Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Master's Degree Programme

in European, American and
Postcolonial Languages and Literatures

Final Thesis

Feminism and Popular Culture in the '60s, '70s, and '80s

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Academic Year
2022 / 2023

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Introduction

In today's society, there is no doubt that feminism and popular culture are intrinsically linked, but so was the case in the '60s, '70s, and '80s. Feminism and pop culture flourished side by side: just as feminism evolved into a cohesive movement and developed its feminist-oriented theories, pop culture became a powerful means of communication that could easily reach most Americans. What this thesis tries to explore is their interconnection and how their interdependence forced both of them to change and adapt so that the principles of the burgeoning feminist movement could be spread through easily accessible media products such as magazines, the news, and television. Feminists quickly realized that, as they were beginning to come together under the umbrella of the feminist movement, they were in need of a vessel that would promulgate their message. And what better one than popular culture? And yet, this relationship with the media forced feminists to come to face a mostly negative portrayal of feminist ideas due to the systematic and well-established media institutions that sought to push back against feminists' interference. What this research also sets out to prove is that, despite the negative portrayal of the feminist movement in the media, feminism needed popular culture to spread its message to those who were not part of the academic world and wanted to approach the issues.

To prove this point, this thesis first takes a look at the importance of representing women's multifaceted and paradoxical identities to showcase 'the woman experience' while abandoning the man-made identity imposed on them. Exploring how men subjugated women in the past led to questioning how the Women's Liberation Movement managed to break free of those constraints, only to find itself trapped in the bubble of academia. Although feminist theory, understood as the expansion of feminism in theoretical discourses of all disciplines, was fundamental in legitimizing the movement's principles, it also distanced feminism from a variety of different publics, catering only to the academic one.

Feminists quickly understood the potential of popular culture to broaden feminism's scope and make it approachable to a larger section of the population. Three influential figures of the movement - Gloria Steinem, Kate Millett, and Audre Lorde - approached feminist discourse - that is the use of communication to relate feminist theories - to adapt it to the media and popular culture. Although they tackled the issue from different angles, either becoming pop culture icons themselves or working at a grassroots level, they understood the necessity of popular culture, and in particular of the press, to further the movement's causes and ideas.

Adapting theoretical feminist principles to the world of popular culture raises more questions: how could feminists transform feminist thought and theory to make it more approachable while maintaining its nuanced facets? How could feminists overcome

women-specific codes that contribute to framing women solely from the male point of view? This means focusing on semiotics and the production and reception of signs, and how to thwart them to reflect a more feminist-oriented perspective while also battling with the pushback from the institution of the media.

These concepts inform the analysis of instances around how the media reacted to feminist ideas and led to questioning how feminism was represented in magazines, the news, and television. The examples chosen in this thesis aim to showcase that the media engaged in either utter dismissal or a careful selection of the principles they were willing to endorse. Two of the most popular magazines at the time - *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Playboy* - were chosen to highlight their reluctancy to accept the intrusion of feminist ideas in their publications; the Miss America Protest in 1968 and the Women's Strike for Equality in 1970 were two major events in the early stages of the Women's Liberation Movement that illustrate the press's reluctancy to engage with feminism as well as origins of pejorative stereotypes that still surround the movement to this day; and the popularity of sitcoms in the '70s and '80s is the perfect vessel to explore the media's tactics to include feminist ideas in their programs while also reinforcing and perpetuating its patriarchal stance.

From the investigation into the media's ambiguous relationship with feminism arises a question regarding institutions and their role in maintaining their male-dominated structures while also facing attempts by feminists to subvert the status quo and implement changes in the representation of women and feminism. This thesis illustrates the constant disregard of feminist principles by the institution of the media, underlining that, for feminism to fully flourish, change needs to happen, leading to the question: if institutions stand in the way of feminism, and by extension social equality, what is the best course of action to ensure change?

Ultimately, this thesis aims to showcase the fundamental role that popular culture had in the '60s, '70s, and '80s to further the feminist cause. Despite its negative representation in the media, popular culture helped to make feminism accessible and approachable and to take another step towards the dismantling of patriarchal oppression against all individuals.

Chapter 1: The Development of Feminist Identity and the Rise of Popular Culture

1.1 Man-Made Identity

In a 1980 interview with journalist Karla Hammond, Audre Lorde - lesbian feminist and author of *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* - ponders on how alienating men's definition of 'woman' feels to her:

> If we don't name ourselves, we are nothing. As a Black woman, I have to deal with identity, or I don't exist at all. I can't depend on the world to name me kindly, because it never will. If the world defines you, it will define you to your disadvantage. (Lorde "An Interview" 19)

In this short paragraph, Lorde encompasses issues such as race, identity, subjugation to men, and the negative representation of women, while making clear that the main problem is the definition of 'woman'. Indeed before investigating the influence of the feminist movement on popular culture and the media during the '60s, '70s, and '80s, it is crucial to take a step back and analyze previous definitions of 'woman'. Our promise is that the feminist movement will have a broader understanding of the term, the kind of understanding that will lead to Lorde's powerful statement on identity and the flourishing of the movement in the latter part of the 20th century. The aim of this section is to build on Audre Lorde's quote to grasp the development and consequent establishment of the feminist movement: coming to terms with their place in the world allowed women to figure out their identity as individuals, one that is separate from that of men. Around the corner of the Women's Liberation Movement, women were adjusting to the new realization that they deserved to be the subject rather than 'the other'.

The concept of identity has been the object of inquiries and analyses for centuries, ranging from Greek philosophers like Plato to Black lesbian feminists such as Audre Lorde (Connell 207). According to Raewyn Connell, the term 'identity' initially meant unity and "was sometimes contrasted with 'diversity' and 'variety'" (207). For centuries, thinkers have tried to give sense to the world around them, which meant exploring similarities and differences among humans. In her essay "Identity", Connell explains:

> Men and women had long been thought of as the same kind of being, although the male was a more perfect and powerful version of it than the female. European intellectual culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries increasingly rejected this view and defined men and women as different in nature, even opposites. Men and women were irrevocably assigned to "separate spheres" suited to their different natures. (208)

It is not just the isolation of the two spheres that is of note; it is also important to stress the positioning of one sphere - that of men - as superior to the other - that of women. This imbalance in power dynamics situated women in a perpetual position of inferiority and disadvantage, one that is so systemic and institutionalized that it has prevented them from breaking free of this condition. With her statement "If the world defines you, it will define you to your disadvantage" (Lorde "An Interview" 19), Lorde stresses an issue that affected - and continues to affect - women. The separation of the two spheres created a disconnection among human beings and it relegated women to an inferior position, one that men could exploit and mold according to their fancy.

The examples in this section were chosen to reflect the issues around identity that concerned women as they were coming into their own both as individuals and as a movement, a century-long search for self-identity, one that was separate from the confining and restrictive definition, previously only imparted to them by men. Women struggled to obtain the kind of self-awareness that would allow them to push back against the oppression of sexism and patriarchy but I would argue it is necessary to demonstrate the reasons behind the tortuous and century-long road that would lead to the discovery of a new self-awareness and self-representation of women.

Up until early European women's rights advocates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the creation of the term feminism in the early 1890s in France (Offen 126), all definitions of what a woman was originated from men. Going back centuries, an example can be made of the Middle Ages as this era favored the aggregation of unmarried women into convents, facilitated the development of organizational skills, and gave women the tools to learn to read and write, an opportunity that was not granted to them outside of life in the convent (Walters 6). Despite their best efforts, women's perpetual condition of inferiority continued to place them as mere shadows of men. They were relegated to the margins of society, placed in a state of subjugation by the male relatives or husbands in their lives, and voided of any rights. Men were considered the prototype of the complete and fully formed individual, while women were given the position and identity of "the other", that is not men. A lack of understanding of the female condition turned into a deep distrust of everything related to the female sex. The witch craze in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and even seventeenth centuries did nothing but accentuate the disparity between the sexes as it cast women in the role of peripheral, subservient, and incomprehensible beings. Ignorance over women-related problems transformed itself into hostile attacks which then escalated into the persecution of those who were deemed "the cunning folk" (Gaskill 42), otherwise commonly known as witches. They were the embodiment of the other, liminal beings and ambiguous creatures that

blurred the lines between humans and monsters. The publication of *Malleus Maleficarum* by Heinrich Kramer in 1486 (Gaskill 35) further contributed to the creation of a stereotypical image of witches, which saw them as hags and old healers equipped with the demonic powers of *mira* (31) and of dark magic called, *malefikia* (Bragg 02:15). What made women more susceptible to the temptations of the devil was their position in society as the weaker vessel. Those who read the *Malleus Maleficarum* and subscribed to its ideology made sense of women's alleged surrender to the Demon by holding their uncontrollable sexual desire and their propensity to be governed by their emotions responsible for their desertion (19:55). Pseudo-scientific theories in both the *Malleus Maleficarum* and King James I's *Daemonologie* (Gaskill 62) reaffirmed women's secondary status in society by casting them as an unknown, inexplicable, and baffling entity to members of the male sex. As Malcolm Gaskill wrote: "the mysteries of womanhood lent substance to the mystery of what it meant to be a witch" (43). Their proximity to carnal desires - and by extension, to the Devil - and their inability to keep their emotions in check made them volatile and unpredictable, something men preferred to suppress rather than confront. Women were further confined to the role of "other" - a sort of sidekick to men, the main protagonists - and did not yet possess the tools that would eventually render them conscious of their self.

The unraveling of the enigma of "woman" was a painstakingly slow process, but what lit the fuse that sparked the development of ideas centered around the female experience was the French Revolution. Ideals stemming from the Enlightenment - encompassing "intellectual communities across much of eighteenth-century Europe" (B. Taylor 263) and an overall social and civil turmoil - made a definitive impact on a cardinal figure who influenced women for centuries to come. In her work titled *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft begins to lay the foundation of what would lead to the blurring of the stark line that separated the spheres of women and men, positioning herself as a pioneer in placing the education of young girls and women centerstage and claiming that girls' inferior position to boys stems from the absence of equal education between the two. In a scattered and disorganized body of work - according to her husband written "in a period of no more than six weeks" (Godwin) - Wollstonecraft hopes to inspire fellow members of her sex to a "revolution in female manners" (Wollstonecraft 37), one that will awaken other women from the torpor of their ignorance. In expressing her doubts on whether her ideas on educating women and young girls will pan out, Wollstonecraft undermines her own stance. She repeatedly distances herself from her own sex, labeling other women as 'them' in an attempt to separate herself from women who prefer to remain uneducated. She avoids identifying herself either with the female or male perspective, despite employing a writing style that is decisively male (Finkle 126) in an attempt to appear less passionate and emotive. She employs a harsh and, at times, aggressive

tone towards fellow thinkers with whom she disagrees while also laying out her theories in a rational and emotionless style that she felt was associated with male writers. Although her work was initially met with favorable reviews (B. Taylor 262), the failures of the French Revolution and indiscretions in her personal life contributed to devaluing the dialogue she had ignited (Botting 274). Once again, Lorde's statement "If the world defines you, it will define you to your disadvantage" (Lorde "An Interview" 19) is central in Wollstonecraft's case, because due to her radical positions, she was appointed the pejorative label of "hyena in petticoats" (Finke 116). Her contributions to a feminist-adjacent discourse positioned her as one of the earliest pillars of the early feminist movement and her impact was so profound that, despite never having been in the United States (Botting and Carey 707), Wollstonecraft heavily influenced the future of feminism.

It took around fifty years for her ideas to catch on overseas. Those seeking to advance the role of women in society seized these chances and started building communities of like-minded people. The most important event to ignite the flame that would lead many women to join the uphill battle to fight for their rights - especially the right to vote - was the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention in New York (Botting 289). It was a gathering of women that helped to create a "shift towards the development of organized feminism" (289) and to spread the ideals centered around the right to vote. The Seneca Falls Convention became the stepping stone for the advancement of women's rights and their fight to obtain the right to vote as it helped spread ideas about the education of women and young girls, the possibilities of employment and self-reliance, and the gain of more rights for married women (Walters 56). Early suffrage-based women's rights gatherings emerged from the anti-slavery movements of the 1830s and produced crucial documents such as *The Declaration of Sentiments*, a treaty modeled on the *Declaration of Independence* and in which the "unalienable Rights" (United States, 1776) that it proudly stated were not extended to women but rather actively excluded them. Instead, the *The Declaration of Sentiments* boldly affirms that "the history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward women, having in direct object the establishment of an absolutele tyranny over her" ("Report of the Woman's Rights Convention"). Thinkers like Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the Convention and were indispensable contributors to the development of the early stages of the movement and its fight for the right to vote, ownership of their property, and more access to education and work opportunities (Weber 59). Upper-class women like Stanton, Anthony, and Mott did not stand alone among those trying to make their voices heard. Former slave and anti-slavery activist Sojourner Truth did not shy away from talking about the crucial issues of race and class that privileged well-educated white women such as Stanton and Anthony had dismissed. Truth delivered her powerful speech at the Akron

Women's Rights Convention in Ohio (Ducille 36) and inserted herself into the discourse by asking "Ain't I a woman?" to the crowd, thus claiming her own identity as a woman and pushing back against the dismissive and negative narrative that saw black women as inferior beings. Nevertheless, there were divisions within the suffrage movement, a conflict centered around Black and queer issues that would also appear in the Women's Liberation Movement in the '60s, '70s, and '80s. For black women, their identity was not limited to their condition of being women, but it also extended to issues of race. White feminists were not welcoming to the insertion of race into the women's rights discourse as they reckoned it would dilute the cause and shift its focus away from the advancement of women's rights. Just as black women were excluded from the Civil Rights Movement by black men, they were reserved the same treatment by white feminists. Nevertheless, Truth's statement stood the test of time because more than a century later it became part of bell hooks' book titled *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism* and much of Audre Lorde's work. It is essential to highlight that gatherings like the Seneca Falls Convention and the Akron Women's Rights Convention were a chance for fellow thinkers to meet and interact, and women's involvement in the African-American abolition movement aided their own cause: they were gaining more and more confidence in public speaking, they were learning how to organize in their communities, and they were taking on an active role in molding society in a way that would encompass them and end their disenfranchisement from public life. Protests and marches in the '20s acted as the blueprint for the demonstrations organized in the late '60s and '70s which saw 50.000 people take to the streets to stand in solidarity with feminist principles.

Activists set up women's organizations and magazines and they fought hard for women to be included in the legislative civil rights improvements that benefitted newly freed African American men, although with little to no success. Women's rights leaders grew resentful of the exclusion of women from both the newly ratified Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. They were met with disappointment when the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified and it said that: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" (United States, Congress, 1868) but what was missing, according to Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, were any mentions of gender. Eventually, women fought for and won the right to vote with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 which expanded the Fifteenth Amendment by clearly stating that the right to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex" (United States, Congress, 1920).

The latter part of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth centuries was an overall period of change, turmoil, and modernity for American society. Epiteths to women ranged from witches and hyenas in petticoats to suffragettes, the latter a word employed for

the first time by the English newspaper *The Daily Mail* in 1906 as a derogative title assigned to women who were fighting for the right to vote (Walters 75). Another term that "only began to be used widely in France in the early 1890s" (Offen 126) as a "synonym for women's emancipation" (126) was the word 'feminism'. The debate around an effective way to differentiate those who believed and were fighting for self-sovereignty and the Women's Liberation Movement of the '60s, '70s, and '80s had been a point of contention for scholars. They proposed dualistic distinctions that include 'old' and 'new' feminism; 'social' and 'hard-core' feminisms, 'first-wave' and 'second-wave' feminisms, 'classical' and 'modern' feminisms, 'maximalist' and 'minimalist' feminisms, and 'humanistic' and 'gynocentric' feminism as a way to separate the more recent movement for women's liberation and the older suffrage-based feminism (Offen 132). The importance of attributing a label - and therefore an identity - to the feminist movement has been repeatedly stressed, but categorizing an ever-growing and ever-changing movement into established categories such as 'first wave' or 'second wave' highlights a restrictive and reductive note. It does not grant a fluidity that is necessary when interrogating ideas and intellectual movements. Therefore, this paper will focus on ideologies and ramifications inside the movement itself and overall concepts linked to feminism, so terms such as first-wave or second-wave feminism will not be included.

Feminism - and by extension feminist - became a term under which women could identify themselves. After centuries of being attributed mostly negative labels, women found themselves with an encompassing name they could stand behind and to which declare their affiliation. They had given themselves an identity and had the tools to turn their thoughts into actions and voice their complaints and they rejected a society that cast them in a non-speaking role that did not grant them any agency in the making of decisions or advocating for their needs. Some feminist theorists "have described a way in which feminist activism 'opened a space' for them to rediscover themselves as women and [...] to theorize that identity and its possible transformations" (Thornham 28). Not every woman was on board with the movement itself or its actions: many women chose not to identify with feminism or stand behind its ideals and it must also be stressed that not all women were represented. Just as the relationship between women fighting for the right to vote in the nineteenth century alienated the abolition movement, this early reiteration of the movement was a collective predominantly dominated by well-educated middle- and upper-class women and it excluded Black women and other minorities. However, one event managed to break through the initial polarization of the movement and that was World War I.

World War I was the stepping stone for women to realize they wanted more and to escape the confines of their homes. They demanded more rights and more agency. They wanted feminism. And just as the word itself came into existence, Sarah Gimké's concept of

'New Woman' reflected this need to be emancipated and freed from the restrictive constraints of patriarchal society. 'The New Woman' was a middle-class woman who found the traditional - and for the time, exclusively appropriate - role of stay-at-home mother and wife restrictive and oppressive (Gamble 259). As women were trying to obtain some self-determination and experiment with their newly-found agency, there was the emergence of codification of what was deemed to be acceptable and "normal" and what was regarded as "abnormal" (Meyerowitz 10) in terms of sexual behavior. The death of Queen Victoria in 1901 signaled the questioning and abandonment of the strict Victorian values centered around chastity and purity in favor of a new approach that meant getting rid of strict and confining Victorian moral standards and explore their sexuality and sexual pleasure, an approach that was reflected both in society at large and also in literature. A fitting instance is *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin, a short novel about a woman who finds herself debating on having an extra-marital affair and experiencing a watershed revelation regarding her own happiness, her lack of freedom, and her entire identity as a woman (Chopin), anticipating Sarah Gimké's 'The New Woman'.

At the same time that women were starting to explore sex as a concept linked with pleasure, the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, was publishing studies and essays on women and sexuality. The strong influence of his theories throughout the twentieth century led people to believe that female sexual expression had to revolve around either a paternal or a male figure and it could not be articulated in an independent way and free of male influence. One of Freud's assessments of women and gender links clitoral and vaginal sexuality to the shift from mother to father related to the Oedipus complex. Freud regards the shift between what he labels an "immature" orgasm - the clitoral one - to a more "mature" one - the vaginal one - as an important development in girls' exploration of their sexuality (Gerhard 452) and inevitably connects it to the phase of the Oedipus complex. As girls came to the realization that their clitoris was inferior to the penis, a sexual displacement starts to take place, concerning the transposition of girls' sexual attachment from the mother figure onto the father figure. By doing so, it creates a rivalry with the parent of the same sex. Such a shift creates a liminal moment where the girl stands outside of any sexual category, only to fall back onto heterosexuality, which "would be consolidated only when the girl shifted her libido away from the mother and the clitoris and on to the father and the vagina" (453). Another one of Freud's theories about women and sexuality deals with their perceived inferior status with respect to men "females are described as experiencing 'guilt' originating from their recognition that they lack a penis and the repression of their desire to possess one" (Gamble 183). Moreover, women's lack of penis implies the act of castration, thus framing women as potential threats to men's physical manhood. Feminist thinker Julia Kristeva rebukes Freud's wildly accepted statements on the inferiority of women in her 1981 essay "Women's Time" by writing:

> the reality of castration is no more real than the hypothesis of an explosion which, according to modern astrophysics, is the origin of the universe: Nothing proves it, in a sense it is an article of faith, the only difference being that numerous phenomena of life in this 'big bang' universe are explicable only through this initial hypothesis. (Kristeva 22)

Here Kristeva compares Freud's belief in the secondary status of women to the scientific hypothesis of the origin of the universe. She does not utterly dismiss the theory but asks the reader to consider it as another possibility and not the unobjectionable truth. Freud's position on women, sex, and their sexual desire had a great impact on how society perceived women and how women discerned their own sexual desires, a topic that will be discussed at length by feminists in the '60s, '70s, and '80s.

As women gained the right to vote, they entered public life and started more openly discussing issues that concerned them, such as wages and birth control. Two women who stood front and center in the 1920s: Margaret Sanger, whose legacy was ultimately ainted by her beliefs in eugenics and her support of white supremacy, established the organization 'Planned Parenthood' ("The History & Impact"), and Virginia Woolf who, despite her blindstops regarding her privilege and generational wealth, advocated for women's rights to earn and keep a livable wage.

