-profile, less respectable portion of the broadcast schedule.[417]

And yet, despite such efforts to disassociate herself from the medium and the "millions of unnecessarily mindless, martyred housewives" she credits it with creating, Friedan's writing contains passing references to individual television programs, suggesting that her viewing was not restricted to professional obligations. In the *TV Guide* essay, she uses the *Twilight Zone* to convey to her readers the "eerie"-ness of TV's representations of women.[418] Similarly, in *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan briefly mentions *The Trapped Housewife* in a discussion of recent

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[416] Friedan, "Television and The Feminine Mystique," 7.
[417] Michele Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922 – 1952* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 130 – 150. On the trope of the TV analyst as explorer of unknown territory, see also Mimi White, "Flow and Other Close Encounters with Television," *Planet TV: A Global Television Reader*, eds. Lisa Parks and Shanti Kumar (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 94 – 110.
[418] Friedan, "Television and The Feminine Mystique," 7.

news discourse about "the problem that has no name," and invokes *Hallmark*'s production of *A Doll's House* in an effort to sketch feminism's recent history and its ongoing relevance.[419] Citations such as these, while abbreviated, indicate that Friedan was a viewer of television for women who think. Perhaps just as importantly, they also suggest that she assumed her readers shared her televisual literacy, that *The Feminine Mystique* was addressed to women who watched, or at least knew of, this same kind of television.

Friedan was not alone in holding this view. Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, feminist activists appeared on talk shows hosted by Merv Griffin, David Susskind and Dick Cavett, that is, discussion programs addressed to an egghead audience. Presumably their decision to appear in such venues was motivated by a desire to not just publicize their political positions to a public at large but, more specifically, to address women who were likely to be persuaded—women like them. In a 1970 appearance on *The Dick Cavett Show*, Susan Brownmiller and Sally Kempton are more or less explicit in articulating this strategy. Almost immediately after she and Kempton are introduced by Cavett as members of the Women's Liberation movement, Brownmiller announces that Hugh Hefner, a fellow guest on that night's program, is "my enemy." Given this dramatic opening, it is perhaps unsurprising that Cavett assumes both women, and feminists in general, are opposed to all mass-mediated culture. "What about Helen Gurley Brown?" He asks them. "Is she part of the same problem?" Brownmiller and Kempton immediately contest this view. They acknowledge their ambivalence about Brown but also pay tribute to her ("Helen Gurley Brown was the first person who said it was okay for a woman to be single into her forties and fifties—you've got to give her that."). They also try to establish some daylight between *Playboy* and *Dick Cavett*. Just because they are against the former and its

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[419] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), 22, 81 – 83.

depictions of women that doesn't mean they oppose the latter. As Brownmiller explains to Cavett, they *like* his show. Based on her references to his predilection for showcasing Shirley Chisholm, Beverly Sills and other "strong women" as guests, she also indicates that they watch the show.[420]

From Women's Editor to Feminist Media-Worker

Identified in their *Dick Cavett* appearance as representatives of Women's Liberation, Brownmiller and Kempton are also defined by their profession; Cavett introduces each of them as a journalist who has recently published an article on feminism. This brings me to the second intersection between female intellectualism and TV feminism. In the late 1960s and the very early 1970s, many of the women serving as the faces of feminism on network television were media-workers, that is, writers with a background as editors, freelance journalists and researchers in the book and magazine publishing industries. This was particularly true in the case of intellectualist venues like the talk show.[421] In addition to Brownmiller and Kempton, Betty Friedan, Kate Millet, Gloria Steinem, Germaine Greer, Jill Johnston were among the media-workers who appeared as guests during this period, tasked with explaining their politics to those who thought of feminism as a thing of the past—the host, their fellow guests, the audience.[422]

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[420] Quotes from the episode are taken from a copy that is posted online. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BXALFRMpCw . With regard to the homemaker label, both Brownmiller and Kempton volunteer in the clip that they are married. Regarding the presence of women on intellectualist television in the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Susan Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books, 1994), 221 – 244; Anselma Dell'Olio, "Home before Sundown," in *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women's Liberation*, eds. Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Ann Snitow (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998), 149 – 170.