It was World War II that lent itself to another opportunity for women to enter the workforce en masse, taking on positions that were previously held by men, now fighting on the front. It further established the concept that women did not exclusively belong in the home and deserved to contribute to society as workers. Now that they had entered the workplace, women were not willing to return to their previous domestic lives. The newly-formed United Nations took to heart issues regarding equality among men and women stating that they had "equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution" and acknowledged the extra role that women had as mothers (Walters 97). These ideas came to fruition in 1947 when the United Nations assembled a Commission on the Status of Women and two years later, it issued the Declaration of Human Rights (97). It is clear that the war had a profound impact on the position that women held in society. They no longer accepted being left at the margins. They now had a seat at the table and they intended to keep it. The turmoil the first half of the twentieth century encouraged a sense of revolution in matters pertaining to both feminism and women's sense of self. The United States experienced a great economic boom and entered the age of capitalism (S. Grant 342). More and more Americans were living in the suburbs and therefore owned a car as well as a television (342). Life was changing rapidly and so did women's approach to themselves as a subject.

Identity, and self-identification have both been issues women have had to grapple with for centuries. Whether they were called 'witches' or not considered at all, women have always played the role of 'other'. A necessary inner reflection that was brought on by Simone de Beauvoir and her work *The Second Sex*. De Beauvoir's work was integral in forcefully opposing this categorization and calling for women to create their own identity. She faults men with having taken over the category of 'Self' and 'Subject' and dismisses women as 'other' and 'object', that is, someone who endures the action and sees it reflected onto themselves without ever taking part in it (Thornham 29). De Beauvoir claims that women were regarded as the 'not-Self', forever relegated to being 'The Other', an entity with no discernable identity if not the one given to her by men. De Beauvoir continues by imposing part of the blame on women who have absorbed their role of being second to men: their only escape from this subjugation is to become conscious of their status and fight for their right to equality in economic and social terms (Thornham 29). What is of note is De Beauvoir's call to action, an appeal to women to revolt against the social conventions that had been oppressing them for centuries. From De Beauvoir's work will stem the uprisings that characterize women's liberation various - at times more successful than not - attempts in the '60s, '70s, and '80s because this process of consciousness-raising will be fundamental in the awakening of women's realization that they are unwilling to be solely relegated to home and domestic life.

Such a complex and tumultuous matter renders itself fundamental in laying down the groundwork to understand the unavoidable steps that were taken up until the '60s, '70s, and '80s in order for the women-oriented, feminist, and revolutionary era to happen. These were not only decades in which the movement flourished but they also reflected an exploration of what identity meant, how it was connected to social conventions and institutions, and how those imposed a specific identity on individuals. These explorations revealed themselves to be a double-edged sword because identifying oneself within a certain community led to generalized assessments of what said community stood for and a subsequent unfavorable portrayal. Placing a group of people in the same category can minimize their individuality and diversity within that body, confining them to a singular identity that they are not able to divert from. The recurring stereotype of what feminist looked like that was portrayed in magazines and newspapers cemented itself into people's minds, they were 'bra-burners', man-hating, angry women who, as Art Buchwald wrote in his article, wanted to destroy everything America held dear (Buchwald). In fact, Black lesbian feminist Audre Lorde explored the concept of intersectionality in the '80s, focusing on her multiple identities as lesbian, Black woman and poet and her refusal to hide one in favour of the other. Equating all feminists to this stereotype can cause the erasure of a diverse set of points of view within the movement and the varied - and at times contrasting - experiences women brought to their community. The inevitability of

the 'Who Am I?' question forces women to put a name to their identity, whatever that may be. As Lorde reminds us: "I have to deal with identity, or I don't exist at all" (Lorde "An Interview" 19).

1.2 The Relevance of Popular Culture

In *Feminism and Pop Culture,* Andi Zeisler writes "it's probably no accident that some of the highest-profile actions of the second wave movement involved popular culture" (Zeisler 12). I would argue that it is most definitely no accident that feminism and pop culture would become intertwined. Women's search for an identity that would break them free of the subjugation of men and patriarchal institutions was undoubtedly aided by the spread and commodification of popular culture. Popular culture did not only serve the capitalist interests of institutions and however flawed and imperfect it might be, but it is also intrinsic to the advancement of feminism as a mass-based movement whose aim was - and is - to disperse ideas that would put an end to sexist practices and patriarchal supremacy. This next section will explore the rise in popularity and commodification of feminist theories and popular culture and their interconnection.

Just as feminism was gaining a more and more prominent role in women's lives, so was popular culture, so much so that the two issues together ended up being intrinsically linked. This work focuses on three widespread aspects of pop culture at the time: magazines, the news, and television because these were the means of communication that were more readily available and easily accessible to the majority of Americans living in this era. The easy access to pop culture allowed some core and more mainstream feminist principles to enter people's homes and mass-consuming media gave the opportunity for expressions of feminism to appear in pop culture. Images of women protesting what they thought was a superficial representation of women at the Miss America Pageant flooded the news: women saw other women coming together under the banner of feminism to make their voices heard and take a stance for what they believed in.

Fig. 1 Protesters brandishing objects that symbolize their oppression from Grant, Bev. Women protesting the Miss America Pageant. *smithsonianmag.com*, January 2018.

Placing activists front and center made feminist causes more identifiable and it gave voice to the more outspoken people within the movement. That being said, not all aspects of the marriage between popular culture and feminism were positive because filtering feminist issues through the institution of the media was both detrimental and beneficial to the movement, as it portrayed the movement in a pejorative easy but at the same time, it allowed more people come into contact with feminist ideas and principles, bettering the chances are that both men and women will rise together against the patriarchal system and end sexism altogether.

That being said, the definition of popular culture has been a point of contention among scholars. Dismissing popular culture as the opposite of 'unpopular culture' and high culture - a possible definition given by some scholars (Parker 153) - or equating it to mass culture fails to take into consideration its role in the average consumer's life. The aforementioned means of communication - magazines, the news, and television - all fall under the umbrella of what can be considered popular culture, and yet, it is still a narrow list. Andi Zeisler expands the reach of popular culture by writing:

> We're also talking about things that were in no way created to entertain us but that nevertheless become part of our mass consciousness: social and political events that stand as touchstones of collective experience—the Vietnam War, the impeachment hearings of President Clinton, the horrors of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina—as well as coverage of these events on daytime talk shows, nightly news, and everything in between. (Zeisler 3)

I would argue that an encompassing explanation of what popular culture stands for is a product that is liked and enjoyed by a vast majority of people, easily accessible, and entertaining to its audience as well as products created by moments that exceed their own boundaries of historical events and expand into how such event is covered and consumed by the masses. From the '60s onwards, mass consumption of popular culture meant that every person in America was experiencing the same event at the same time, whether that was tuning in to watch *I Love Lucy* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* or catching the 6:30 Evening News with Walter Cronkite. The variety of content available to consume was somewhat limited by the number of networks - NBC, CBS, and ABC (Zeisler 102) - and yet, this was fundamental in creating a unifying identity. Everybody was subjected to the same media, everybody read the same newspapers and watched the same programs on television, as the commodification of the entertainment industry and the ruling capitalist mentality secured the prevailing role of magazines, the news, and television in people's lives. The spread of popular culture had rendered itself the ideal vessel for feminism to enter people's homes on a daily basis but such a task proved itself to be rather challenging.

There is no doubt that in the '60s, '70s and '80s the establishment of university courses about feminist theory was instrumental in the flourishing of feminist ideas. In fact, in *Feminism is For Everybody*, bell hooks reminds us that before the publication of feminist literature and the establishment of women's studies courses at universities, women used to get together in groups to learn about feminism (hooks 10). These consciousness-raising groups in the '60s were described by attendee Alix Kates Shulman as meetings to "regularly discuss the effects of male supremacy not only on women's professions, education, and public life, as the women in NOW were doing, but on their "private" lives as well" (Shulman 592). Despite the creation of organizations such as NOW - National Organization of Women - by the author of *The Feminine Mystique* Betty Friedan (S. Grant 371), the increasing popularity of consciousness-raising groups, and the various protests happening in the late '60s, I would argue that feminism was given true legitimization thanks to its presence in universities courses. It stopped being a mass-constructed movement and it gained traction as a discipline that needed to be studied. hooks gives a first-hand recollection of her time as a student of feminist theories by stating that:

> the institutionalization of women's studies helped spread the word about feminism. It offered a legitimate site for conversion by providing a sustained body of open minds. [...] And it was in those classes that many of us awakened politically. [...] My conversion to feminist politics had occurred long before I entered college, but the classroom was the place where I learned feminist thinking and feminist theory. (21)

The institutionalization of feminist studies gave legitimacy to the cause and helped spread the word about feminist principles and gain momentum on a larger scale, but I would argue that the relegation of feminist theories to the world of academics was in part detrimental to the cause itself. The confinement of feminist theories to elitè groups of academics distanced women from a hands-on approach to the day-to-day struggles women were facing because restricting discussions about feminism to higher education tended to exclude the point of view of poor and working-class women narrowing such meaningful discourse to the experiences of privileged - and mostly white - middle-class women. This rendered feminist theories approachable only to thinkers, philosophers, and educated people and therefore, such a self-referential approach excluded the large majority of the population who did not belong to the academic world. In order for any sort of change to happen, feminism needed to catch on on a larger scale and encompass the largest possible number of people. The need to establish a mass-based movement became the path forward to implement the change feminism was pushing for. But in order for feminism to gain momentum, seep through all aspects of society, and take on a big role in people's lives, it needed to be easily accessible to a variety of different

publics. And this is when popular culture comes into play. It became a vessel that allowed the transmediation of theoretical academic principles into a product that was void of the jargon that alienated those who were not fluent in it. And yet, the feminist discourse in university classrooms awakened women's curiosity in all women-related issues, gave them a political identity to which they could belong, and the tools and the necessary terminology to create their own identity as feminists, legitimizing not only their theories and discourses but feminists' existence as well, therefore making Lorde's quotation "I have to deal with identity, or I don't exist at all" (Lorde "An Interview" 19) extremely relevant once again. Now that women had gained legitimization through institutions of higher education, another problem presented itself.

If feminism needed to be a "mass-based movement that offers feminist education to everyone" (hooks 24), how can academic and theoretical texts become mass-consumed? Mass-consuming media gave the opportunity for expressions of feminism to appear in magazines, on the news, and on television. Still, feminist thinkers were not able to find a way to get their message across in a way that would set straight the media's perception and representation of their discourse. I would state that even though the portrayal of feminism in the media was a mostly negative one, it was still incremental in helping spread feminist issues just by broadcasting the protests and sit-ins, and having feminists be part of mainstream media. Despite the flourishment of feminist studies in the '70s and '80s, their feminist-oriented theories failed to burst out from the secluded bubble of academics because this self-referential approach that prevented theories and ideas from spreading to the general public and becoming mainstream. What did come across to the general public was the media's version and its coverage of feminist issues. Making the ideals they were fighting for more accessible to people meant that those who would not have otherwise had access to feminism became aware of what the movement was struggling to achieve. In her article *Media Images, Feminist Issues,* Deborah L. Rhode writes "The press is increasingly responsible for supplying the information and images through which we understand our lives. For any social movement, the media plays a crucial role in shaping public consciousness and public policy" (685). Although the media's coverage brought to light the issues the movement was fighting for and spread them to the public, it also opened it up to fierce criticism. It meant that more coverage of the movement meant more people having unfavorable opinions about it. Feminism was dismissed and ridiculed, excluded from the strict binary identity women were confined to. The Miss America Pageant protest is an ideal instance in which the movement's message clearly came across while being "distorted and sensationalized" (Baker Beck 142). This event was particularly poignant because it originated one of the epithets most associated with feminists: bra-burners. Although at the 1968 Miss America Pageant protest no bras were burned but

“ceremoniously deposited in a trash receptacle” (Rhode 693), the name stuck. The media - in this instance, *Time* magazine - was not shy in labeling women participating in the protests as ‘strident’, ‘humorless’, ‘extremist’, ‘lesbian’, and ‘hairy legged’ (693).

These labels appointed to women by the media sculpted the formation of a separated category to frame feminists, one that did not even consider women who adhered these ideals as part of the two opposite cornerstones of the spectrum established by society: women were confined to two diametrically opposed roles, and appointed a fixed identity decided by men, that of either wife or of object of sexual desire. On one side stood the idealized version of women, one that was seen in advertisements or on wildly popular sitcoms such as *Father Knows Best* and *The Donna Reed Show* that saw the woman in the family as confined inside the home, utterly devoted to her husband and children; on the opposite side stood the sexually provocative women in magazines such as *Playboy, Hustler* and *Esquire*. Such a clear distinction between wife and whore - for lack of a more politically correct term - is particularly evident in the extensive variety of magazines aimed at the two genders. Magazines for women emphasized the clear distinction between the two genders, giving beauty tips and advice to women on how to appear and behave, while the ones targeted at men ranged from cheesecake magazines to softcore and hardcore pornography (Meyerowitz 10) featuring women whose representation only aimed at satisfying what Laura Mulvey would end up calling “the male gaze” (Mulvey 11). The way feminists were represented by the media did not match with the society-imposed characterization of what women should behave and look like; they neither belonged to the category of chaste and subservient housewife nor that of the object of men’s desires. Such additional identity was not even remotely contemplated as an acceptable one. One feminist managed to bridge the gap that divided these separate identities: Gloria Steinem. Her unconventional yet mesmerizing beauty stood in the way of the media’s characterization of feminists as ugly and unattractive. She was the perfect example to make the argument that not all women were unappealing, man-hating lesbians. Despite being famous for her feminist positions and her journalistic writing, her beauty and her persona contrasted the image of - as *The New York Times* described them - “strident” “humourless”, “extremists” “lesbians” and “hairy legged” (Rhode 693) women. Some fellow feminists were irked by the media’s interest in her due to its focus on her appearance while actively dismissing the issues she was advocating for (Karbo). Her attractive looks stood in the way of an unbiased recognition of her work. It seemed that feminists could not be represented in the media without running into a series of biases: either feminists were dismissed for being too unattractive or they were not taken into consideration because of their attractiveness.

Suffice it to say, the role that popular culture played in spreading feminist principles is undoubtful. It was a necessary means that allowed feminism to burst out of the academic

world and cross over into mediums such as the news, magazines, and television which would aid the commodification of feminist theories and ideas. Pop culture has the ability to fracture boundaries and expose the audience to new ideas and concepts that they would not have otherwise come into contact with.

Chapter 2: Feminist Discourse: Gloria Steinem, Kate Millett, and Audre Lorde

The '60s, '70s, and '80s were three pivotal decades for the flourishing of the feminist movement and the launch of its most staunch advocates into the spotlight of popular culture. Despite the numerous works by crusaders of the feminist movement analyzed in the research process for this work, three women who stood out in these decades were Gloria Steinem, Kate Millett, and Audre Lorde, authors who represent only a small percentage of the many different identities of the feminist movement and the many divisions and points of view within it. Steinem, Millett, and Lorde are of different races, and sexualities, and experienced vastly distinct life journeys and yet they were brought together by their strong beliefs in what feminism stood for and what it could achieve. What also binds them together is their ability to understand the fundamental role of popular culture and the media in spreading feminists principles to as many people as possible. This chapter examines Gloria Steinem's, Kate Millett's, and Audre Lorde's works and it focuses on their different approaches through different means of communications to make their voices heard and further the movement's causes and ideas. While I would argue that Steinem employs a more mainstream process that leads to her and her magazine *Ms.* to adapt to the already existing media institutions in order to altern them from within rather than completely revolutionize them, her notoriety allowed her to become an icon of the Women's Liberation Movement and spread the feminist message to a vast net of individuals, a task she might not have been able to accomplish had it not been for her connection to the mainstream; although reaching the same level of icon status, Millett's approach to feminism is more academic-focused and relies on women's studies and laying down the foundation for a critical and theoretical approach; on the other hand, Lorde's perspective on how to advance feminism relies on a much smaller scale than Steinem and Millett, focusing in her essays and poetry on the Black and lesbian esperience and aspects of feminism she believed the media had forgotten.

2.1 A Journey towards Feminism with Gloria Steinem

"This revolution has to change consciousness, to upset the injustice of our current hierarchy by refusing to honor it, and to live a life that enforces a new social justice" (Steinem, "Living the Revolution"). In 1970 Gloria Steinem was relatively new to the role of activist within the movement, and yet, in a couple of years, she would set up her own publication Ms. in 1971, become one of the most recognizable figures of the Women's Liberation Movement and a household figure in feminist circles.

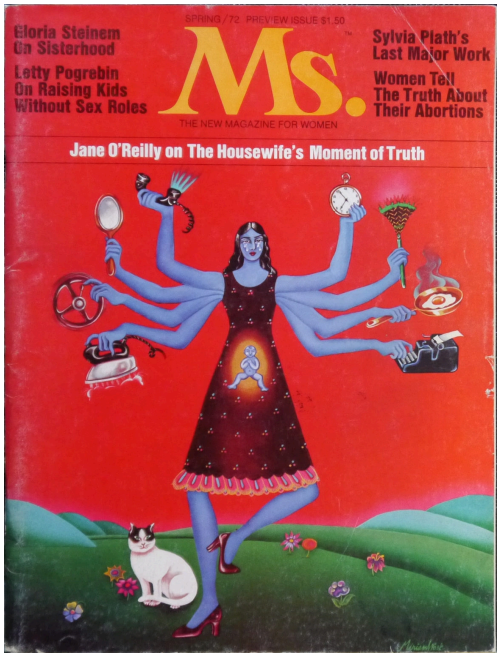

Fig. 2 Cover of the first insert of *Ms. Magazine* in *New York Magazine* from "About Ms." *msmagazine.com*

In analyzing Steinem's writings and her career, her relationship with popular culture became especially of note because of its many facets and contradictions. The spotlight shone on her either made her the hero - penning essays and articles about relevant feminist issues - or the villain in people's stories, going as far as being deemed "one of the primary causes on the downfall of [...] the American family and society" by a caller on live television while a guest on *Larry King Live* (*Gloria: In Her Own Words* 49). Right from the beginning of her career, Steinem herself became a figure of pop culture. Despite being a self-claimed shy person who "started out life as a writer" because "writers write in part because they don't want to talk" (Dominus), she became an out-spoken representative of the movement, appearing on news programs, sitting down for TV interviews, and writing for various publications, including her own. Gloria Steinem went beyond the written text and became pillars of the Women's Liberation Movement. She rose to such prominence that she became a symbol of the movement, a recognizable figure that, for better or for worse, was held as representative of what feminism stood for in the '60s and '70s.

And that is primarily thanks to another piece of writing that became the breakthrough moment of her career, one that moved her away from frivolous articles about stockings and into serious journalism and helped launch Steinem's career as a feminist and activist. "A Bunny's Tale" - a scathing exposé on her stint as an undercover Bunny at the *Playboy* Club in 1963 - made her a famous, or rather, infamous personality. In both articles, Steinem is able to touch upon important issues concerning the feminist movement while also appealing to the general public in a way that makes the articles both accessible and thought-provoking. Steinem details the objectification she underwent while working as Bunny Marie - her chosen pseudonym - and her first-hand involvement proved itself a way to break through with her

readers. By minutely describing her experience, Steinem is able to connect with her audience on a personal level, in fact, at one point in her article, she gives a rather grim observation: "All of us [...] were intended to be a living window display" (Steinem, "A Bunny's" June 1963), emphasizing how demeaning and objectifying the entire endeavor was. She recalls how she got this special assignment by recounting:

> I was sitting at an editorial meeting at Show magazine [...] and so suddenly the editors - who were all guys, of course, I was the only woman - looked at me and said: "No, you do it." I said: "No, are you kidding me? I mean, they're not going to hire me. I don't have ID, I don't... I'm too old". Actually, even then I was too old to be a bunny. [...] So I needed to pay my rent and so I went. (Steinem "Gloria Steinem" 12:50)

Although she accepted the assignment mostly out of necessity, what would come out of a month of tight costumes, bunny ears, learning how to serve drinks without spilling out of her clothes, and being considerably underpaid, is a powerful exposé on the newly opened *Playboy* Club. Steinem is able to bring into the foreground a cascade of issues close to the heart of working women and feminists alike, by talking about the practices these women - all strictly under 24 - were subjected to: the long hours, the falsely advertised pay, sexual exploitation, and Hugh Hefner's rigid standards of beauty, describing in detail the strict dress code rules that involved wearing a skin-tight satin Bunny costume and three-inch heels at all times. Steinem does not only focus on the objectification of women's bodies but she brings forward issues such as fair wages by laying out the considerable gap between her tough working conditions and the meager pay of 12$ she received every eight hours of work (Steinem, "A Bunny's" June 1963), a job that forced her, and her fellow co-workers to be perpetually cheerful and pleasant while maintaining a well-kept appearance, an aspect that reinforced the stereotypical role of the subservient yet bubbly woman. In the years following the publication of "A Bunny's Tale", she managed to report on political campaigns and even interview First Lady Patricia Nixon (Steinem, *Outrageous Acts* 187, 189). And yet, the stigma of being a *Playboy* Bunny kept following throughout her life. In a 1995 Postscript in a reprint of her book *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, Steinem claims a lack of serious assignments due to her fame as a Bunny (77). It was an easy way to attack her, to use her pleasant appearance to diminish her worth as a journalist and a serious writer, especially when pictures of her dressed as a Bunny (76) are often brought up to dismiss her and her journalistic career. She admits that "when anybody wants to put me down, they say: 'Well, she was once a bunny'" (Steinem "Gloria Steinem and Ronan Farrow" 14:38). In her 2011 documentary *Gloria: In Her Own Words* she confessed: "I regretted it for many years having done it because it made me unserious. But as feminism began to dawn on my brain, belatedly in life, I became glad I did it"

(*Gloria: In Her Own Words* 05:50). This backlash against her as a writer and feminist reinforced the claims of perpetual and systemic dismissal of feminism by women involved in the movement and highlighted the fact that Steinem's Utopian and feminist version of the future, delineated in "What It Would Be Like If Women Win" has not come to fruition yet. In addition to her stint as a *Playboy* Bunny, her pleasant appearance, her fashionable clothes, and her ever-present aviator glasses contributed to her dismissal as both a serious journalist and a feminist. Her beauty prevented her from being taken seriously in a professional setting because she did not conform to either expectations of what feminists should look like. And yet, despite these seemingly irreconcilable differences, she became pop culture: she is such a recognizable figure of the '70s and an emblem of the feminist movement elevating her above the movement while also being a synonym of the movement itself.

What makes Steinem an interesting feminist icon to analyze is her rapport with the media. She fiercely criticized the media as an oppressive institution while also taking part in it to further the feminist cause. This begs the questions: should feminists play into the consumerist tendencies of the American capitalist society? I would argue that it is inevitable for the movement to need means of communications that are able to reach the highest number of people possible. What is also especially difficult to achieve for feminists is walking the thin line between perpetuating and reinforcing practices used by the same industry that feminism were trying to improve and having a platform that is able to reach a vast audience. A fitting example in Steinem's case is her magazine *Ms.*. I would argue that the publication can be seen in two different perspective: it can be interpreted as a way of trying to reach the largest possible audience thanks to the launching pad that New York Magazine provided, or it could be seen as an alignment with the mainstream thought so it could fit into the pre-existing mold of the already existing media practices. I would suggest that these perspectives are not mutually exclusive: while it is true that the magazine was born out of the same industry that rejected feminism and it still had to deal with advertisements and pressures from within the industry, an aspect further delineated in Chapter 4 of this thesis. I would also observe that it is essential to have a product that is broadly available to spread feminist ideas and in the '70s, no such publication was available. *Ms.* became the place that could amplify feminist voices to a wide audience and bring feminist issues closer to people's lives.

Case in point, before *Ms.* and the other feminist publications of the '70s, Steinem recalls the very few jobs available for women at that time. Steinem was interested in politics and wanted to write about it but there were very few female political reporters so she was forced to lower her expectations. She recalls her lowest moments as a journalist in her documentary: "I came to New York full of idealism and wanting to write serious assignments, but as a freelance writer, I was assigned things about fashion, and food, and makeup, and babies. Or the low

point of my life, writing about textured stockings" (*Gloria: In Her Own Words* 07:40). What changed her life was an assignment that led her to a "an abortion speak-out in a church basement in the Village in 1969, when I was already in my mid-thirties" (Dominus). Hearing the harrowing testimonies of women who had put their own lives in danger to receive an illegal abortion resonated with her because she too had had an abortion when she was just out of college. In her own documentary, she shares her experience and the impact the abortion speakout had on her at the time:

> I was 22 and there was no women's movement then, there was no companionship. So I never told anybody. And I listened to these women testify about all that they had to go through. The injury, the danger, the infection, the sexual humiliation to get an illegal abortion and I suddenly realize: why is it a secret? If one in three women has needed an abortion in her lifetime in this country, why is it a secret? And why is it criminal? And why is it dangerous? And that was the big click. It transformed me and I began to seek out everything I could find of what was then the burgeoning women's movement. (*Gloria: In Her Own Words* 09:30)

What appealed to Steinem about feminism was the sense of community, a sentiment also particularly relevant to Audre Lorde's writing. As Steinem emphasized: "I don't think I had ever felt part of a group before" (*Gloria: In Her Own Words* 11:30), and feminism gave her the possibility of being a part of one. Her story reflects that of the many women who around that period also found the feminist cause through consciousness-raising groups, protests, and speakouts. As she heard women recount their pain and suffering and their desire to change laws to allow safe and regulated abortions, Steinem felt a kinship to them and, just like many women in the late '60s and early '70s, experienced the benefits of consciousness-raising groups which "produced a great emotional outpouring of feelings against the way women had been used sexually and revelations of sexual shames and terrors we had all lugged through our lives" (Shulman 592). The relevance of these groups in the development of feminist awareness is unquestionable. Women came together to realize that they were not alone in their distress and that they were all victims of the same social constrictions. By the end of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, more and more women were becoming comfortable with their sexuality, their relationship to sex, and were fighting for safe reproductive rights, a fight that would lead to the 1973 Supreme Court 7-2 ruling, famously known as *Roe v. Wade*[1], a landmark decision that gave women the constitutional right to obtain an abortion in the first two trimesters of pregnancy (Mangan and Breuninger). The wide range of topics discussed gave them the opportunity to go beyond their disappointment in their daily domestic lives, explore their innermost thoughts, and realize that their oppressive condition was shared among them.

After the speak-out, Steinem wasted no time becoming an outspoken member of the movement: in 1970 she gave a statement before the Senate Hearing Committee on the Judiciary on the importance of the Equal Rights Amendment (Congress), she talked about the myths regarding women's inferiority compared to men and the relevance of the feminist movement (Steinem "Living the Revolution"), and in an essay in *Time* Magazine she laid down the possibility of "What It Would Be Like If Women Win" (Steinem "What It Would Be"). Steinem recalls that she was forced to became so outspoken was because she was not given space to write about feminism in other publications. In her documentary, she recalls:

> I remember when I got so frustrated with the inability to publish anything much about the movement that I actually started to go out and speak. So I went with my speaking partner Dorothy Pitman Hughes, an African-American woman, and wherever we went, it was just outstanding that there would be these huge crowds [...] I started to speak in public regularly and it had just begun then. On the subject of women, I thought I could explain it and make an emotional connection with an audience that perhaps was rare among speakers on the subject. (*Gloria: In Her Own Words* 14:16, 14:51)

In fact, she was able to accomplish another goal that would help her become an icon in the movement: she understands how to connect with an audience. In addition to "A Bunny's Tale", another fitting and more recent example that showcases her ability to resonate with an audience is her 2019 interview on *Late Night with Seth Meyers* in which Steinem debunks the assumption that feminism is solely related to women while linking it with the betterment of men's life. "After Black Power, Women's Liberation" ends with "Because the idea is, in the long run, that women's liberation will be men's liberation, too"(Steinem "After Black Power"), a powerful statement that shows that the movement would benefit men jut as much as women, a sentiment that she would continue to use throughout her career to stress the universality of the movement, so much so that almost fifty years later, it is still an issue she is advocating for. In her vision of Utopia, published in an essay in *Time* titled "What It Would Be Like If Women Win", serves as a blueprint to delineate the movement's goals as well as creating a final goal which feminist can aspire to achieve and formulates a reality where the feminist Utopian ideals have come to fruition. She focuses on topics ranging from abortion, sexism, gay marriage to the dissolution of the wage gap and the breakdown of traditional sex roles. Moreover, she focuses on equal pay for equal work, and the importance of more women elected to office and even to the office of the President[2]. What is of note is that in the article, Steinem cites men's shorter life span - compared to women - as caused by "more diseases due to stress, heart attacks, ulcers, a higher suicide rate, greater difficulty living alone, less adaptability to change" (Steinem "What It Would Be") and suggests that the implementation of a more equal and

balanced share of the burden of responsibilities and would avoid a premature demise. Talking to the host Seth Meyers, Steinem reiterates that "women's movement and the dissolution of gender roles means that you would have about five more years of life to live" ("Gloria Steinem Explains" 00:08), connecting men's health and the proposals of the feminist movement. Steinem makes an example out of the male host only to ask him and the in-studio audience if they would be interested in living longer and then adding with a laugh: "Who else can make that offer?" ("Gloria Steinem Explains" 00:30), as a way to look for consensus and to show a relatable and down-to-Earth example the real-life consequences that the movement was supporting.

What made Steinem such a prominent figure in the '70s is her ability to exploit the media to facilitate her goals. I would argue that her kinship with the institution of the media was not the revolutionary and exclusionary stance that some other feminists were expecting. Her approach came from the assumption that the industry could be changed from within and as Chapter 6 of this work explores, that is a dubious approach to a necessary change in the media landscape, but it was fundamental to launch feminist on the national discourse. She made use of pop culture to express feminist issues exactly because she understood that in those early stages of the feminist revolution, the movement needed the media to spread their message to as many women as it could. And Steinem did so by trying to cater feminist issues to the average American.

What is remarkable is that Steinem employs a clear and easy-to-understand writing style to make it easier for the average news consumer to understand and relate to the contents. Published in New York Magazine on April 4 1969, "After Black Power, Women's Liberation" lays out an extensive summary of what the movement was trying to achieve and its key figures. The piece begins as if it were a fairy tale:

> Once upon a time—say, ten or even five years ago—a Liberated Woman was somebody who had sex before marriage and a job afterward. Once upon the same time, a Liberated Zone was any foreign place lucky enough to have an American army in it. Both ideas seem antiquated now, and for pretty much the same reason: Liberation isn't exposure to the American values of Mom-and-apple-pie anymore (not even if Mom is allowed to work in an office and vote once in a while); it's the escape from them. (Steinem "After Black")

In this initial paragraph, Steinem is able to immediately capture the attention of the audience by referencing the typical formula used in fairy tales while also rebuking the antiquated idea of 'liberation' in favor of one that established it as an escape from its contraints. Here Steinem is able to showcase how the movement was distancing itself from what she refers to as "Bloomingdale-centered, ask-not-what

I-can-do-for-myself-ask-what-my-husband-can-do-for-me ladies of Manhattan, who are said by sociologists to be 'liberated'" (Steinem "After Black"). While delineating the goals and tactics of some radical groups such as W.I.T.C.H. and The Redstockings, Steinem is quick in dismissing potential accusations of elitism or unlikeliness in its effectiveness, grounding the movement to more soldering and concrete foundations:

> If all this sounds far-out, Utopian, elitist, unnecessary or otherwise unlikely to be the next big thing in revolutions, consider two facts: 1) the WLM is growing so rapidly that even its most cheerful proselytizers are surprised, spreading not only along the infra-structure of the existing co-ed Movement, but into a political territory where anti-Vietnam petitions have rarely been seen; and 2) there are a couple of mass movements, from highly organized through just restless, that the WLM might merge with, becoming sort of a revolutionary vanguard. (Steinem "After Black")

Once again, she states her points clearly, connecting them to the contexts which were extremely prominent in people's lives at the time. She equates the struggle of the feminist movement to that of the protesters of the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement, connecting it to an era best described as "a decade of turmoil and change" (S. Grant 357): ten years that shook America to its core due to the assassination of a sitting president and the supposed Democratic presidential candidate and two leaders of the Civil Rights Movement (357). Moreover, protests against the Vietnam war showed people the power of organizations that aimed to implement change in a society. It was fertile ground for movements that aimed at revolutionizing already existing social structures and creating new ones. Therefore, by linking these two issues to the Women's Liberation Movement, Steinem legitimizes the importance of the issues the movement was fighting for. The piece clearly shows her support and propensity for the cause, employing the same clear writing style to talk about some of the core issues of the movement, ranging from Equal Employment Opportunity laws to welfare programs and childcare and she speaks of kitchen-table issues that resonated with the average middle-class woman. She rebukes criticisms focused on the downfall of marriage caused by the Women's Liberation Movement and cites consciousness-raising groups as rallying points for a revolution to begin (Steinem "After Black Power").

In this time of change, women started questioning everything, from their role in society and the images they saw in magazines and on television, to their sexuality. From a place of isolation, they managed to become a community of individuals. And Steinem's presence in mainstream pop culture aided the spread of new ideas to a community of women that longed for change and a singular icon that could lead them through the enactment of the revolution promised by the Women's Liberation Movement.

2.2. Kate Millett: The Message of a "young angry woman"

"I was an angry young woman with a message" (Millett qtd. in Stimpson 39). This is how, twenty years later, Kate Millett described who she was in 1970, the same year she wrote and published *Sexual Politics*. Millett channeled her anger and displeasure with the way society was stacked against women into what could be described as a manifesto for the burgeoning Women's Liberation Movement, a text that would influence a generation of feminists to come and would become a testament to how feminist criticism can be employed in the analysis of both the oppression women are subjected to by the institution of the patriarch and how that is necessary to view through theoretical and critical lenses the popular culture elements that perpetuate negative and demeaning representations of women. In the preface of *Sexual Politics*, Millett is quick to establish her intent:

> It has been my conviction that the adventure of literary criticism is not restricted to a dutiful round of adulation, but is capable of seizing upon the larger insights which literature affords into the life it describes, or interprets, or even distorts. This essay, composed of equal parts of literary and cultural criticism, is something of an anomaly, a hybrid, possibly a new mutation altogether. I have operated on the premise that there is room for a criticism which takes into account the larger cultural context in which literature is conceived and produced. (Millett xx)

Millett's intent is to connect the insight that literature is able to give its readers with how people's life experiences are represented on the page. I would argue that *Sexual Politics*'s final aim is to arm feminists with the language, the skills and the overall tools to apply feminist criticism to all aspects of popular culture and society at large. Millett's focus on books stands as an example of how to employ feminist criticism in every other part of women's lives. If a woman is armed with the tools to criticize a piece of writing and scrutinize it under the lenses of feminist analysis, why can the same process not be applied to all aspects of society? Her precise dissection of the multitude of aspects in women's lives that were influenced by the patriarchy helped fellow feminists give legitimacy to their protests while also inciting what Catharine R. Stimpson called "revolutionary utopianism" (Stimpson 31). Her work awakened the feminist consciousness that "everything is connected and susceptible to feminist analysis" (36), and that it is fundamental for the movement to question everything in order for change to happen. In her own words, Millett describes the end goal of what she wanted to achieve with *Sexual Politics*:

> I was trying to trace the reasons why the first phase of the sexual revolution started, and how it changed, through the currents of literature . . . showing how literature reflects certain sides of our life, the way diamonds reflect life—or the way a broken bottle does. From culture criticism it got bigger and bigger until I was almost making a political philosophy. (Millett qtd in "The Liberation" 19)

Millett's focus on literature places it as a form of popular culture that, just as television, magazines, and the news, is able to reflect how the patriarchy has influenced both people's lives and literature as a form of popular culture. Her analysis of a broad scope of aspects stresses the multitude of systemic and institutionalized factors that continue to keep women subjugated under the powers of the patriarchy.

Step by step, Millett builds her case against the production of popular culture works that reiterate the patriarchal conception of women. She "treats the literary text as a transparent reflection of reality that therefore provides evidence of sex in patriarchal society" (Clough 475) and makes use of literary examples to pinpoint instances of oppression in women's real lives, those of violent and brutal depictions of women both in literary texts and in visual means of communications feed into the widespread narrative of women's inferior position in society. While Gloria Steinem had focused on magazines and had explored *Playboy*'s view of women and their working conditions, Millett focused on books by D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Normal Mailer to analyze their texts from a feminists perspective and highlight the instances of blatant sexism and mysogyny in the books. *Sexual Politics* is a dense, fact-heavy treaty on all the ways in which women are oppressed by a concept she describes as the patriarchy but it also serves the purpose of highlighting the systemic institutionalization of anti-feminist ideas in society and the influence it has on popular culture and proves the necessity of dismantling the male-oriented point of view of institutions by adopting a feminist outlook to its criticism. What it manages to do is arming her readers with the necessary information to have a comprehensive understanding of the larger cultural and social context and express the ways in which said framework is derogatory for women. In fact, she stresses the notion that the relationship between men and women is not based on natural characteristics but on ones created and imposed by an unbalance of power among individuals. She writes:

> sexual dominion obtains nevertheless as perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power. This is so because our society, like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance—in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is

> entirely in male hands. As the essence of politics is power, such realization cannot fail to carry impact. (Millett 25)

Her analysis shows that all aspects of a woman's life are affected by the disease that is the patriarchy and frames the issue of women's subjugation as created and perpetuated by this institutional entity that is structured with male-domination at the forefront. She disregards the fact that women are inferior because of their innate characteristic of being a woman and she claims that this unbalance in power is constructed by men. For instance, her rationalization of feminist ideology is yet another effort to dismantle the widespread concepts of inherently natural differences between men and women. She pushes back against theories of biological determinism that are present in a number of Freud's works and proposes the idea that gender is a social construct, rather than a characteristic that is inherently passed down from generation to generation. In one of the many sections of her work devoted to this issue, Millett writes:

> Failing to pause and to consider fully how "masculine" and "feminine" are elaborate behavioral constructs for each sex within society, obviously cultural and subject to endless cross-cultural variation, Freud somewhat precipitously equates such behavior with inherency, with the biologically inevitable, and finally arrives at prescriptive conformity to a social norm built upon what he believes to be an anatomical base. (190-1)

In examining this section of Millett's work what is of notice is a resemblance to another author who I would argue employed a similar approach: eighteenth century writer and philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft. Their writing is void of any flowery descriptions, opting instead for a more dry and fact-based approach and both writers do not shy away from expressing their true and honest opinions in their writing. Wollstonecraft berated philosopher Rousseau's view on what women and young girls should concern themselves with by stating that she has "probably had an opportunity of observing more girls in their infancy than J. J. Rousseau" (Wollstonecraft 69). On the other hand, Millett uses a similar derisive tone to reprimand Sigmund Freud's assumption that men and women are inherently and naturally different. In a similar mocking tone, she writes: "Freud appears to have made a major and rather foolish confusion between biology and culture, anatomy and status" (Millett 187). Both writers carefully examined passages from theoretical and philosophical texts, reported their ideas, and then proceeded to dissect and mostly contradict their opinions. While Wollstonecraft employs a rather aggressive and harsh tone, Millett seems to make use of a more contained one: I would argue it comes down to Wollstonecraft's rather unorganized and scattered thoughts and Millett's carefully planned dismantlement of library productions written by men. Both authors

do not pull any punches in stating their own opinions while utilizing irony and sarcasm to make their points come across. This goes back to the initial description Millett gave herself, that of "an angry young woman with a message" (Millett qtd. in Stimpson 39), in fact, her dismissive and fierce critique of Freud's theories on biological differences between men and women further reinforces her claim that the goal is to abandon sexual politics for a more equal and balanced social organization. My comparison to Wollstonecraft shows Millett's work as a multilayered and precise criticism of the patriarchy and literary texts that adhere to its systems and that despite being one hundred and seventy-eight years apart, both manifestos became the stepping stool for two different burgeonings of the feminist movement and have held their place as fundamental texts in the advancement of feminist ideals.

Another author with whom Millett shares similarities is Gloria Steinem because in addition to their criticism of cultural phenomena from a feminist perspective, they both became icons of popular culture themselves. Contrary to Steinem whose first brush with feminism occurred in 1969, Millett's happened early on in 1964 and 1965 when she attended a series of lectures that would introduce her to the Women's Liberation cause ("The Liberation" 19), When she announced "We're a movement now" (Shteir) at the Women's Strike for Equality march in August 1970, her thesis-turned-almost-manifesto had been published a couple of months before and it turned her into an overnight star, so much so that she was on the cover of *Time* magazine that same month.

Fig. 2 Cover of the August 1970 issue of Time Magazine from: Neel, Alice. Cover Image. *Time*, 31 August 1970.