[421] For discussion of representations of feminism in the different but related formats of news reports and documentaries, particularly those that were in circulation in the aftermath of the 1968 Miss America pageant protest, see Bonnie Dow, *Watching Women's Liberation, 1970: Feminism's Pivotal Year on the Network News* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

[422] For accounts of these and other feminists on talk shows, see Douglas; Dell'Olio; Roxanne Dunbar, "Outlaw Women: Chapters from a Feminist Memoir-in-Progress," in *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women's Liberation*, eds. Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Ann Snitow (New York: Three Rivers Press,

The prominence of women with a print media background speaks in part to a bias in the talk show format. As Marcie Frank argues in her study of Gore Vidal, hosts like Paar, David Susskind, Merv Griffin and Dick Cavett sought out writers as guests, because, unlike actors or politicians, they could work without a script and be counted on to have something interesting to say.[423] That said, the writer-as-feminist figure is also indebted to television's longstanding practice of using print media associations to convey and confirm the expertise of its female experts. As discussed in my first chapter, this practice dates back to CBS's 1945 collaboration with *Mademoiselle* magazine and can be traced through later figures such as Dorothy Doan and Arlene Francis, both of whom were designated as "editor-in-chief" of their women's service programs. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, writers like Rona Jaffe and Helen Gurley Brown also made use of this history, appearing as celebrity media-workers on talk shows, but also as women who were experts on women. In this sense, the female writer-expert constituted a familiar conceptual figure, one that feminists in the 1960s could adapt and embody.

In a 1965 article for the *New York Times*, Gloria Steinem is explicit regarding this strategy, pointing to Pauline Frederick, Aline B. Saarinen, and Arlene Francis as role models and suggesting that women who wish to appear on television emulate their career paths and modes of self-presentation.[424] Directed at women looking to transcend the "*Today* girl" role or to transition from producers and researchers to on-camera personalities, Steinem's article is also a reminder that the relationships between feminist guests and male talk show hosts were often mediated by female media workers. Indeed, retrospective accounts of the 1960s suggests that the appearance

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1998), 90 – 114; Patricia Bradley, *Mass Media and the Shaping of American Feminism, 1963 – 1975* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2003), 96 – 97; Stephen Battaglio, *David Susskind: A Televised Life* (New York: St. Martins Press, 2010), 234 – 238.

[423] Marcie Frank, *How to be an Intellectual in the Age of TV: The Lessons of Gore Vidal* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 34.

[424] Gloria Steinem, "Nylons in the Newsroom," *New York Times*, November 7, 1965, X23.

of the first feminists on talk shows were the result of extended communications between female publicists who believed in the feminist cause and female TV producers who at the very least thought it would make good television.[425]

Among feminism's 1960s TV representatives, Betty Friedan seems to have been particularly adept at inhabiting the part of the female writer-expert. Billed as a psychologist and best-selling author, she was compared to Helen Gurley Brown and appeared on talk show panels that also featured Rona Jaffe.[426] One imagines, though, that the platform she could achieve as the female writer-expert sometimes undercut the politics with which she was associated. In August 1967, for example, she served as one of the talking heads, along with Joyce Brothers, Anita Loos, and Marya Mannes, in a color TV documentary entitled *Do Blondes Have More Fun?* that was broadcast on ABC and, as many critics pointed out, sponsored by Clairol.[427]

While the role of the female expert-writer was one means through which feminists could make themselves intelligible to TV producers and audiences, this path was not free of complications. The women who achieved prominence as experts in "women's issues" did not necessarily wield authority in matters that were perceived as being beyond their purview. In fact, sometimes quite the opposite. In a 1959 episode of *Playboy's Penthouse*, for example, Rona Jaffe is treated by host Hugh Hefner not as a talented fiction writer, but instead as a "young attractive girl" who merely created a (sensationalized) record of her own office romances. When Jaffe protests, emphasizing that her bestselling novel, *The Best of Everything*, is not her life

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[425] See Stephen Battaglio's account of the efforts of Jane Everhart, a *Cosmopolitan* editor by day and a NOW volunteer by night, to get feminists booked as guests on Susskind and Cavett's shows. Battaglio, 232 – 234.