Millett was not only a well-regarded author and feminist thinker, her work as an activist and her personal beliefs became relevant to her role as one of the most outspoken people in the movement, which led her to incredible notoriety, almost becoming a celebrity that could count musicians and activists Yoko Ono and John Lennon as friends (Millett "Insist" 42). Just like Gloria Steinem, she became both famous and infamous. Millett, who had come out as bisexual

and later on a lesbian, took the brunt of the criticism to the fragments and infighting between more conservative and the lesbian members of the movement such as Betty Friedan - with whom she had a contentious relationship due to Friedan's position on lesbians in the movement which she referred to as "lavender menace" (Shteir).

There is no denying that Millett's *Sexual Politics* is an indelible mark in the history of feminism: it ignited new knowledge and a new awakening to the intrinsic relationship between sex and politics, it gave legitimization to what feminists were fighting for and it allowed the creation of entire courses of study dedicated to the analysis and exploration of women's oppression by the hands of the patriarchy. And yet, feminists failed to obtain the revolutionary goals feminists had set themselves out to accomplish. Fractures inside the movement, strong attacks from anti-feminists, and the rise of conservative voices in the late '70s and throughout all the '80s mirror the diminishing in popularity of *Sexual Politics*, so much so that in the Reagan years the book went out of print (Stimpson 35). Moreover, lengthy and scathing reviews - such as the one by Irving Howe, which called Millett "a little girl who knows nothing about life" (Howe 129) - further reiterate the widespread role of the patriarchy in the media. And yet, Millett's enthusiasm did not diminish: "So we know it's a long haul, the oldest struggle; we know that as feminists now we stand at one still vital ringing moment in a file of years stretching behind us and before us. Failure is impossible" (Millett qtd. in Stimpson 40).

2.3. Audre Lorde's "hopes and dreams toward survival and change"

"For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" (Lorde "The Master's Tools" 112). What is of note is that the revolutionary-like power behind one of Lorde's most known statement does not reflect her own view on how change can be brought about. Despite the idealistic tone, Lorde claimed to be much more realistic and aware of the challenges in front of her and fellow feminists. Disrupting the status quo is no easy task and according to her, it would be impractical to solely rely on the remote likelihood that a complete dismantlement of the systems in place would lead to more feminist-oriented results. Instead, her focus is aimed at a "kind of movement that comes from the very bottom" (Lorde "Women and the world" 35:55) because, in her view, that is how change could come to fruition. What brings together feminists such as Gloria Steinem, Kate Millett and Audre Lorde is their belief both in the importance of sharing feminist ideas with the vastest audience possible and in the power of what the feminist movement could accomplish if a revolution were to include all women who are oppressed by the patriarchy. Instead, what sets them apart is how they approach this change. While Steinem and Millett embraced the already-existing media industry, Lorde went about it from a different angle, focusing on alternative means of

communications such as her own press. According to her, the mainstream media was not capable of capturing the huge impact little activist groups were having in keeping the promises of intersectional feminism alive around the country. This begs the question: is Steinem's and Millett's more mainstream approach more effective than Lorde's? Would a grassroots movement be ultimately more effective in drawing closer more women to the feminist cause? Lorde thought the media was not able to encompass all the various aspects of the feminist movement and its impact on women's lives. In her interview with Blanche Cook, Lorde did not shy away from expressing her discontent with the media landscape of the '80s and its "effort in the establishment media to deny what is actually going on around the country" (Lorde "Women and the world" 34:25). People relied on the media as their only source of information of what was going on around the country in terms of feminist activism, and it showed that feminism was being abandoned. For instance, Steinem's *Ms.* magazine remained popular during the '80s but Millett's book went out of print during the Reagan years and was brought back in circulation in the early 90s. Lorde belived that in order to build a grassroots movement to spread feminist ideals, the best course of action was to create her own printing press, aimed at elevating the voices of women of color who were left unnoticed at the margins by the mainstream media. Although she did not have the same name recognition as Steinem or Millett, her work is a vital contribution to the advancement of the movement, distinctively regarding the inclusion of black women and black queer women into the feminist discourse and a goal that aimed toward what would be called years later "intersectional feminism" (Crenshaw 1244). Not only was Lorde focused on the importance of communities and creating a grassroots movement that would turn feminist principles into a reality, but the topics she explores in her work all revolve around issues that she believed the media had forgotten to talk about and actively dismissed, matters such as community, identity, race, class, and sexuality.

Despite the rise towards conservatism in the '80s, Lorde emphasized the central role women of color had in spreading feminist ideals making use of alternative communicative solutions such as her own press. Contrary to Steinem's magazine *Ms.* which was nationally known and distributed across the country, Lorde's Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press could keep spreading genuine movements for change at a local level, instead of relying on dismissive and condescending coverage by the mainstream press. In stating her approval for this grassroots movement she said:

> What we wish to do, of course, is have a press that will be supported through our communities and in addition to applying for grants, or whatever, that women recognize that this is one of the survival tools. That women of color have never had a chance to control the presentation of our own voices. To share, for instance, and to have the means by which to share this and also to have a real control and input into this. And this why it is so important

> that this happens now that we begin to make, for instance, the connections through our different communities, that we begin to recognize the differences between us and the things that hold us together and inform this with a feminist consciousness and work. (Lorde "Women and the world" 26:48)

In addition to recognizing that both feminists' different experiences and the reality that women can be simultaneously oppressed by different institutions, Lorde places great importance on another major theme, which had also captured Steinem's attention and that would echo through the '80s: community. In her extremely famous 1984 speech-turned essay titled "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House", Lorde cites community as the force behind the change that can disrupt the patriarchal system in place. She claims that in order for liberation to happen, a community of diverse people has to come together and she stresses the significance of 'difference' as a tool that can spark conversations and debates among feminists (Lorde "The Master's Tools"). Another example of how to deal with differences within the movement was turning diversity into strength and collective forces that "define and empower" rather than "divide and conquer" (112). These strengths, coming from marginalized women who were excluded from both the patriarchal system and white feminism, would evolve as a means to erode the already established systems of institutionalized sexism. She explains:

> Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference -- those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older -- know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master's house as their only source of support. (Lorde "The Master's Tools" 112)

Lorde chastised white feminists who rejected the inclusion of a diverse cast of voices because they feared that without the safety net provided by the patriarchal system, they would be left with nothing. Instead, the author claimed that by building a community, survival would be granted for all feminists, no matter their multifaceted identity.

Lorde recognized that the media was not interested in talking about the fact that women were not a monolithic identity, and recognizing that being a woman did not automatically mean a shared experience was a first step forward in the acknowledgment that racism was just as powerful as sexism, more so because many women were affected by both. Lorde calls attention to the importance of focusing on differences despite belonging to

movement run by white feminists who claimed 'sisterhood', despite actively excluding women of color (Thornham 27). Lorde calls for unity by writing:

> Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation. Racism, the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance. Sexism, the belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over the other and thereby the right to dominance. Ageism. Heterosexism. Elitism. Classism. (Lorde "Age, Race, Class")

Denying differences between people proved to be detrimental to the feminist movement because by pretending there were no differences, feminists themselves turned into the oppressors by erasing women of color's experiences and struggles. Instead she calls for an intersectional approach: in an open letter to religious feminist Mary Daly added to her collection *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Lorde accuses Daly that "to imply, however, that all women suffer the same oppression simply because we are women is to lose sight of the many varied tools of patriarchy" (Lorde "An Open Letter" 67). Oppression was not a singular entity but rather a sum of different aspects of subjugation that eclipsed facets of women's identities such as being black, gay, and poor. In the same letter, she wrote: "the oppression of women knows no ethnic nor racial boundaries, true, but that does not mean it is identical within those differences" (70). Women's oppression was so widespread, that it transcended boundaries and affected many aspects of a woman's life. In her view, the diversity of women's experiences reflected that of the oppressions imposed on them.

Although prominent figures within the feminist movement such as Gloria Steinem and Kate Millett did focus on some issues that were affecting women of color, it was also essential to give space to women of color and let them be aprt of the efforts to adapt the movement's goals to benefit all women. hooks recalls white feminists' hesitation to introduce race into the discussion as they claimed it would distract from issues of gender, whereas Black feminists asserted it would only strengthen the sisterhood. She summarizes white women's history of erasing the narrative of Black women by stating that white feminists "entered the movement erasing and denying differences, not playing race alongside gender, but eliminating race from the picture" (hooks 56). Including differences in the movement does not diminish one aspect in favor of another but it also enriches the cause and strips it of the hypocrisy of claiming that feminism was for everybody - to reference hooks' 2000 book title - when it wasn't. Lorde's personal account intertwines with hooks' ideas in her poem "Who Said It was Simple", in which the author convolutes the themes of identity and institutionalized racism in a single

18-line poem. Written "the afternoon of the First Women's March [...] in New York in 1970" (Lorde "An Interview" 19), the poem criticizes white feminists's complacency with the racially oppressive practices in the fast food restaurant she is sitting in. She told Karla Hammond that she "drove down with some women in the academic community who spent most of their time discussing who was going to take care of their kids" (Lorde "An Interview" 19) and their difficulty in hiring au-pair girls, and Mexican housekeepers. She recalls being appalled at these women's lack of self-awareness as she calls out their hypocrisy by accusing them of neither noticing nor rejecting "the slighter pleasures of their slavery" (Lorde "Who Said" line 11) when they are served first at the expense of a Black man who is left waiting and that is because white women have been put on a pedestal, one that grants status and security while also elevating them above Black women (Lorde "An Interview" 19). They had just marched for women's rights and yet, they were comfortable ignoring an instance of racial inequality as it was happening in front of their eyes. The last seven lines of the poem reflect Lorde's amalgamation of identities: "But I who am bound by my mirror / as well as my bed / see causes in color / as well as sex // and sit here wondering / which me will survive / all these liberations." (Lorde "Who Said" line 11-18). It is because of her black skin - which she sees reflected in the mirror - and her sexual partners that she is left wondering which one of her identities will be liberated by the white-orientend feminist movement of the early '70s and which ones she will have to repress. While she claims to be at ease with the "different ingredients" (Lorde "Age, Race, Class") that constitute her person, she is appalled to be asked to "pluck out some one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self" (Lorde "Age, Race, Class"). To fully understand her experience, fellow white feminists needed to realize she was also oppressed because of the color of her skin and her sexuality. Erasing one of these aspects meant erasing parts of her identity, instead stressing the importance of naming the different "lived realities of women" (Gay) and that factors such as race, sexualiy, and class needed to be considered when pushing back against patriarchal oppression. In her article "The Legacy of Audre Lorde", contemporary feminist author Roxane Gay praises Lorde's concern with all facets of her identity by writing: "Lorde never grappled with only one aspect of identity. She was as concerned with class, gender, and sexuality as she was with race. She held these concerns and did so with care because she valued community and the diversity of the people who were part of any given community" (Gay). Lorde's intersectional approach firmly acknowledged the noteworthiness of factoring in age, race, class, and sex into the feminist movement and its approach to the dismantlement of sexism and the patriarchy. As Gay reminds us: "Lorde was not constrained by boundaries" (Gay).

Lorde placed particular emphasis on her identity as a poet and attributed her ability to deal with the world around her and cope with her own life experiences to poetry: "It's

necessary that I get in touch with all of the people that I am: warrior, poet, lesbian, mother" (Lorde "An Interview" 21). It was the vessel through which she was able to express herself and turn her thoughts and emotions into reality. In her essay "Poetry is Not a Luxury", the author discusses the essential role of poetry in every woman's life:

> For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. (Lorde "Poetry" 37)

For Lorde, poetry was not just a way to express herself or a part of her identity that touched all aspects of her life, but it was the tool that allowed her to express her dreams and ideas and then turn them into tangible actions. In fact, poetry bring about change because it has the ability to describe "the nameless" and transform it into thoughts which then become words on a page. Poetry allowed Lorde to voice her anger and stand up against the erasure of her multifaceted identity.

In her essay "Transformation of Silence into Language and Action", Lorde expresses the deadly stronghold that silence has on women by writing "while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us" (Lorde "Transformation of Silence"). Poetry gave her the tools to express herself and break free from silence, to get rid of the shackles that chained her to voicelessness and set her free to call out injustices directed towards her because, as she writes at the end of her poem "A Woman Speaks": "I am / woman / and not white" (Lorde, "A Woman Speaks" lines 33-35). Race and sexuality prevent her from keeping silent and so she feels a semblance of duty to make her voice heard, because people like her were not granted the opportunity to daydream: their lives were so intrinsically connected to constant crucial choices that determined the outcome of their lives; they were so plagued by fear that every thing caused them to be afraid of not eating again or never seeing the next day (Lorde "A Litany").

Given that poetry has given the tools to speak, Lorde stressed that she had to stop being silence and keep her anger in check just to spare other people's discomfort. Keeping her resentment bottled up will serve nothing other than spare people from feeling guilty. She writes: "I cannot hide my anger to spare you guilt, nor hurt feelings, nor answering anger; for to do so insults and trivializes all our efforts" (Lorde "Uses of Anger" 431) and she accentuates how essential it is for women to speak out, even if it is done in anger: "If I speak to you in anger, at least I have spoken to you" (431). Lorde utilises anger not just for its own sake: she named it 'constructive anger', that is indignation that leads to a purpose and can invoke change. Rather than being something that rendered her weak, Lorde appoints power to anger.

She believed it to be a source of knowledge that helped her understand herself better, it allowed her to get in touch with all the people that she was, whether that is warrior, poet, lesbian, mother, and channel that powerful "force, that energy, for something which begins to build" (Lorde "An Interview" 21), forcing her exasperation to turn into change. Sometimes it is necessary for it to be directed at fellow women because "the anger of women can transform difference throught insight into power, for anger between peers births change, not destruction, and the discomfort and sense of loss it often causes is not fatal, but a sign of growth" (Lorde "Uses of Anger" 434). Only through tough and honest conversations within the movement itself can the movement become more inclusive and open to women from all parts of society.

Despite all her anger, Lorde did not fail to be hopeful that change would come even if in the '70s and '80s the mainstream feminist movement fell into a downward spiral. Adrienne Rich describes the first five years of the 1980s as "a generally violent, increasingly repressing, anti-feminist, racist, anti-Semitic, anti-gay society -- the United States of the Reagan years" (Rich 30). It became the decade of Republicans, when former-actor-turned-President Ronald Reagan became Commander in Chief and enacted a decade of conservative politics[3]. The sexual revolution professed in the '60s had not panned out as intended: the term 'revolution' implies a radical change that would subvert the order of things (Martin 105) and in the '70s and '80s feminists started to believe that little to nothing had actually improved. The polarization of the 1980s and the influx of religious, anti-feminist conservatism practices severely impacted feminists' continuous fight for liberation and, according to bell hooks, by the late 1980s, more and more women started abandoning feminism because they thought it had nothing left to given them (hooks 33). Feminists had fought for and won their right to abortion, and yet they failed in their effort to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, former prosecutor Geraldine Ferraro's bid for the office of Vice President as Walter Mondale's running mate in the 1984 Presidential election (Mastromonaco and Pfeiffer 08:30) was ultimately unsuccessful, her candidacy came the closest to Steinem's 1970 Utopian desire of seeing a woman as in the office of President of the United States (Steinem "What It Would Be"). That is to say, change was coming, although rather slowly and it was not effective enough for women to see a betterment in their every day lives.

One other aspect of the '70s and '80s that Lorde tried to dismantle revolved around her sexuality as a lesbian and, on a larger scale, women's complex relationship with the erotic. Lorde stands out as a writer who pushes her readers to embrace "rethinking and reframing paradigms" as well as encouraging "women to understand weaknesses as strengths" (Gay). Just as she reframed anger by placing it as a source of power rather than a weakness, she does the same with the concept of the Erotic. She links the Erotic to power, subversing the pejorative connotation around sexuality and pornography at the time and establishing it "as a political,

social, and academic tool of deconstruction, subversion, and imagination" (Young 301). Rather than distrusting "that power which rises from our deepest and nonrational knowledge" (Lorde "Uses of the Erotic" 54), Lorde believed that women ought to accept the deep sense of satisfaction that comes from embracing the erotic. She pushed back against the anti-pornography stance of a large portion of feminists in the '70s and '80s, appointing to the erotic the energy to enact change and liberate women's unexpressed feelings of powerlessness and inferiority (53). The author puts center stage the connection between the erotic and women's empowerment, thus claiming that when the internal sense of satisfaction brought on by the erotic is reached, women will come to know that the same joy can be extended to other aspects of their lives. It must be said that in this period, not all feminists were as eager to embrace erotism as she was[4] and pornography and the erotic caused multiple rifts within the movement. In her lecture "The Feminist Sex Wars: A Retrospective", lesbian feminist Galye Rubin gives a clear and detailed chronological roadmap throughout the evolution of so-called Sex Wars, from organizations whose aim was to stop violence against women to the demonization of pornography as a whole and the relentless attacks on prostitution towards the end of the '80s and early '90s (Rubin). Not only did the fight against pornography put feminists against each other, but I would also argue that it rolled back some of the progress that had been made during the '60s, when women began to share their experiences with sex. But as the revolutionary ideas of the '60s fell flat in the '80s, the anti-porn movement was still running rampant throughout the country and as both the anti-pornography's emphasis on morality and the anti-sex stance came from a place of fear of violence and they imparted these fears to women, turning them away from what Lorde describes as the deep sense of satisfaction, joy and knowledged of oneself that comes from the erotic.

It must be noted that despite the different approaches to the media and pop culture by Gloria Steinem, Kate Millett, and Audre Lorde, their works are an integral part in the advancement of feminism. I would argue that these texts are still extremely relevant because they give people access to feminist theory that is untethered by the influence of the media industry and the male-oriented dominant codes that produce a watered-down version of feminist principles that lack any sort of nuance, a topic that is explored in the next chapter of this work. After having examined these texts and read feminist theory and thoughts on how to get rid of the patriarchy, a question comes to mind: is feminism not a means towards social justice? I would argue that it definitely is. Feminist theory has proven that patriarchal oppression does not only involve women but it is also a deep-rooted issue for men as well. If feminism's overall goal is that of reaching gender, political, economic, racial and social equality, is it not a form of social justice? Does it not go beyond advancing women's rights to encircle all people, regardless of their gender? Feminism means that all individuals, regardless

of their gender, race, social class or sexuality, must benefit from the same social and civil rights, and be granted the same opportunities and privileges. It does not simply mean that once a woman enters the workforce, she is liberated, because when she returns at home she is still confined in the gender role that forces her to also take care of her children and partner. It also does not mean that all women have gained the same rights, because Black and Latino women are paid less than white women with the same job title. Feminism at its core should remember not to fall in the same oppressive stance it is trying to dismantle. It should embrace every person who wants to fight towards a more equitable society, regardless of the color of their skin, gender, and sexual identity. Only then can feminism truly thrive.

Chapter 3: From Academia to Popular Culture: Adapting Feminist Theory for the Public

3.1. Taking Feminist Theory Outside Academia

"Teaching feminist thought and theory to everyone means that we have to reach beyond the academic and even the written word" (hooks 23). bell hooks wrote her book *Feminism Is For Everybody* in 2000, twenty to thirty years after the birth of popular culture, urging feminists to burst out of the bubble of academic life and get in touch with an American audience through mediums that set aside texts and books in favor of more accessible ones. This is particularly relevant because it signals that in the '60s, '70s, and '80s, feminists had partly failed to reach beyond. While women's studies and feminist theories relied on the world of academics, popular culture was more easily approachable by the majority of Americans who could afford a magazine subscription or a television. Previous sections of this work have laid out the interconnection of popular culture and women's studies but what sets the two apart are their wildly different means of expression. This transmediation process is fundamental in employing a series of mediums suitable for the spread of feminist theories to a variety of publics. hooks underlines the significance of explaining complex theoretical and philosophical ideas in layman's terms by stating that "literature that helps inform masses of people, that helps individuals understand feminist thinking and feminist politics, needs to be written in a range of styles and formats. We need work that is especially geared towards youth culture. (hooks 23). Pop culture might be the right means to achieve this goal. If, as hooks tells us, it is important to expand the reach of feminism, adapting text-based theory to means of communication based on popular culture such as magazines, the news, and television is crucial. And yet, this approach proved itself a great challenge for feminists. This chapter will examine how a shift from the world of academics to popular culture can occur, what it means, and how it inserts itself into the discourse around feminism.

First of all, in order to appeal to the general public, it is fundamental that feminist ideas - usually mostly written for an academic setting and employing distinctive language to appeal to fellow academics - are condensed and packaged in a way that is easy to approach by the average consumer. What is rather demanding is the production of a concise and, at the same time complete explanation of feminist theories. Can the media summarize pages and pages of theoretical ideas in a way that encompasses the nuances of the argument? How can they avoid watering down complex feminist ideas just to make them easy to grasp for the general public? The solution to these questions can be seen reflected in hooks' words above: there is no answer. "Reaching beyond the academic and even the written word" (hooks 23) proved itself to be such a difficult task that even twenty to thirty years later, hooks was still advocating for it and her statement shows that feminists were still stuck playing catch-up to the rest of the

media. There are no guidelines, no instruction manuals on how to approach this process of adaptation, especially not in the '60s and '70s when popular culture was still relatively new and unknown phenomenon. It was uncharted territory for most feminists and therefore it was mostly trial and error. hooks's urgency reflects that feminists' efforts to translate their core principles to a broader audience were not successful in the '60s, '70s, and '80s and I would suggest it is still relevant in today's politically and socially polarized landscape. As the world gets more and more complex, so does this effort to communicate and adapt complex feminist theories into mediums that are not entirely suitable for long and drawn-out theoretical discussions.

Another issue feminists had to give thought to was the way they presented their theories. If the aim was to spread feminism to those who did not belong to academic circles and might be holding a negative opinion about the movement, it needed to be done in a way that would entice people to learn more about it. Debra Baker Beck emphasizes how women were mostly rejecting the word 'feminists' rather than the causes the movement was fighting for by making use of the common "I'm not a feminist, but" refrain (140), but I would argue that it is a testament to the way the media was able to demonize the word itself but it is also clear evidence that, despite the negative converge, feminism was becoming more and more present in people's lives. Despite the media's resistance to feminism, it still managed to flourish, which is in part thanks to easily approachable means of communications like magazines, television, and the news. The insertion of feminism in these mediums allowed it to enter the mainstream and become part of the discourse of the time. Women might still reject the label while also supporting the movement's cause. Still, most people were privy to the coverage of feminism that the news was providing, and a large section of it was, in fact, pejorative. In *Media Images, Feminist Issues*, Deborah L. Rhode reiterates that: "Many women have access to the women's movement only in the terms that the press provides. If we are to realize feminism's potential, feminists need a greater voice in shaping its public image" (705). I would emphasize the essential role that the art of persuasion plays in the amplification of the 'greater voice'. Although often associated with politics, persuasion is a useful tool to make a compelling case for the feminist cause. Persuasion is not solely related to the words chosen to persuade but it concerns the visual aesthetic and how messages are discerned from a visual standpoint.

Given that the means of expression shifted from text to image and video, appearances began to matter more, especially as the movement was making its way into newspapers, magazines, and television in the late '60s and early '70s, Andi Zeisler explains:

> News organizations reporting on the phenomenon of women's liberation described feminists with terminology that alternated between condescending ("libbers") and fearmongering (women described as "militants," the movement itself called "a contagion"),

> and they spent at least as much time reporting on the dress and hairstyles of feminist women as they did on actual feminist actions and concerns. (60)

In *The New York Times* articles published in the wake of the 1968 Miss America Protest and the 1970 Women's Strike for Equality - examined in Chapter 4 of this thesis, this approach aimed at dismissing and demonizing both feminism and feminists is blatant. Therefore, feminists had to find solutions to contrast the image of "bra-burners" that the media provided.

Fig. 3 Two women toss items into the Freedom Trash Can while a female reporter looks on: "Freedom Trash Can, Miss America protest, Atlantic City, 1968." *repository.duke.edu.*

Just as women, most prominently during the Victorian age, were appointed the identity of either housewife and mother or prostitute, stereotypical characteristics of what a feminist should look like began to be established. We are reminded of Gloria Steinem and the contrasting images she represented: her beauty and her persona did not match the media's descriptions of what a feminism or a traditional woman was. The feminist movement was - and is - a nuanced and complex phenomenon with a variety of often opposing points of view; reducing divergent opinion to a soundbite devoided it of its numerous facets. Creating a concise, easy-to-understand and relatively brief product that conforms to the media's rapidly changing demands proved itself a challenge. On top of that, the media's hostile and institutionalized environment added another level of difficulty in the process of bringing feminist ideology closer to people's homes.

3.2. "Socially and constructed" Signs

Feminists had to deal with their struggles of reachability to the general public and easy-to-understand adaptations of their messenger in a media environment that was set up against them. At the same time, media studies were being established and they were extremely influential in taking a closer look at the step-by-step process to fully understand how messages were constructed and deconstructed. One of the complexities of adapting texts to popular culture mediums such as magazines, the news, and television comes down to the transmediation of one code to another, a process that allows the same concept to be adapted through different sign systems (Semali 1). Reality cannot be represented without being mediated through language, in whatever form that might take place, and language itself is the ultimate system of signs: a series of icons strung together to communicate different meanings. Signs can be considered anything that makes any type of communication possible: "'signs' form widely understood systems of meanings - as when giving a rose is a sign of love or smoke is a sign of fire" (Semali 2). And just like any language, signs are to be assimilated in order to understand the representation of reality. True, untethered and objective reality is impossible to produce due to our inherent subjective perception of what our brain would classify as "real" and the inherent presence of codes and signs: if we perceive reality through the symbolic representation of the thing itself, what we perceive is the codified meaning and not reality itself. Although they are organized just like languages, signs are "socially and culturally established" (De Lauretis 48), so much so that they can be regarded as codes when in a specific context. John Fiske explains what a code is by stating that it is a "system of signs, whose rules and conventions are shared amongst members of a culture, and which is used to generate and circulate meanings in and for that culture [...] 'reality' is always coded, it is never raw" (qtd. in Baker Beck 140). If signs are the alphabet letters that, when next to each other, form words, codes are how said words are used in specific contexts, even seemingly straightforward concepts such as 'woman' are embedded into a culturally coded meaning (Baker Beck 140). We know what we believe a woman to be because of the myriad of signs that have been telling us what is the social and cultural status quo. Umberto Eco, writer and semiologist, claims that codes are so engrained in a person's subconscious that they are not even aware of their role and function (De Lauretis 48). What is of note is that there is no single code: multiple codes and sign systems are employed in the construction and meanings of identity (Semali 6) through the translation of a concept from one medium to another. Charles Suhor calls this process 'transmediation' that is "mediating or 'representing' meaning across sign systems" (1), a process that entails "taking understandings from one sign system and moving them into another in order to make meaning" (1). It became fundamental for feminists in the '60s, '70s, and '80s: they needed to find a way to take the signs systems and codes employed in their

academic research and adapt to an increasingly complex media environment, where multiple signs systems and codes came into play. On top of adapting their content to different sets of codes, feminists also needed to push against them. If codes were socially constructed, who had set them in place? The standpoint was male and white, and therefore established codes that fit a patriarchal view of society. And feminism did not fit into what Marilyn Crafton Smith calls the "field of allowable images" (qtd. in Baker Beck 141) that the media was willing to promulgate. It was coded negatively because it challenged the 'reality' that was socially constructed by the patriarchy through codes. This analysis of the process of transmediation from one sign system to another makes us realize that what is commonly considered 'reality' is actually a product of a series of socially crafted codes that give their own representation of a reality that is made to conform to a pre-established set of male-oriented dominant values.

The adaptation of feminist theories through a mass media communication model has to consider the fact that many codes are employed in the process of creating what we refer to as popular culture, as well as the modes of production that come into play when generating media messages. In this instance, the word 'producing' is particularly appropriate because, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the concept of 'culture' acquired an added meaning: Kate Crehan defined it as "products of intellectual and, especially artistic activity" (61). If culture is a product, it means there must be a 'producer', a man, a social group, or an entity that constructs said culture. If feminists wanted to reach across the aisle to spread their ideas and theories, they needed to put on the producer's hat. In his essay "Encoding/Decoding" Stuart Hall posits an articulated process that dismisses the simplistic linearity of sender/message/receiver in favor of analyzing the creation of mass-communication items as related to Marxist theories of production (S. Hall 117). As the 'sender' is turned into the producer, and the 'receiver' into the consumer, Hall identifies two processes, one of 'encoding' a message - the production of said message - and the one of 'decoding' the message when it is received by the audience. What is of note is that these processes are highly volatile and subjective: the producer is not completely sure a message will be received and interpreted using the same system of meanings they implemented and is concerned with the effectiveness of the message (125). Complete, transparent communication is unattainable because of the codes and sign systems that allow such messages to be formed (125).

3.3. Feminism and Publics

Stuart Hall's decoding process implies that any message that is transmitted through a means of communication must find an audience, that is a group of people who receive the message and decode, in their own way, the codes produced by the sender. In his essay, Hall rebukes the idea that any given audience is passive: just as the process of encoding entails various levels of

subjectivity, so does the process of decoding. Given how subjectivity is ingrained in the two processes, the act of communicating is highly complex and contingent. For instance, if feminists went on a television program to share their ideas, no matter how much thought was put into the effectiveness of the message, the unpredictability of the audience's reception would render all attempts void. Just as the feminist movement was multifaceted and complex, so was its audience, and therefore the decoding process was subjective to every single person because of their values, belief systems, and adherence to the hemogenic codes. Hall postulates possible decoding processes, whether that is employing the same decoding reference - leading to a transparent communication - as the producer; taking a more critical position; or taking a fully oppositional stance in the decodification of the message (S. Hall 126, 128). Hall's theories highlight the complexity of the transmediation process as well as the many obstacles that feminists have to face in spreading their theories to the public. And yet, decoding is not an entirely individual process because for a message to spread it needs a discourse and consequently, "an ongoing space of encounter for discourse" (Warner 90) which can be identified as a public. A single individual cannot constitute any sort of public because in order for one to be created, a discourse needs to happen and the message needs to circulate. This is why mass communication mediums, and their widespread reach, are essential in the production of a discourse and therefore the public that participated in it. It is important to establish some of the ways that the noun 'public' can be used. In his book *Publics and Counterpublics*, Michael Warner identifies three: first, 'the' public, is seen as an organized entity, such as communities, states, and nations; then, he refers to 'a' public, which he refers to as "a concrete audience, a crown witnessing itself in a visible space" (66); finally, he explores another meaning of 'public' that the public that is strictly connected to texts - whose notion was extended by Umberto Eco to include visual signs, therefore including images, videos, and advertising (Mitrano 126) - and its circulation. Any time a message reaches a group of people the creation of a public ensues, which is why the public sphere is composed of countless numbers of publics. The premise that a single person does not account for a public translates into what Mena Mitrano calls "the externalization of an intimacy" which is a core concept connected to another use of the word 'public', this time regarded as an adjective. In fact, for a public to be formed, there needs to be "the dispersal of a private modality into a public one" (Mitrano 5). Therefore, any form of address needs to reach the public sphere if a public is to be formed. Messages can be decoded in different ways by receivers but the mere fact that they have been addressed constitutes them as a public. Hall talks about the unpredictability of how a message will be received by a public but what is also indiscernible is who that public will be. Contrary to a single public in a controlled environment such as a theater, for example, Warner's public is autotelic, which means that it exists only for a reflexive purpose and serving

a self-sufficient goal, and "it exists by virtue of being addressed" (Warner 67). In fact, Warner speaks about the self-organizational aspect of publics which are created simply because they find themselves at the receiving end of an address. They require minimal participation, because "merely paying attention can be enough to make you a member" (71) and therefore, they are organized through discourse. This factor plays into the unpredictability of publics: given the basic requirements needed to be included in a public, it is impossible to imagine who will be included in the public. Moreover, if simply paying attention and engaging in the discourse around either a magazine, a newspaper article or a television show creates a public, it means our subjective interpretation of a single message has to collide with other people's. While Warner also speaks about ambiguous self-awareness in terms of belonging to a public, it is fundamental to keep in mind that being part of a public means a kind of identity loss. Warner explains this concept by writing: "

> we might recognize ourselves as addressees, but it is equally important that we remember that the speech was addressed to indefinite others; [...] publics are different from persons, that the address of public rhetoric is never going to be the same as address to actual persons, and that our partial nonidentity with the object of address in public speech seems to be part of what it means to regard something as public speech (78)

Here Warner is reminding us of the subjective interpretation that each member of the public might appoint as well as the loss of individual identity members of the public have. This impersonality in public addresses reminds us of its duality: it is both addressed to us and other strangers (78). Not only were other members of the public strangers to fellow participants, but they were unknown to addressers. The self-organizational aspect of the public prevents addressers from gaging the extent to its members. If the media were to be interpreted through this theory, it might mean that addresses in the public sphere needed to be tailored to people who resonated with the subject and those who did not

An indefinite way of communicating feminist principles is often used to appeal to a larger section of the already-existing public and gain the attention of new individuals. In fact, as the feminist movement needed to gain as much attention as possible and therefore formed a public, it needed to attract people's attention. In her book *Language and Public Culture*, Mena Mitrano writes: "throughout the 1700s the public sphere instituted a reasoning public, which became a legitimate addressee for those who wished to exert more influence in political power" (3). Through consciousness-raising group and the realization that 'the personal is political', feminists employed the public sphere as a means to gaining political influence and therefore a public. But as their publics increased, they were forced to consider a solution as to how to keep their members engaged. Warner establishes that publics are formed "the moment of attention,

must continually predicate renewed attention, and cease to exist when attention is no longer predicated" (88). If feminists wanted to maintain their publics, they needed to adopt tactics that would constantly put them in positions to address the public sphere and utilize all tools of mass media communication. To do so, the feminist movement needed to become part of that establishment and gain access to as many people as possible. That proved itself a treacherous endeavor because of the innate institutionalized nature of mass communication.

It is important to remember that the media environment is an institution driven by economic power and most of all, by the ad industry (Baker Beck 142), and on a variety of wildly socially ingrained codes that reflect patriarchal values. When entering the realm of the media institution, feminists had to face already established codes that went against their message, and ignoring them was not a possibility. Hall reminds us that "there is no intelligible discourse without the operation of a code" (S. Hall 123), therefore, all reality is mediated through codes and without codes, there cannot be any discourse. Hall gives his readers a fitting example:

> A 'raw' historical event cannot, in that form, be transmitted by, say, a television newscast. Events can only be signified within the aural-visual forms of the televisual discourse. In the moment when a historical event passes under the sign of discourse, it is subject to all the complex formal rules' by which language signifies. To put it paradoxically, the event must become a 'story' before it can become a communicative event. (S. Hall 118).

If we apply this idea to the coverage of the 1968 Miss America Pageant protest, what the majority of the American publics saw was the 'story' that the producers of said message decided to show them. Their role takes center stage in encoding a message that is to be transmitted to an audience. So many different aspects have to be taken into account when dealing with mass communication practices and I would argue that media literacy was a relatively unknown and always-evolving subject, adding this aspect to the already long list of difficulties feminists were facing in their efforts to broaden the positive coverage of the movement. In the landscape of popular culture, subjectivity is a key factor, and the notion of absolute objectivity must be entirely dismissed.

A more detailed analysis of the production process of the message reveals another set of issues that feminists have to face when dealing with the media and that is the subjectivity of the point of view. Hall's use of Marxist adjacent terminology renders itself particularly apt for an analysis of popular culture. The media is an institution built on capitalistic foundations: it is a money-making machine with a robust set of formal and informal rules, whose aim is to solidify their stance on the media landscape. In his capitalistic mode of production, there is the need to satisfy and please the advertisers whose goal was to push a gendered and patriarchal agenda with pages in magazines dedicated to the newest household appliance and the latest

beauty product in order to conform women to the mold society had created. As an institution, the media is also privy to adapting to the patriarchal systems. The news was being reported by a newsroom full of men who employed a decidedly male point of view. An example can be made out of the 1970 *New York Times* article whose headline reads "Leading Feminist Puts Hairdo Before Strike" ("Leading Feminist") and reports Betty Friedan's late arrival to Women's Strike for Equality - an event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment (United States, Congress 1920) - because of "a last minute emergency appointment with her hairdresser" ("Leading Feminist"). This is the kind of headline that ran rampant in the news at the time - and I would argue it is still the case now, 50 years later - and it is an example of the changes that needed to be implemented in the mass communication landscape. Here the example works on two different levels: the first one being that as a feminist, Friedan should not have concerned herself with how she looks because feminists are inherently unattractive and by doing so, she perpetuated patriarchal impositions on beauty and women's appearance - a claim she rebuked herself by stating "we should try to be as pretty as we can, It's good for our self-image and it's good politics" ("Leading Feminists"); on the other hand, this unfortunate mishap played into the common misogynist stereotype that women take a long time to get ready and are consumed by their appearance. This incident is reflective of the restrictive identities women were forced into in the '70s and '80s: they could either be docile housewives, prostitutes - sexually promiscuous women -, or feminists, but they could not be both - or all three - at the same time. While I would argue that the confines of what a woman is and can be have been mostly broken down in recent years, reconciling all three aspects - as well as all other identities - is an ongoing struggle. Recognizing that women could be interested in sex, feminist ideas, and the role of nurturing mother is to this day, an idea that might leave some people baffled. It is undeniable that in institutions like the media, appearance is a key factor: it is what reaches the consumers first, it is the introductory impression that an audience gets and therefore it plays an important role in a medium with a huge visual component, especially if put in contrast to dense academic texts. As we previously established, the truth cannot be captured by the media (Johnston 36) because, for instance, even just by pointing a camera in a specific direction a point of view has already been established, whether that is the angle of the camera or the subject chosen. If truth cannot be represented, the feminist movement needs to represent its own truth and point of view, which contrasts the institutionalized and male-produced one. In a male-oriented and institutionalized environment such as the media, said task has proved to be an arduous endeavor.

3.4. Shifting To Feminism

If feminism were to become accepted by the largest possible section of the American population, a series of shifts needed to happen. Just as the one from academic feminist theories to popular culture mediums such as magazines and television, there needed to be a transference from the male standpoint to a feminist one. If feminist practices ought to reach a large number of recipients, popular culture mediums were the most efficient path to achieve this goal. Still, the next barrier feminists encountered had to do with the lack of space for feminist voices to emerge. In her famous essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Laura Mulvey identifies said lack of space with what she called the 'male gaze'. She highlights how the sexual imbalance - which also reflects the unevenness of power - between men and women is reflected in cinema in the roles of activeness (men) and passivity (women) and how "the determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure" (Mulvey 12). Mulvey distills three looks associated with cinema, that of the camera, of the audience, and of the character, all of which start from the subjective point of view of either the male director, audience member, or person in the shot. Although her essay is mostly focused on cinema, her theories are relevant to communication outlets such as magazines and television. In addition to Mulvey, Budd Boetticher expresses the irrelevance of women as an active subject in cinema:

> What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance. (qtd. in Mulvey 13)

I would go as far as to say that his quotation is relevant to most mainstream popular culture media products: magazines for women were written, and edited by men, advertisements depicting a stereotyped version of women are created by men (although more and more women started running female-oriented magazines in the '70s and '80s); in the '60s, '70s, and '80s the news featured the codified message of a story solely from the male and subjective point of view; television represented the image of the devoted housewife and mother. Although such overwhelming evidence proves that there was a need for an analogous shift to the one that happened regarding academic theoretical texts and popular culture. As chapters 4 and 5 of this work examine, in the late '60s and the '70s a shift towards including a feminist point of view occurred but it was still within the confines of the patriarchal media. The disruption of the codes that have been dominant in mass communication and popular culture is no easy task but it is fundamental to rid these environments of dominant codes created by men and institutions run by men.

For the feminist movement, one of the many dangers of clashing against the male-run and male-oriented institution of the media is the lack of nuance: women are represented as a monolithic social group, based on the notion that just because these individuals are women therefore, they must share the same experiences. Narrowing down the label of 'woman' to one single definition forces women to suppress the other fragments that make up their identities. In an interview with Karla Hammond, Audre Lorde further explores this issue by observing:

> There's always someone asking you to underline one piece of yourself - whether it's *Black, woman, mother, dyke, teacher,* etc because that's the piece that they need to key in to. They want to dismiss everything else. But once you do that, then you've lost because then you become acquired or bought by that particular essence of yourself, and you've denied yourself all of the energy that it takes to keep all those others in jail. Only by learning to live in harmony with your contradictions can you keep it all afloat. (Hammond 15)

Here Lorde mentions intersectionality - a concept later explored also by bell hooks in the '80s and then clearly defined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1991[1] (Crenshaw 1244) - and condemns society's request of identifying oneself as only one aspect: you can either be Black, a woman or a lesbian. You cannot be both or all three. The three identities - wife, prostitute, feminist - recognized by patriarchal values and by extension of the mass media left little to no space for the complex array of identities of women who called themselves feminists. Encompassing feminists as one uniformed group of women stripped away the different aspects and experiences that constitute one's identity. Repressing and pushing down one part of that identity plays into the efforts to dismiss everything that does not comply with the patriarchy's version of what a woman should be.