[426] On Friedan's early media forays, including her appearances on shows hosted by Virginia Graham and Merv Griffin in the early 1960s, see Tania Grossinger, *Memoir of an Independent Woman: An Unconventional Life Well Lived* (New York: Skyhorse, 2013).

[427] Percy Shain, "Night Watch: Equal Time for Brunettes?" *Boston Globe*, August 29, 1967, 32; "Do Blondes Have More Fun?" *Variety*, August 30, 1967, 40.

story, but rather entailed imagination and empathy on her part, Hefner and the other male guests and hosts, all laughs and smiles, explain that their criticisms are not personal. They like her, of course; it's just that they're worried that her book is the latest sign of a dangerous phenomenon: the "over-feminization" or degradation of culture as they know it.[428]

More than a decade later, an episode from the *Dick Cavett Show* would echo this dynamic. In response to a guest's assertion that there is no such thing as a female intellectual, Cavett names a succession of women who defy this claim. Each woman—Margaret Mead, Hannah Arendt, Mary McCarthy—provokes cheers from the audience. Each woman, that is, save the last one. When Cavett calls out "Helen Gurley Brown," he is greeted with silence, followed by giggles. Moments such as these suggest that, with regard to authority and prestige in general, the distinction between the critical female housewife and female media-worker, even in the case of someone as celebrated as Brown, was not so great.[429]

Shared Blind Spots

In the *Playboy's Penthouse* episode cited above, Hefner's articulation of his fears regarding the "over-feminization" of America is cut short by a woman with a breathy voice. "Excuse me, Hef," she says, "Ella is her." "Ah," Hef responds, as he turns and smiles at the camera. "Wonderful. Ella Fitzgerald is here everyone." This interaction captures the last intersection between female intellectualism and TV feminism that I will explore. At the risk of

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[428] Jaffe, along with Lenny Bruce, Nat King Cole, Ella Fitzgerald, A.C. Spectorsky, and numerous unidentified women, appeared in the premiere episode of *Playboy's Penthouse*, a copy of which I viewed online. To be clear, the series was distributed via syndication, not network. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwN09HzpYBQ . See also Spigel, *TV By Design*, 55 – 56; Thompson, 76 – 97.

[429] The guest asserting that there are no intellectual women is Mort Sahl. He appeared on the *Dick Cavett Show* in 1970. His tirade began as commentary on the episode of *Cavett* that had featured Hefner, Brownmiller and Kempton. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLEEoBhTw5A .

pointing out the obvious, Hef's reaction indicates that neither he nor his male guests perceive Ella Fitzgerald and her music as belonging to the same category as Rona Jaffe and her soap-y bestseller. We can see some of the same distinctions and occlusions in Friedan's *TV Guide* essay published a few years later. Focused primarily on the depiction of women in soap operas, situation comedies, and game shows, Friedan does also provide some discussion of primetime dramas, news documentaries and reports, if only to assert that women are all but absent from such texts. Left out of her analysis is any acknowledgement of the variety programs and talk shows that were also a part of the television schedule. The female entertainers who appeared on such programs surely defy her claim that television was bereft of "images of women active or triumphant in the world."[430]

In a way, this point is a familiar one. As bell hooks famously noted in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Friedan's conceptualization of women in *The Feminine Mystique* is restricted to "a select group of college-educated, white, middle and upper class, married women." Friedan, hooks continues, "ignored the experiences of all non-white women and poor white women." hooks, with good reason, frames such occlusions in terms of privilege and marginalization. The experiences of "a maid, a babysitter, a factory worker, or a prostitute" are left unaddressed in *The Feminine Mystique*, and she asserts, in the iteration of feminism with which it is associated. Here I want to build on those insights by offering some initial thoughts on how the narrowness of this construction of "woman" and "feminist" played out in 1960s

[430] Friedan, "Television and The Feminine Mystique," 11. For an account of some of the female entertainers on variety television in the 1950s and 1960s, see Meenasarani Linde Murugan, "Exotic Television: Empire, Technology, and Entertaining Globalism (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 2015). On the relevance of such performers to the history of feminism, see Douglas, 83 – 98.

television, arguably enabling more widespread dissemination of feminist positions and politics.[431]

As the names I have invoked perhaps indicate, the women presented as the faces of feminism and given a chance to speak at length about their cause were, for the most part, members of the same select group to which hooks refers. One important distinction between the two groups is that in the case of TV's feminists, many of them were not married.[432] This narrow conceptualization of a feminist meant that Florynce Kennedy, Dorothy Pitman Hughes, Pauli Murray and other women of color instrumental to the success of feminist organizations during this period did not appear on network television as feminism's advocates, at least not in the setting of a network talk show. At the same time, this narrow understanding of who a feminist was and what she looked like did create opportunities. Women whose public recognition came from success in other fields than book and magazine publishing, the very entertainers that Friedan's *TV Guide* essay ignores, were frequently booked on talk shows and in their non-official capacities spoke on what were then designated as feminist issues. Jane Fonda, for example, invited to promote the film *They Shoot Horses Don't They?* (1969), notes the social subordination she experiences as a woman; Rita Morena discusses her successful efforts to negotiate a no nudity clause in her contract for *Carnal Knowledge* (1971); Ruby Dee in an appearance on *Dick Cavett* is questioned by fellow guest BB King on her marriage and discusses at some length the demands and professional sacrifices it has entailed. In such instances,

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[431] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 1-3.
[432] Jill Johnston's appearance on Dick Cavett's show in 1971 is evidence of at least one woman figuring both lesbianism and feminism by that time. Johnston mentions the appearance and its date in an article she published ten years later. Jill Johnston, "Lesbian/Feminism Reconsidered," *Salmagundi*, 58/59 (Fall 1982-Winter 1938): 76 – 88.

exclusion from the category of feminist perhaps facilitated these women's efforts to publicize issues and topics aligned with feminist politics.[433]

Shirley Chisholm provides what is perhaps the best example of the opportunity created by the exclusionary, narrow view of the identity feminist that was shared by some activists and some television producers during this period. Appearing on the *Dick Cavett Show* in August 1969, Chisholm shares stories about her encounters with other members of Congress. An anecdote about her refusal to accommodate the "Georgia delegation" and move from one table to another in a Congressional cafeteria is met with cheers and laughter. A follow-up anecdote that emphasizes her status as one of the few women in Congress, however, seems to take both the host and the audience by surprise. Cavett, by way of response, makes a derisive reference to the "rabid" kind of feminists—the ones who are advocating that hiring ads cease to be organized by gender. It is clear that he and his audience have failed to comprehend that they have one of these "rabid" figures in their midst.[434]

Appearances such as Chisholm's indicate the work that women outside the "select group," as hooks put it, did in publicizing feminist issues—if not necessarily or always the Women's Liberation Movement—on intellectualist television in the 1960s and early 1970s. Subsequent research on sources such as syndicated and local television, as well as print publications like *Ebony* and *Jet*, would be necessary to do justice to such contributions.

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[433] Fonda appeared on *Cavett* on March 13, 1970, according Cavett's youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3211zSfwsAo . Morena appeared on December 30, 1970: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaAaUDAmao4. Ruby Dee's appearance was also in 1970: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krUzdIvsw4s . For an overview of *The Dick Cavett Show*, *The Merv Griffin Show*, and their characterization as intellectualist television, see Bernard Timberg, *Television Talk: A History of the TV Talk Show* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

[434] https://www.shoutfactorytv.com/the-dick-cavett-show/the-dick-cavett-show-black-history-month-shirley-chisholm-august-8-1969/56a2cc4c69702d07f9de7b00 .

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