In an institution disproportionately made up of men, a nuanced representation of women is not a focal point: it is far easier to impose a single way to be a woman, one that conforms to their capitalistic and patriarchal goals of molding women into what the institutions think they should be. Andi Zeisler writes that "even the best movies, the giddiest television romps, the most memorable ad campaigns speak of what women can and should—or shouldn't—be" (23). It is such a subconscious code that it often goes unnoticed: women are so accustomed to seeing the stereotypical representation of themselves as the aim they are supposed to achieve that assimilating these dominant codes becomes second nature. This is precisely why there is the need for more feminist voices in the media as well as a collective awakening whose purpose is to recognize said signs and be aware of their effect on female consumers. Over the years, popular culture became deeply ingrained into people's lives and it was the perfect vehicle for stereotypical representations of women, so much so that it became a sounding board for people to measure their lives against. Zeisler elaborates on this issue by

explaining that "when we look at our lives—both personally and collectively—we view them largely through the lens of popular culture, using songs, slogans, ad jingles, and television shows as shorthand for what happened at the time and how we experienced it" (Zeisler 4). But when women looked at their condition through the lenses of popular culture, what stood out was a single interpretation of what a woman should be and do. The mass media's representation of women fails to showcase the complexity of the movement and its goal to "synthesize 'woman', 'feminism' or 'femininity' into one homogenous mold" (Baker Beck 150) voids the movement of any nuance. Donna Haraway echoes Lorde's sentiment around identity in her famous *A Cyborg Manifesto*. Just as the grouping of feminists as one monolithic identity is reductive and oppressing, Haraway claims there is no inherent female characteristic that encompasses all women:

> There is nothing about being "female" that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as "being" female, itself a highly complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourses and other social practices. Gender, race, or class consciousness is an achievement forced on us by the terrible historical experience of the contradictory social realities of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. (16)

Women - and by extension feminists - are inherently different and their experiences cannot be narrowed down to an individual version with which the patriarchy is comfortable. Instead of focusing on the common traits that bind women together, feminists such as hooks, Hawaray, and Lorde emphasize the shifts in perspective that are needed. The simplistic version of women's identity that is portrayed and perpetuated by the media is directly linked to the adaptation of feminist theories to the masses. The differences in the 'woman' experience ought to be made a point of and accentuated - especially in popular culture - rather than keeping them hidden. In *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, Natalie Fenton sums up the relevance of the issue thanks to the somewhat recent establishment of feminist media studies:

> Feminism has moved from a focus on the repression of all women in general and a politics based on the concept of shared female experience, to the recognition and embracing of difference within the category 'woman' which removes the possibility of there being a singular truth about womanhood. (84)

By having a more diverse and nuanced representation of feminism and feminist ideas in popular culture, women have the chance to see themselves represented and validated. Feminists were reduced to being called "angries", "radical", "hairy", and "petty and

confrontational" and therefore not particularly attractive to young women who were just getting interested in the movement and its principles (Baker Beck 143). To combat these patriarchy- and media-appointed identities, feminists needed to fight hard for a expression of feminism in the media that did not rely on the dominant patriarchal codes of institutionalized media and that was able to convey the different characteristics, parts, and trains that made up the movement and its members.

This begs the question: What can be done to improve this process of adaptation from academic text to popular culture? The presence of more women in newsrooms, in a magazine writers' room, or in front of the camera is not enough if dominant patriarchal codes are still in place. If feminists are not in a position of power, how can they enact change and push against the well-established 'rules of the game'? Is a complete overturn of the patriarchal institution in favor of one with a feminist approach a concrete possibility? It is important to reiterate once again the central role that the institutionalization of the media plays in what is produced and created as popular culture. The previously mentioned new feminist code aiming at producing a message from a feminist point of view and the nuanced representation of feminism in all its different facets eventually came head to head with the strict and rigid institution of the media. The simplistic and narrowed representation of feminism in the media is created and shaped by said institutions, therefore a logical conclusion would be to employ more women in the production of popular culture. It might be fair to assume that employing this approach might lead to a direct correlation to a better representation of women, but pink quotas and legislations are not nearly enough to shift from a white male standpoint to one that does not marginalize women (Baker Beck 141; Waylen 212). Although there are more women in newsrooms, they are not in a position to influence how mass media products are produced. Debra Baker Beck in *The F Word How the Media Frame Feminism* highlights three processes in the production of popular culture that have stifled the spread of feminism in the media which include the intertwined role of money and advertising in popular culture, the overwhelming presence of men in the production process and the socially accepted workplace norms that conform to the dominant cultural values of a patriarchal society (142). According to Rhode, in the '60s, there was one female journalist per network and she was relegated to handling only news stories about women's issues while in print magazines, women were either assigned to research positions or to features aimed only at female readers (Rhode 686). It was editors, anchors, and producers who were actually in charge of making decisions about what was produced. The role of a woman in mass communication media was that of token, the symbolic representation of women in the workplace by hiring only one. Just as the accepted identity of 'woman' was a singular one, so was the presence of women behind the scenes in most popular culture products. If society was under the impression that all women had a

common and shared identity, having multiple women on staff was thought to be unnecessary. The role of the 'token woman' was relegated to one woman speaking for all women, one feminist speaking for all feminists, thus placing centerstage only a handful of issues and dismissing the rest of them. We have established that women are not made up of a single identity but of contrasting and often paradoxical parts and such facets are in need of acknowledgment and representation.

After having analyzed a selection of the numerous difficulties facing the feminist movement and given all the obstacles and the hazardous paths toward more feminist-oriented popular culture, is it worth it for the movement to be part of mainstream media and popular culture? I would argue that it is. Since its skyrocketing increase in popularity ever since its creation, popular culture has been a pillar in people's lives, so much so that it is almost impossible to avoid. It has become so intertwined with people's lives that the feminist movement would be remiss not to take advantage of the reachability of mass media. A section of this chapter has been devoted to analyzing why the transmediation from theoretical texts to a more accessible medium was particularly challenging but I would emphasize how fundamental the process was to bring feminism into people's homes. It cannot be denied that there were a series of shortcomings and issues - highlighted in the course of this chapter - but despite the negative coverage of the movement by the media, ideas, theories, and principles managed to seep through. For instance, in just short of twenty years, the representation of women in television programs increased and became more varied. The influence of feminism can be clearly seen as women on television gained more and more prominent roles until they had their own shows as leading characters, whose lives did not center around their families and/or their husbands and children. In sitcoms such as *The Donna Reed Show* and *Father Knows Best*, the only role available to women was that of the dutiful housewife. In the '70s and '80s that started to change. Sitcoms were still set in domestic settings but more and more feminist issues - such as single parenthood, abortion, and pregnancies - started to become main storylines. Public discourse about the ERA and the Supreme Court ruling of *Roe v. Wade* were undoubtedly pillars in the commodification of feminist theories (Mangan and Breuninger). Although both issues received an abundance of criticism and vicious attacks - both by the media and by conservative activists such as Phillis Schlafly, there is no denying that the 1970s solidified the connection between political and social inequalities and the condition of women. And yet, women were still forced into systemic institutionalized roles. One of the examples revolves around the 1980s sitcom *Kate & Allie* about two divorced moms who decide to live and raise their children together (Rabinovitz 10). The male/female dichotomy of the relationship is still present with the replacement of the male figure with another female figure: Kate was associated with the role typically imposed on men, while Allie

was associated with the domestic role (11). And yet, because the two roles were articulated through two female characters, their characterization was more fluid and interchangeable than one between a man and a woman (12). It must be said that shows like *Kate & Allie* were still an essential advancement in the extension of feminism to the audience of popular culture even if the feminist theories introduced were ones the media was the less uncomfortable with representing. The transmediation of feminist theories into popular culture has not been an easy task, a process that often miserably failed and at times was successful enough for more and more people to come into contact with feminist thinking, albeit its own watered-down version. Flora Davis reiterates this idea by writing that:

> Throughout the seventies and eighties, the media continued to be a mixed blessing for feminists. On one hand, they educated the American public about a multitude of issues, from wife-beating to the gender gap. On the other hand, they failed to cover much of what happened in the movement and often distorted much of what they did cover. (qtd. in Baker Beck 150)

The negative coverage of the feminist movement and its principles had a strong hand in silencing even its more vocal proponents, but it also had an essential role in educating the public about what feminism was really about. It was about putting some distance between the "strident" "humourless", "extremists" "lesbians" and "hairy legged" definitions attributed to feminism by papers of record such as *The New York Times* (Rhode 693). I would argue that in the adaptation from one medium to another, nuanced discussions are bound to be dismissed and it is an aspect that feminists must resign themselves to accept. It would be fair to say that it would be unattainable for feminist academics to precisely recreate their complex discussion through a medium that thrives on somewhat soundbite-size content. That should not prevent feminists from enacting change and pushing forward their agenda to the general public, whether that is through an increased representation of the nuanced and multifaceted aspects of feminism or the creation of more female-friendly media. Having dominant and meaningful influence in decision-making positions would lead to the creation of forms of popular culture that reflected feminist values.

Chapter 4: Feminism in The Press: Magazines and Newspapers

Feminism in Magazines

"The press is increasingly responsible for supplying the information and images through which we understand our lives. For any social movement, the media plays a crucial role in shaping public consciousness and public policy" (Rhode 685). During the '60s, '70s, and '80s magazines and newspapers were the means through which most people kept up with the news and consumed popular culture, it was a reflection of people's lives and the issues they cared about, even if the "mainstream press appeared largely uninterested or unsympathetic" (Rhode 686) to the feminism movement, preferring to demonize and trivialize both the movement and the principles it stood for rather than give space to its ideas. Newspapers were either covering the movement's protests but placing the articles in the women's section or completely making fun of the issues as the most popular magazines in the country routinely featured objectifying and misogynistic depictions of women. The media apparatus was threatened by feminism's incitement for a revolution and the subversion of society as they knew it, and so its solution was to internalize feminist ideas and rework them to adapt them to the rules of the institutions that were set in place. In terms of its rapport with feminism, there is no denying that the media had an essential role in shaping people's consciousness and linking it to the political sphere, as magazines and newspapers were forced to reckon with the impact of feminism on society as a whole and incorporate it into their products. And yet, feminism in both mediums was covered in an aura of institutionalism that undercut the ideals that it was promoting. Just as feminist voices were becoming louder and louder, so did the media's backlash against them. Along with television - whose rapport with feminism will be examined in the following chapter - print-based media had all the necessary characteristics for feminism to be easily spread across the country. This chapter takes a close look at how feminism was featured in two of the most prominent magazines of the time, *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Playboy*, how the movement was covered in newspapers such as *The New York Times, The New York Post,* and *Time* and how feminist principles made their way into both mediums.

4.1. Magazines: A Gateway for Feminism

"Magazines can be both instruments of social change and tools of social control that reinforce the status quo" (Haveman 5). In the '60s and '70s, popular magazines available on the market could be put in only two extremely gendered-oriented categories: periodicals such as *Ladies' Home Journal* that catered to women and reinforced sexist gender stereotypes, and those that were targeted to 'the neglected male' such as *Esquire* and *Playboy*. In her book *Magazines and the Making of America: Modernization, Community, and Print Culture, 1741-1860*, Heather A. Haveman encapsulates the reason why magazines were so influential in shaping people's

opinions on different topics: its varied content allowed people to be informed on several issues and offered both facts and opinion through which readers could shape their understanding of the world and of a society that was changing, especially in this period. What is particularly of interest in *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Playboy* is their contentious relationship with feminism and how it was portrayed on their glossy pages. They are the token examples that show the mixed messages women were receiving in this period: *Ladies' Home Journal* was telling them all the tips and tricks on how to become the ideal homemaker, featuring pages upon pages of cooking recipes and life hacks on how to save money, while *Playboy* was displaying the image of the supposed liberated woman who was in charge of her sexuality while also adhering to society's, and by extension men's, standard of beauty and appearance. Haveman connects magazines with the creation of communities:

> They [magazines] are the social glue that brings together people who would otherwise never meet face-to-face, allowing readers to receive and react to the same cultural messages at the same time and, in many cases, encouraging readers to contribute to shared cultural projects. (5)

Magazines were able to cultivate a following of avid readers who trusted the editors and interacted with fellow readers, and yet the communities still adhered to the strict separation between the public and private spheres, a clear indication of the double standard of the magazine industry: women were shown the varied ways they could behave to better fit into the mold set by the patriarchal society, while men were exposed to a standard of masculinity they thought they had to conform to. For instance, magazines for women such as *Ladies' Home Journal* ran headlines such as "20 Pages of Budget Tips - How To Save Money When You Cook, Shop And Sew" and "How People You Love Help Keep You Fat" on its cover of the March 1970 edition (Scavullo). It portrayed its version of womanhood that was limited to the sphere of domesticity. On the other hand, in its March 1970 issue, *Esquire* reinforced its own version of masculinity, that of the upper-class man who drank whiskey and smoked cigars, and presented its readers with a magazine that featured pieces such as "Charlie Manson's Home on the Range", an in-depth article about the former headquarters of the Manson clan (Talese 101).

That was the case until feminist magazines began to emerge on the publishing scene and pushed against the boundaries of the strict male/female dichotomy and of the dual characterization of the woman as either wife and mother or prostitute by establishing feminist magazines. As the ideal vessel to reach women at the time, it is no surprise that feminists chose this medium to help spread their ideas and principles. As the women's movement began to take shape and established itself on the public scene, it became essential to find a course of action to spread its principles in an accessible and easily distributed way. The '60s and '70s

saw the birth of numerous magazines geared toward newly liberated women with publications that tackled real issues that affected women rather than the best tips and tricks on how to please their husbands.

The problem was that feminists had to take matters into their own hands and establish their own publications because, as Gloria Steinem reiterated, magazine editorial rooms were not particularly friendly to feminist journalists who wanted to forego articles about which household object would make a woman a better housewife. What led to the foundation of Ms. was a 1971 scathing article about her was published in *Esquire* that made Steinem came to the realization that "there really was nothing for women to read that was controlled by women" (*Gloria: In Her Own* 21:46). Whether it was through an already established press or an independent one, the debate around publishing was lively. Should feminists count on big publishing houses that could help push their message forward on a more mainstream level or should they rely on donations and work on a smaller scale? Did belonging to an already existing industry force feminists to compromise on their vision? Was the sacrifice worth it? Despite *Ms.*'s tight connection to *New York Magazine* - whose editor wholeheartedly endorsed the newly founded publication claiming they "believe in the Women's Movement" and wishing "*Ms.* longevity and strength" (Felker 42), the magazine was still met "with a mixture of scorn and dismissal" (Zeisler 65). For instance, while *Ms.* could count on the support of *New York Magazine,* other feminist magazines were forced to rely on word of mouth and limited publicity, as Audre Lorde's Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press did in the '80s. *Ms.* was arguably the most well-known essential feminist production but many others started to emerge as the movement gained more and more traction. Today only a handful of magazines are still in production, namely *Ms.*, *off our backs*, and *Women in Libraries*, while by the end of the '70s, publications such as *New York Radical Feminists Newsletter*, *Lesbian Tide*, and *Pandora* had gone out of print. I would observe that their demise can be attributed to a series of factors. First, even well-established and popular *Ms.* magazine struggled to find a balance between obtaining ads to continue publishing issues and offering its readers feminist-oriented ones. If *Ms.* wanted to maintain its audience and appeal to all feminists, and not just white heterosexual ones, it needed to keep in check what ads it featured in its issues. On the other hand, the editors had to be mindful about not losing advertisers because relying on donations and support from patrons was not a sustainable business model in the long term. Former *Ms.* writer Lindsy Van Gelder recalls her experience: "Every time the magazine did bravely publish an article mentioning lesbianism (or abortion), it would lose advertising. [...] In the fall of 1980, [...] I wrote an essay about the need for same-sex marriage; it didn't see the light of print until February, 1984" (Van Gelder). In addition to ads, magazines relied upon subscriptions and word of mouth. If nobody knew the magazine existed, how could it gain readers? Not all

small magazines could benefit from being hard-launched in an already-popular magazine with an extensive reach and Steinem's and Sylvia Plath's names on the cover. Even the erotic feminist magazine *Viva* - analyzed in the Appendix of this thesis - benefitted from publicity in the pornographic magazine *Penthouse*. I would argue the lackluster sentiment around the feminist cause was detrimental to the existence of many feminist publications because due to the rise of conservatism, enthusiasm for feminism was dying down and most women felt like feminism had accomplished what they had been aiming for. Alix Kates Shulman states that the alleged power women had gained was merely a token and that "token power is different from real power" (603) because it was merely a farce and women were still indebted to men for their position in society and institutions. Most white heterosexual women felt like feminism had accomplished what it had set out to and they stopped caring about it the moment they obtained access to existing social structures, maximizing "their freedom within the existing system" (hooks 5). Instead, they had merely gained entrance into the patriarchy rather than ending sexism or its oppressive practices and had become instead a part of the same structure that was oppressing them. Despite the hardships of creating a magazine and keeping it running, the advantages of using magazines to spread feminist ideas might have outweighed its negative sides because they helped the establishment of feminist ideas and gave legitimization to the movement as a whole. It showed that it was not merely about protesting and, as the media continued to falsely portray, bra-burning.

4.2. Feminism in Mainstream Magazines: *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Playboy*

The impact of feminism in the magazine industry did not only revolve around the establishment of feminist magazines, but it also affected the already-existing mainstream publications. The magazine industry in the '70s showed the presence of two main genres on the market: publications aimed at women and those aimed at men. While *Ladies Home Journal* is an example of how hard feminists had to fight for some of their ideas to be included in the second most popular magazine in the country, *Playboy* asserted itself as an advocate for some causes such as abortion while also rebranding feminism to fit what Hefner was comfortable with championing. What is indicative is the surface-level representation of feminist principles to appease feminists who condemned the patriarchal, domesticated, and gender-oriented representation of women in *Ladies' Home Journal* while also denouncing the exploitative and objectifying nature of the sexist images that made up *Playboy* and *Penthouse*'s identities. It becomes clear that despite their different target audience, what *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Playboy* had in common was their close relationship to patriarchal values. How could *Ladies' Home Journa*l, whose reputation was of a serious magazine for women make no effort to include elements of the burgeoning women's movement and actively shun feminism as a

whole? How could *Playboy* champion feminist causes - as seen in Hugh Hefner's statements of support of pro-abortion, while also publishing demeaning images of women whose only purpose was to please male consumers? The answer lies in the fact that they were both controlled, published, and created by men.

After a sit-in at the *Ladies' Home Journal*'s offices to protest both the content of the magazine and its hiring practices, the insert 'The New Feminist', a collection of essays and articles written by members of the Women's Lib, was published in the August 1970 issue and while it might have seemed like a victory for the Women's Liberation Movement, I would assert it was not, as the presence of the insert was merely an ephemeral acquiescence to placate irate feminists rather than a stepping stone for actual change. This is supported by editor John Mack Carter's preface of the insert: his letter reads as a condescending and resigned attempt to accept the movement's ideas. After labeling the movement's "crusading activities" as "both daring and bizarre" (Carter 177), he writes about his decision not to resign from his position:

> Almost six months have passed since our famous sit-in, at which the original demand was for me to step down and hand over the JOURNAL to an all-women staff selected by the movement. Pointing out that women were already a well-paid and respected majority of our staff, I declined. But I did remain to listen, and to learn. And beneath the shrill accusations and the radical dialectic, our editors heard some convincing truths about the persistence of sexual discrimination in many areas of American life. What is more, we seemed to catch a rising note of angry self-expression among today's American women, a desire for representation, for recognition, for a broadening range of alternatives in a rapidly changing society. (Carter 177)

Carter's defensive tone and his refusal to step down highlight the magazine's rejection of feminism. While he acknowledges the "broadening range of alternatives in a rapidly changing society" (Carter 177), he is not willing to implement these changes in the magazines, preferring to stay at the helm instead of relinquishing his position to a woman. What is also of note in his editor's letter are the negative terms commonly associated with feminism, as he mentions the "shrill accusations", "radical dialectic", and "angry self-expression", further reiterating the image of the strident and angry feminist (Carter 177). He employs the common rhetoric of dismissal that surrounded the movement which is explored in this and the following chapter of this work as it is present in both the news coverage of the movement on broadcast on television. He continues to diminish the cause by writing: "This new movement may have an impact far beyond its extremist eccentricities. It could even triumph over its man-hating bitterness and indeed win humanist gains for all women — and their men" (Carter 177). Despite acknowledging the importance of feminism for both women and men, by making use

of pejorative terms to describe the movement and its members, he perpetuates the image of the 'man-hating' feminist.

In the years between 1970 and 1974, the magazine intrinsically linked power to consumerism by featuring articles such as 'The Power of A Woman', a column that tackled issues of the working woman such as how to ask for a raise (Pogrebin May 1975, 552) or "Husbands Talk about Working Wives" (Pogrebin March 1975, 314). The first issue of the column featured the motto of the magazine: Never Underestimate the Power of a Woman, as the magazine maintained the idea that a powerful woman was one in charge of the house and her appearance while advertisers turned consumerism into women's power. These instances made women feel like they had achieved empowerment instead of the actual liberation feminists were fighting for. For decades, women were the designated consumers, the individuals who spent the highest amount of money and therefore, most advertising campaigns were targeted at them. The trajectory towards consumerism became even more evident in Lenore Hershey's first letter as the new editor in the March 1974 issue. In it, she explains that women are essential to the economy and that "for the past several years, the JOURNAL has been deeply involved in underlining this crucial aspect of the changing role of women" (Hershey March 1974, 302). Hershey's letter ends with the motto of the magazine, highlighting the irony of a magazine that adopted a slogan that was supposed to empower the newly liberated woman instead featured countless ads about dieting, how to host the perfect party, child-rearing tips, and even articles titled "What's Your Mouth Say About You?" (Lynch 469).

That is not to say that the magazine completely rejected debating feminist topics but it was contained to a couple of pages, or in the case of the debate regarding the Equal Rights Amendment, a single page split in half between the pros and cons, with the addition of a couple of paragraphs written by actor Alan Alda as a way to highlight the amendment's importance for both men and women ("How America" 191). Could the complexities of the ERA be summed up in a single page? Was this the best way to reach women and educate them on the issue? What these examples show is that there might be more feminist issues that began to be featured in the magazine but the essence of the publication remained unchanged: some feminist issues might have been incorporated in its contents, appearing to embrace the movement but it still maintained the status quo of the publication. Case in point, the announcement of Hershey's promotion, with her promise of maintaining a "legacy of sanity, balance and decency" ("Editors' Diary" 8), highlighted the principle of the token woman: Hershey might have gained power within the institutional structure of the magazine but her presence was not an indication of any change in the magazine.

A magazine where one would not expect to find feminist principles is Hugh Hefner's erotic magazine, *Playboy*. It might be surprising that a soft-core porn magazine that featured

articles about politics, current affairs, and entertainment while also depicting numerous images of mostly naked women and sexually explicit cartoons would profess liberal opinions around issues close to the women's liberation movement. And yet, *Playboy* heavily contributed to abortion rights organizations[1] (Pitzulo 282), and featured a series of interviews with feminist Germaine Greer. I would argue that its perpetual representation of naked women only for the pleasure of men diminishes these contributions, almost rendering them null. How could a magazine pride itself on supporting feminist causes while also continuing to depict women in a demeaning way that reinforced heterosexuality (the women were portrayed to appeal to only the male gaze) and whiteness (the models in *Playboy* were almost exclusively white)? How could Hefner define himself as a feminist while also completely disregarding the innate sexist and misogynist representation of women in his magazine? The juxtaposition of feminist stances next to a centerfold that depicts that month's Playmate in a seductive pose creates a stark dissonance and fails to give legitimation to the magazine's support for the legalization of abortions. Hugh Hefner went as far as describing the magazine as a "serious journalistic vehicle" (Pitzulo 261) and himself as a feminist but his vision was rather narrowed: while he might have been pro-choice, he and the magazine drew the line at any discussione surrounding gender roles. Hefner's insistence on identifying as a feminist brings into question the truth of his statement and showcases his duplicitous approach to the issue.

Many of *Playboy*'s early stances on abortion came for the Forum section in each magazine, which displayed an array of different points of view also featuring comments and rebuttals by feminists who rightly questioned Hefner's supposed feminist identity. *Playboy*'s progressive stance on abortion can be seen in issues dating back to 1965: the Forum section of the December issue of that year features a letter titled "The Pain of Abortion" in which the editors respond to a comment about the physical and psychological toll that abortions have on women by claiming that "we think she [a pregnant woman] should be allowed to decide which alternative is preferable under the circumstances-- whatever the circumstances happen to be" (Editors 1965, 227) and that "the legalization of abortion would simply increase the alternatives available for her" which would lead to less emotional and physical pain as well as a higher level of safety for the woman involved. The following letter "A Case For Abortion" is much more forceful in stating that "our laws giving precedence to the unborn over the living, thereby causing incredible suffering to the individual and to society, are unenforceable, and should be changed" (Branting 228). Despite being somewhat hidden in the Forum section of a magazine featuring nude women, these statements were published in 1965, before the explosion of the feminist movement in the mainstream media and there is no denying that it can be interpreted as a progressive position ahead of its time.

The magazine was quick to undermine its stance when in the April 1970 issue it delineated its opinions on feminism, thus underlining the hypocritical beliefs of the staff. The editors claim to support the legalization of abortion and more access to contraceptive methods, even calling for equal pay for equal work (Josephs 59-60) but a line is drawn when talking about differences between men and women:

> However, [...] we cannot go along with the radical "liberationists," who maintain that sexual differences are insignificant (some say "nonexistent"). [...] We believe that many distinctions, apart from the purely physical, do and should exist and whether they are primarily cultural or inmate (or a combination of both), we rejoice in them as do most men and women because they help form the very basis for heterosexual attraction. This leads us to conclude that there should be distinct social roles for men and women in a society in which they complement one another rather than compete with one another. (Editors 1970, 60)

This passage is indicative of Hefner's lukewarm support of feminism, one that involved men and that left them able to exploit women's bodies. I would argue that the magazine's pro-abortion stance came out of *Playboy*'s understanding of what the legalization of abortion would mean to men. Men picked up on one aspect among the feminist principles that they could benefit from in sexual terms, such as having sexual relationships without taking responsibility for pregnancies and children, and by extension, women themselves. Moreover, eliminating differences among men and women - which Hefner interpreted as the erasure of everything he believed constituted a woman - and the threat against sex championed by the more radical fringes of the movement would render a magazine that was founded on the objectification of women's body for men's pleasure obsolete.

In the following issue, in a lengthy article by Morton Hunt titled "Up Against the Wall, Male Chauvinist Pig", the legitimacy of many of the Movement's concerns was acknowledged, but the article begins with a one-sentence-long summary of the entire piece: "militant man-haters do their level worst to distort the distinctions between male and female and to discredit the legitimate grievances of american women" (95). Hunt's article reinforces the traditional sex roles stating that differences between men and women stem from the "complementarity of our sexual parts" (207). This reaffirmation of the public and private sphere encompasses Hefner's superficial identity as a feminist. It is no surprise that *Playboy* was focused on the differences between the sexes as its own existence and relevancy in the cultural landscape depended on this innate contrast. If women were not seen as sexual objects, how could *Playboy* continue to exist and maintain the vast circulation and popularity it had?

Playboy, and *Esquire* before it, was able to exploit the interconnection between the ideology of consumption and the commodification of women's bodies, especially when linked to sex. From the turn of the century, the commodification of women's bodies became more and more widespread, and so did its presence in products targeted at women. Even the magazine *Ladies' Home Journal* featured ads with scantily clad women hoping that "the sexual representation of women would encourage women to buy the attraction seen in the ads" (Meyerowitz 10). Not only were women told how to behave by the articles featured in the magazines, but they were also encouraged to model the stereotype of womanhood that was depicted in ads. What *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Playboy* clearly understood was that people had slowly become accustomed to having women's bodies more and more on display and it depicted a their own version of womanhood that was acceptable to them. It was *Esquire* editor Arnold Gingrich who found the market niche that would turn men into consumers and created the concept of 'the neglected man'. In the 1933 Autumn issue, he wrote that general magazines "have bent over backwards in catering to the special interests and tastes of the feminine audience. This has reached the point where the male reader is made to feel like an intruder on gynaecic mysteries" (*Esquire* 4). The proclamation of 'the neglected man' - in a society whose institutions were created around men and actively rejected women, people of color, members of the queer community, and those who did not conform to its standard - can be interpreted as a rather tone-deaf remark. And yet, he managed to caputure this sentiment of neglect and turn it into a tool of consumerism so that he could cater to men as consumers, and because they had become accustomed to the commodification of women's bodies, *Esquire* featured cartoons, pin-up girls and images that depicted either as nagging and irritating wives or an over-the-top sexualized and often young women.

Playboy followed *Equire*'s lead but its core concept revolved around desire and what Laura Mulvey described as 'the male gaze', an imbalance of power reflected in cinema that casts men as active participants in looking at a woman while she remains in a state of passivity (12). A characteristic of the *Playboy* model was that she mainly looked directly into the camera, in direct contrast to what Mulvey asserted. As direct eye contact has been regarded as an assertion of dominance - and by extension, avoidance of eye contact has been defined as a sign of submission, the lack of gaze aversion further asserted *Playboy*'s concept of desire and hinted at a mutual interest expressed by the model on the page (Beggan 266-7). Women in *Playboy* were represented as nice girl-next-door types, they were photographed "cooking, playing games, attending college classes" (267) while also embodying the stereotype of 'naughty' because she was featured mostly nude in *Playboy*. For instance, the Playmate in the May 1970 issue is depicted topless in a domestic setting - possibly an apartment - with three house plants in front of her, and she looks at the camera without smiling or being overtly

seductive ("Born Free" 22-3). On the following page, the centerfold shows her leaning against the wall, with her hands in her pocket and wearing a pair of bright pink trousers. Once again, she is staring at the camera lenses, embodying a slightly more sexual stance - while also maintaining a somewhat innocent look ("Born Free" 25-6). Had *Playboy* listened to feminist concerns and adopted some changes to make it less sexist, it could have been a liberal publication that uplifted women's voices and concerns. Instead, Hefner's fear of an asexual society - one that would not rely on sex and therefore would render his very profitable magazine obsolete - put a stop to an unexpressed potential.

Another instance that shows Hefner's hypocrisy in his professed feminism manifested itself in the placement of more feminist-adjacent articles next to pictures of young naked women and cartoons that were degrading to them. In the September 1970 issue, the article "The Abortion Revolution" by Dr. Robert Hall was featured right after a cartoon that saw a topless woman in a cage while men gawked at her and her breasts. The article was a researched medical excursus on the importance of abortion from the perspective of a doctor, whose most impactful statement "*Doing* an abortion properly requires medical training, but *deciding* whether do it, in most cases, does not" (R. Hall 276) was undermined by the series of objectifying cartoons in the middle of the piece, one of which featured archeologists discovering a drawing in hieroglyphics of a naked woman (R. Hall 272). It is as if the editors wanted to keep reminding their readers that despite their liberal views, they are still a soft-porn publication that values the differences between the two sexes. This approach is also apparent in the January 1973 issue which featured an interview with feminist Germaine Greer. Her article "Seduction Is a Four-Letter-Word" examining the various aspects surrounding rape is sandwiched between arrays of women in seductive poses and various states of undress (Greer "Seduction"). Greer's comments around consent, the law's confusing treatment of rape crimes, and seduction are undermined by images that merely reduce women to an object to be admired, rendering the content of Greer's article null.

In examining issues from the late '60s and the mid-'70s, what stands out is the progressive explicitness of the images featuring women. In the early '70s, the commodification of women's bodies was becoming an incendiary issue within the movement. Up until 1972, nudity was mostly contained to showing the Playmate's breasts and at times her buttocks, but the January 1973 one featured the model's pubic hair ("Go-Getter" 124-5). While the feminist movement was ramping up attacks against both pornography and pro-sex feminists, pornographic magazines such as *Playboy* and *Penthouse* were doubling down on their displays of the naked body. At the same time, *Playboy* became a place where discussions about feminist issues could be had and brought many principles to the foreground for the male reader. On the other hand, *Penthouse* championed women behind the scenes, promoting them to high

positions within the company, I would argue that most of their efforts were nullified because of their ridicule of women and feminism and their constant objectification of women and the commodification of their bodies. Just as *Esquire* had paved the way for *Playboy*, which was, in turn, the stepping stone for the more explicit and raunchy *Penthouse*. Its editor, Bob Guccione, pushed against the boundaries previously set by *Playboy* and "began to get more daring, featuring full frontal nudity, girl-on-girl shots, and graphic displays of genitalia", an issue addressed as 'going pink' according to Patricia Bosworth, executive editor at *Viva*, *Penthouse'*s sister magazine (Bosworth). And *Playboy* followed suit. So many women, who had been taught to repress their sexuality, had no idea how to behave when the society around them was becoming more and more sexually explicit especially when blatantly confronted with it in *Playboy* and *Penthouse*, deeming, therefore, that rejecting every form of sex was a better option. It is irrefutable that pornography was never seen through women's, and especially feminists' lens and it affected women's perception of their sexuality. I would argue that groups like WAP (Women Against Pornography) that were rejecting all forms of pornography and erotic images, and women's history of repression of their sexuality, contributed to the erasure of women as sexual being, reinforcing beliefs in frigidity and shunning a part that made up the identity of a woman. Just as feminism was not an all-encompassing entity, neither was women's approach to sex and sexuality.

Feminism in the News

"This lady of the press usually has something nicer to do on Saturday night than burn her undergarments on the boardwalk in Atlantic City" (Van Horne). This is what Harriet Van Horne wrote in the September 9, 1968 issue of the *New York Post*, the day after a rally in Atlantic City in which a group of feminists gathered to protest that year's Miss America Pageant contest. This quotation encapsulates both the disparaging tone employed by the press when dealing with newspapers and the myth that feminism incided the burning of people's bras. This protest and the Women's Strike for Equality in New York on 26 August 1970 were the two major events that were covered by the media and ignited the discussion around the Women's Liberation Movement. Their coverage highlights the undeniable central role that the press and the media play in turning a movement that had started in small disjointed groups into one that was featured on the cover of *The New York Times*. The analysis of a series of articles published in *The New York Times, New York Post, Newsweek*, and *Time Magazine* between 1968 and 1970 shows that factors such as gender anxiety and the breaching of the private sphere into the public one contributed to the dismissal and at times mockery of the movement's goals. The rupture of gender roles was embodied by women taking to the streets and fighting for true liberation. The image of women burning their undergarments in the

streets unsettled the American consciousness, which believed that women should be docile and poised. There is no doubt that the Women's Liberation Movement required the attention of the media to gain more sympathizers and members, although what these articles show is that, contrary to the well-known saying, not all press is good press.

4.3. Breaching The Public Sphere in the News

"As one who has always been on the side of protesters, I regret to say that I believe this demonstration in Atlantic City has gone too far" (Buchwald). What this quotation encapsulates is the destruction of the wall that separated the public and the private sphere, one of the recurring themes that can be identified in the coverage of both the Miss America protest and the Women's Strike. The analysis of news articles published around these two events shows that any potential sympathy towards the Women's Liberation Movement was obfuscated by the transgression of boundaries. As feminists were breaching the public sphere, it is unsurprisingly that they were met by fierce resistance by both society at large and most of all, by the media. As the newspapers were mainly aimed at men, a relatively large number of noisy, demanding, and angry women did not meet their standard of interests and were subsequently dismissed as unimportant. The lack of faith in women's ability to band together and their demands to be liberated - something most men believed women already were - did not grant as an issue to be seriously taken into consideration. In turn, it was far more agreeable to make a mockery out of it while also stressing that real women - not those ugly feminists - were the standard to aspire for.

These protests were regarded as an exercise in narcissism and exhibitionism that transgressed the social boundaries by a group of women who were dismissed as "belligerents" (Stafford), "angries" (Brine 53), and "sturdy lasses" (Van Horne). It shows that any instance that did not conform to society's standard of what women should do and how they should behave was so extraneous and outside of the binary categories of 'men' and 'women' and therefore, dishonorable. The breech of the two separate and - most definitely not equal - spheres caused quite a stir. When women began to publicly rebel and take over the spotlight that had previously been shining on men and demanded to be placed on their same level, there was no turning back. Susan J. Douglas puts it best by writing: "The public sphere was defined, visually and rhetorically, as the place where men make history. [...] Because of these journalistic conventions, the only places any female had in the news were as victims, hysteric, sex objects or wife of a prominent man" (Douglas 156-7). The 1968 protest subverted the standard of what was considered news as newspapers were forced to reconsider that the only topics deemed newsworthy were the ones revolving around men.

It must be stated that the scale of the two events was different. While the Women's Strike counted around 50.000 participants, the Miss America protest was attended by around 150 women. Even so, the event itself was covered in a single and lengthy article in *The New York Times*, while the *New York Post* featured Art Buchwald and Harriet Van Horne's commentary rather than their reporting on the event. But despite the limited coverage, I would argue that the event was the catalyst that unraveled the entire coverage of the movement as being featured in *The New York Times*, which is considered 'the paper of record', gave legitimacy to the entire movement and despite the constantly tone of dismissal employed by journalists, it catapulted feminist ideals in front of a vast number of people.

In an article titled "Miss America Pageant Is Picketed by 100 Women", journalist Charlotte Curtis gives a broad look at the protests in a sympathetic yet condescending tone. In what I would argue is an attempt to dismiss the demonstration, Curtis stressed that there were more "unsympathetic spectators" than women involved in the protest who were vulgar and that they wished the protesters were the ones being thrown into the trashcan rather than their symbols of male oppression. By doing so, she made the women appear insignificant and their protest vain, especially if compared by such a large number of onlookers. Similarly to the sentiment in Buchwald's article, it becomes apparent that it is not the reasoning behind the protest that irked these reporters, but it was the gender of the protesters. In another attempt to minimize the impact of the event, Curtis focused on the appearance of three counterdemonstrators who were wearing a Nixon-For-President button, in what is an attempt to frame them as sensible women who were in favor of the Pageant and voting for the Republican Presidential nominee Richard Nixon, making them more conservative and traditional. I would argue it was an attempt at polarizing the issue by turning it into a good guys versus bad guys encounter, and placing it in political terms of Democracts versus Republicans.

Another issue concerning the Pageant was the Miss Black America Pageant that was happening the same day. The different coverage highlights how far away the concept of intersectionality was: member of the New York Radical Women group, Robin Morgan, the only protester named in the article, cautiously stepped around the issue denouncing all beauty contests but at the same time accepting the positive impact it had on recognizing Black women. Curtis is dismissive of the issue in the article, interviewing the few Black women at the protest and commenting that "they were not sure what they ought to do about it" (Curtis). The article does not take into consideration that Black women were deeply affected by both sexism and racism, especially because standards of white beauty imposed on them continually pushed them to refute their natural looks. The Miss Black America served as a way to acknowledge the beauty of Black women, but it also simultaneously forced them into the same subjugated

position as white women while also compelling them to deal with racist issues. Finally, the last aspect of this article that has to be examined is an article which features the announcement of the winner of the context and a quote regarding the protest from the newly anointed Miss America which reads: "It was too bad, I'm sorry it happened" ("Illinois Girl Named"). The piece, "Illinois Girl Named Miss America" was right next to Curtis's, easily undermines the protest once again: what becomes blatantly obvious is the parallel of the Pageant contestant as docile and well-behaved contrasted with the hysterical and deviant protesters who ruined her big day.

Although featured in *The New York Times*, Curtis's article was placed in the 'Style' section which was mostly aimed at women. Doing so implied that the issue lacked legitimation, as the masculine narrative of the press assumed that men reading *The New York Times* did not care about women's issues, which this protest was deemed to be (Dow, *Watching* 16). That being said, the protest caused indignation among men but it affected women as well. Harriet Van Horne tackled the issue of women's liberation, claiming that what feminists were wishing was "to be liberated from their femininity" (Van Horne). Van Horne's essentialism is just one of the many attacks against the Women's Liberation Movement and it should not be baffling that it comes from a woman. The majority of women at the time were still living under the strict constraints of the patriarchy and were gladly participants in its upholding. I would emphasize that this instance is the reason why press coverage was fundamental in the early days of the movement's public actions. It shone a light on feminist issues that might have not entered the mainstream discourse had it not been for the articles written about it. And by doing so, it helped spread the message to those who would have otherwise not come into contact with any information regarding feminism. On her part, Van Horne's superficial analysis of the movement fails to capture and overall misinterprets the purpose of the protest as she calls the protesters 'Amazons' and despite admitting to not having seen any pictures of the event, she claims to be certain they look "unstroked, uncaressed and emotionally undernourished" (Van Horne).

In the following year, more articles were written discussing the Women's Liberation Movement and its achievements. A handful of mostly sympathetic articles were published often by journalists Linda Greenhouse, Marylin Bender[2], Deirdre Carmody, Judy Klemesrud, and a couple were even authored by men but they failed to analyze the issues the movement was bringing to the table and continued to play into the sexist and superficial stereotypies around the movement. A meeting of The Congress to Unite Women is covered, albeit in a too-short article of around 350 words (Greenhouse); despite employing misogynistic rhetoric, the double standard women are forced to adhere to is recognized in "Meet The Women of the Revolution" (Babcox). A list of achievements obtained by women in the public eye is compiled

but it features peculiar elements such as the attractiveness and the weight of some of the women[3]. On the other hand, a rather hostile article was penned by Ruth Brine in *Time Magazine* and manages to acknowledge the validity around the issues the feminists had brought forward by conceding to the relevance of the gender wage gap between men and women and an efficient daycare system while also employing multiple times the words 'militant' and 'radical' to refer to the members of the movement. In addition, the article is full of far-fetched accusations such as the indoctrination of women into joining the movement and feminists being "surprisingly violent in mood" (Brine).

Nonetheless, the coverage of the movement and its events saw an explosion halfway through 1970 and that was due to the Women's Strike for Equality on 26 August 1970. Published between 26 August and 28 August, at least six articles regarding the Strike and the Women's Liberation Movement made their way onto *The New York Times* and the Women's Strike for Equality appeared on the front cover under the title "Women March Down 5th in Equality Drive". The placement gave the event legitimacy, it appointed the Women's Liberation Movement on the national stage and it decisively contributed to raising awareness of its existence. The March established the previously-disjointed feminist groups as a united Movement, with a list of goals they were trying to accomplish. As Kate Millett claimed that day: "We're a movement now" (Shteir). Although journalists admitted to the validity of some of the women's points, the overall tone of the six articles analyzed continued to be mostly dismissive. Rather than focusing on interviewing protesters, journalists spoke to bystanders, shop owners, and male spectators, focusing on the factors surrounding the events, actively dismissing the feminists' demands. In "For Most Women, 'Strike' Day Was Just a Topic of Conversation", Grace Lichtenstein glosses over the feminists' demands in favor of interviewing a hair salon owner to ask about the impact of the strike on his business, to which he replies: "We have a middle-class clientele and their liberation is being able to come here and spend three hours having their hair set" (30). It is another instance in which the feminist cause is equated to a kind of liberation that meant being able to take time out of one's day to go to the hairdresser instead of it being considered a demand of gender, economic, political and social equality. In fact, the article ultimately ended by reporting the opinion of a woman on the streets whose quote reads: "Women's Liberation? [...] Never thought much about it, really" (Lichtenstein 30). From the title to the very end, the disparaging style of the piece is both a constant reminder to its readers and a reassurance that despite all the chaos, the protests, the demonstrations, and the angry women, the Women's Liberation Movement would lead nowhere. In her front-page coverage, Linda Charlton also mentions the minimal impact of the Strike and what is of particular note is that the demands brought forward by the organizers were featured in the last paragraphs of the story which read, in its entirety: "free abortion on demand, the

establishment of community-controlled 24-hour day-care centers for the children of working mothers and equality of educational and employment opportunity" (Charlton "Women March" 30). What this article - as well as most of the others published in *The New York Times* in this window of time - perfectly showcases is the newspaper's focus on events rather than issues.

The tone of dismissal had already been set in place in *The New York Times* coverage even before the event had happened. In the days before, articles such as "Traditional Groups Prefer to Ignore Women's Lib" written by Lacey Fosburgh linked once again political affiliation to their stance against feminism: proper and well-behaved women who had conservative values were the model to aspire to while loud and brash liberals embodied all the things they deemed went against femininity and feminine values. It draws a parallel to the three counterprotesters at the 1968 Miss American Pageant who were wearing their Nixon-For-President badges, reinforcing the conservative/poised and liberal/hysterical dichotomy. Self-professed 'traditional' feminist groups such as Daughters of the American Revolution called feminists "ridiculous exhibitionists," "a band of wild lesbians" or "Communists" (Fosburgh 44), once again appointing derogatory characteristics to people's identity as feminists. Fosburgh clearly states the conservative side of these women who "strongly endorsed the traditional concept of woman as a mother and a homemaker" (Fosburgh) and were quoted stating: "Women themselves are just self-limiting. It's in their nature and they shouldn't blame it on society or men" (Schary qtd. in Fosburgh).

4.4. Gender Anxiety in the Press

"The final and most tragic part of the protest took place when several of the women publicly burned their brassiers" (Buchwald). The aspect of the 1968 Protest that ruffled Art Buchwald's feathers the most had nothing to do with the actual act of protesting, but it revolved around the burning of women's bras, a clear threat to gender roles, a dissolution of the barrier that separated the traditional representation of the kind of femininity and masculinity promoted by the patriarchy. In his article in response to the protest on 7 September 1968 in Atlantic City, *New York Post* journalist Art Buchwald laments women's audacity to publicly protest misogynistic and sexist stereotypes represented by the annual Miss America Pageant. 1968 was a year that saw one demonstration after another: from January to June, 39.000 students were involved in protests at 101 different colleges for a total of 221 major demonstrations (Douglas 154). What created outrage was not that people were protesting in the streets but that these people were women, and this threatened the way of life a male individual in America had become accustomed to because women "talked back to men, invaded their bars and clubs, and even challenged the very fabric of American language, coining terms such as *sexism* and *male chauvinism* while exposing the gender biases in the words *mankind*, *chairman*, and *chick*"

(Douglas 166). It felt unbecoming for a ladylike individual to be holding up signs and destroying the objects that, according to Buchwald, made her a woman, because "these well-meaning but misled females were trying to destroy everything this country holds dear" (Buchwald). What symbolizes femininity more than a bra? And the image of feminists running around a flaming trashcan filled to the brim with bras stuck in people's minds. And yet, no bras were burned.

The origin of the 'bra-burning myth' came from a single line in Charlotte Curtis' article about the 1968 Miss America Pageant protest in which she quotes attendee Robin Morgan saying: "we told him [the mayor] we wouldn't do anything dangerous-- just a symbolic bra-burning" (qtd. in Curtis). Harriet Van Horne picked up on this aspect and expanded it and Art Buchwald made it the centerpiece of his entire article claiming that they were destroying "everything that this country holds dear" (Buchwald). By eliminating what made her different from a man, a woman was rendered utterly unappealing to men. His rhetoric did nothing but perpetuate the image of the women who were demanding liberation as unhinged and unattractive people who would eventually destroy the male-female dichotomy. Bonnie J. Dow explains:

> Media obsession with "the supposed burning of bras" communicated "the fear that women might, by abandoning cosmetics and delicate costuming, lose their femininity, i.e., their sexual and companionship utility for men" (Molotoch, 1978, p. 182). Some reporting on the movement implied that feminists both hated men and wanted to be men, endangering not just their own femininity but men's masculinity as well. (Dow, *Watching* 17)

The representation of the Women's Liberation Movement as an abnormality stemmed from the fact that it did not pertain to either sphere - the male or female - and therefore, it was unacceptable in society. It was a threat to the way of life that people had experienced up until that point and a menacing warning that the breaching of gender boundaries would lead to chaos, a belief is reflected by Hugh Hefner's essentialist stance on the difference between man and women and by extension, masculinity and femininity. The bra-burning myth was something that both the press and news networks could exploit as well as something tangible they could latch on. It has been noted how most of the articles were focused on events rather than the issues discussed by the Women's Liberation Movement and that was because these two events had both visual and physical components: hoards of women on the streets of New York or women picketing outside of a beauty pageant throwing clothes and accessories in a trash can. By contrast, what feminism was advocating for was not tangible. Susan J. Douglas explains:

> Women's real grievances-the burdens, frustrations, and inequities in their lives-occurred behind closed doors. Unlike the civil rights movement, there were no protesters being hosed down or attacked by dogs. There was no war footage, or photographs of napalm burning people's skin. There were just these women, most of whom looked OK on the outside but who were, on the inside, being torn apart. Feminists had to make the private public, the invisible visible, and the personal political. This was an extremely difficult assignment, especially with a media increasingly hooked on dramatic, violent pictures. (Douglas 187)

And therefore, the media focused on bra-burning. It was mentioned in passing a short piece called "The Price of Protest" about the charges against a participant at the Miss America Protest ("The Price of Protest"); Linda Charlton's "The Feminine Protest" similarly raised the issue in the opening paragraph of her article writing: "They have marched down Fifth Avenue; they have at times, burned bras and written books and pressured Congressmen and made speeches" (Charlton "The Feminine Protest") and in *Time*'s "The New Feminists: Revolt Against Sexism", Ruth Brine writes: "to demonstrate their disgust and alienation from sexist society, the angries picket the Miss America contest, burn brassieres, and dump into "freedom trashcans" such symbols of female "oppression" as lingerie, false eyelashes and steno pads" (Brine). After so many repeated mentions, it is no surprise that an instance that never happened became a myth.

It was easier to cast feminists out rather than embrace the newly liberated woman. Coupled with the media's institutionalism, society's resistance to change did not bode well with feminists' demands. Juxtaposing proper women to the angry demonstrators and comparing the "dignified and ladylike" women, to the "strident and jokelessness" (Stafford), "noisy and obstreperous" ("The Liberated Woman") feminists who engaged in "attention-getting antics" ("The Liberated Woman") showcased women's indifference or outright rejection of the movement's antics. Their militancy and their abrasiveness disrupted the ecosystem and journalists blamed their aggressiveness as the reason why so many non-member women rejected feminism. I would argue that the analysis of these articles highlights how many women were turned off by what seemed to be radical ideas and that is because they were presented as such by the press. And yet, despite the unflattering coverage, these new and revolutionary ideas they might have not heard of before were brought to women's attention.

4.5. Media Attention

"The fustian and the hollering, the deification of Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan, the strident jokelessness attendant on the movement are woefully unpropotious because they obfuscate a good many justified grievances" (Stafford). Jean Stafford's comment in her article "Women as Chattels, Men as Chumps" echoes a widespread assumption concerning the

Women's Liberation Movement: women were going around the wrong way to enact change. Rather than take to the streets and be "noisy and obstreperous" ("The Liberated Woman"), women should avoid breaking the already-established boundaries and express their discontent without rallies or riots. Feminists were highly critical of the media, popular culture, and its practices but at the same time, they craved its attention. To make noise and attract the attention of institutions in the media industry, feminists were resorting to the adoption of tactics that played into how the media was structured. They were trying to both advance their visibility and criticize the media by playing into the same tools that were oppressing them. The movement's thirst for revolution was extremely evident in these two events, but what was still unclear was how change could be brought on.

Feminists needed to rely on the attention of the media to spread their message but he problem was how to obtain it. Both the Miss America Pageant protest and the Women's Strike for Equality fit into the five qualities that an event ought to have if media coverage were to take place because they were "public and observable, "deviant", showed "the potential of conflict", could be "personified" and they could be linked to issues already in the media such as talks of abortion reform and the ERA (Dow, *Watching* 149). There is no denying that women breaking boundaries made the news, but that was mostly because the demeanor and appearance of the protestors symbolized conflict which, by extension, caused outrage. In "Making the News: Movement Organizations, Media Attention, and the Public Agenda", Kenneth T. Andrews and Neal Caren propose that:

> Fundamental to these perspectives is the observation that news media are not neutral channels reflecting the events of the day. Like other institutions, media are shaped by organizational, economic, political, social, and cultural forces that influence the practices of news-gathering and the content of news. [...] News agencies, especially editors and reporters, act as gatekeepers who sort through events and define what is and what is not an important story. (843)

It is important not to forget that the media is an institution designed to make money: reporting on an event that caused "perplexity", "bemusement" and "uncontained fury" (Babcox 102) meant an increase in copies sold and even more publicity for the newspaper itself. This meant that consciousness-raising did not make enough impact to be covered by the media and maybe in part, be taken seriously but loudly marching in the streets and making noise did. In addition, the relationship between activists and media goes both ways: feminists needed the visibility that news coverage brought to their cause if they wanted to reach the highest possible number of individuals.

This visibility did not translate to an exact reflection of the feminists identity and, especially, their demands. The institutionalization of the media is an essential factor to be taken into consideration when trying to make use of the industry to one's advantage. In "Encoding/Decoding", Stuart Hall stresses that any historical event has to first become a story and then it can be communicated to an audience because in the transformation from "'raw' historical event' (S. Hall 118) to message, codes must be changed and therefore, the intent behind the protests is clouded by the media's biases. Just as the adaptation of feminist theory to the publics was obfuscated by the insertion of codes appointed by the media, so was the message of the protests. Steering away from the male-oriented codes was impossible and therefore, both protests became sensationalized by the press to fit the narrative demanded by their institution. Feminists were forced to spread their message through the same institution that they were criticizing and trying to change and when engaging in these events of activism, organizers needed to be prepared to face the reality that, no matter how much they stayed on message or the number of interviews they gave, their points might not be reported in the way they wanted to.

Common sayings such as 'Any Press is Good Press' might not be entirely applicable in this situation because, as for the bra-burning myth, feminists would have to continue to work hard to dismantle the image the press had created of the movement and its members. But, in her book *Where The Girls Are*, Susan J. Douglas emphasizes that despite the negative coverage, the media endorsed some "selected feminist principles" (189) and emphasizes a fundamental point: "And at the same time that radical feminists and their often shocking pronouncements were marginalized, portions of their vision were folded into the mainstream, thus reconfiguring what constituted the middle ground" (189). In support of Douglas' claims, I would argue that even the ridicule aimed at the protests was helpful to the advancement of the movement's goals as well as its visibility on the national stage. More radical principles were essential in representing mainstream feminist issues as moderate ideas when compared to the more eccentric proposal. For instance, eccentric antics by the group WITCH - which involved them hexing Wall Street while dressing up as witches, helped create a common denominator that made the less radical faction of the movement appear less threatening to the average viewer[4].

What is evident from the analysis of these articles is the tight-knit relationship between the media and feminism. The articles analyzed in this chapter have proven is that in its early coverage, the Women's Liberation Movement was met with some ridicule as well as some recognition of its validity. Most articles acknowledged that although the movement made serious points about the inequality among men and women and the serious systemic fails within society, feminists went about them the wrong way. And yet, these two events were

fundamental in giviging visibility to feminism as a movement and spreading its principles to audiences that without these articles, would not have come into contact with the movement.

Chapter 5: Feminism on Television

"Television watching is often an occasion for family gathering and can be associated with times of family togetherness, of unity" (Press 61). There is no doubt that television is one of the most popular and powerful cultural institutions, the object the living room decor is oriented towards, and, most of all, a window into fictitious worlds that allow viewers to escape from the reality of their day-to-day lives. While magazines and newspapers did not rely on the premise of being consumed inside the home, television did. In the '70s and '80s, television was not immune to the changes in society that feminism was fighting for, such as equal pay, free childcare, and freedom from the constraints of the patriarchy but it is important to remember that, just as the press and the magazine industry, television was - and is - an institution that is reluctant to change and it is particularly relevant to examine how feminism inserted itself in television programs and how the institution of the media molded it to fit its systemic and male-oriented structures. Before the explosion of the Women's Liberation Movement on the cultural and social scene, women were portrayed as "dependant, passive, nurturing types, uninterested in competition, achievement, or success, who should conform to the wishes of the men in their lives" (Douglas 17), as can be seen in episodes of *The Donna Reed Show* and *I Love Lucy*. While feminist ideas were somewhat incorporated into television programs, the underlying message was one related to maintaining the status quo and portraying a type of feminism that was acceptable to the media industry. This chapter also features the analysis of six programs: *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *All In The Family*, *Maude*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Family Ties*, and *Roseanne*, to illustrate how sitcoms and, by extension television, featured feminist ideas while also maintaining an overall message that was in line with the male-oriented systemic structures in the television industry. These programs were chosen to showcase how the conversation around feminism moved from the public - regarding the demands of equal rights in the workplace - to the private sphere - implementing feminist ideas into the home - and, ultimately, a return to what looked like a slightly more liberated version of the domestic life in the '50s with the TV show *Roseanne*. First, this chapter takes a look at Mary Richards' maternal working-woman version of the liberated woman and the over-sexualized one imposed on the Angels on *Charlie's Angels;* then it examines the reversal of the generational divide between parents and their children in the '70s's *All In The Family* and *Family Ties* and finally, it analyses the figure of the strident feminism embodied by Maude and Roseanne on their respective shows.

5.1. Different Liberations

"A woman doesn't have to have a baby if she doesn't want to" ("A Son For Murray" 12:23) said Mary Richards to her boss Lou Grant in an episode of the acclaimed sitcom *The Mary Tyler*

Moore Show. This quotation is one of the many reasons why Mary Richards embodied one aspect of the liberated woman of the early '70s to be, she personified a tame, glamorous, and liberal version of what the media accepted feminists to be like and look like and demonstrated a model of women young girls could aspire to emulate, that of a young, good-looking, and bubbly girl who enjoyed her comfortable life surrounded by lovely friends and with a good job, but posed no threat to the statuo quo of society as it was, she was an isolated case that showed the way a liberated woman could achieve so she could be accepted by the media and society at large. On the other hand, ABC's *Charlie's Angels* depicted another side of the liberated woman. Sabrina, Jill, and Kelly[1] embody the liberated woman who despite having a job that was traditionally male, without sacrificing their femininity, and made use of it to solve crimes. *Charlie's Angels* is a fitting example to show the influence of the media in portraying women who were seemingly liberated because they held had fulfilling jobs in a male-dominated field that allowed them to be independent career women but also maintained their alluring appearance to either seduce men into revealing their secrets. The Angels represented a similar version to the career woman personified by Mary Richards but deviated from her good-next-door persona in favor of the ultra-glamorous woman with sex appeal.

Despite their portrayal of different sides of the liberated woman, what brings together *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Charlie's Angels* is their apparent support for feminist values of financial independence and liberation from social constraints while reinforcing patriarchal values and portraying a version of feminism that was in line with the media's institutional ideology. The television industry was willing to show women who had their own career outside the home and managed to remain perpetually happy, sweet and maternal to her coworkers and friends just like Mary Richards, as well as women who, like the Angels, relied on their sexuality to do their jobs. Moreover, both Mary and the Angels are the embodiment of "traditional femininity with new feminist ambitions" (Douglas 205): they are fashionable, good-looking women who fit in the beauty standards imposed by the media while also benefitting from the advancement brought on by feminism. It was as if the media was telling them that it was okay to look for liberation as long as they maintained both the pleasant behavior and appearance demanded by the media. Finally, they all had jobs traditionally held by men: Mary is a television producer and in an all-male office, while he Angels were police officers who were handpicked by the mysterious and faceless Charlie and recruited to work for him at his private investigation agency.

Despite embodying the image of the independent and liberated woman, Mary Richards is still confined in a strict patriarchal society. There is no denying the influence of feminist ideas on the entire premise of the show: contrary to the portrayal of women solely as mothers and wives in sitcoms in the '50s and '60s, in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Mary is the main

character, she's not married, and she has a job that takes her away from her home. She is liberated but in a way that is controlled and designed by television producers to create a version of feminism that appears less threatening to the status quo created by the institution itself. In fact, the role of the caretaker does not avoid her. The show shifts the setting, removing the self-sacrificing figure of the mother/wife from the home and placing it in the workplace. The television station becomes her surrogate family, she is the de facto mother figure of the office, always ready to provide advice or a shoulder to cry on for her co-workers. Women embraced Mary's independence as it procured a model for young women to imagine and make plans for their lives in a way that could provide a balance between work and home. Mary represents the best of both worlds and yet she is not equal to anyone. Bonnie J. Dow explains: "She is inferior to other, especially male, characters in the public realm, where her success depends more on interpersonal than professional skills, and she is superior to other female characters in the private realm" (Dow, "Hegemony" 269). In a room full of men, she is inferior to them while in the privacy of her home, Mary's life seems more put together than Rhoda's and Phyllis': Rhoda's chaotic personality, her frequent comments about being overweight (an aspect that the viewers could clearly see for themselves she was not and further confirm society's expectations of what women should look like) and her relentless search for a husband place her in a subpar position compared to Mary. The representation of Mary as the ideal liberated woman isolates her from the other characters, either because she is the token woman in the office or because she is one in her private life.

Mary's role as a nurturing figure is evident right from the first couple of episodes of the show. From the start, the pilot titled "Love Is All Around" immediately establishes Mary's personality: she is not afraid to speak up and almost reprimands Mr. Grant when during her job interview he asks her inappropriate questions (06:00) but on the other hand, it also establishes Mary's maternal persona: after her new boss Lou Grant shows up drunk at her door, she does not seem annoyed about his presence in her home, even indulging him. The episode finds a balance between the image of feminism embodied by a young working woman who is not afraid to speak up for herself and the traditional image of the happy and nurturing woman and Mary's liberal and yet traditional persona is cemented over the course of the show. In "Bess, You Is My Daughter Now", Mary plays the role of mother to her landlady's daughter Bess, becoming the ideal mother-surrogate to the little girl and by the end of the episode, she embodies the role of a mature and accepting figure to Phyllis as well ("Bess, You Is My Daughter Now"). In the last episode of the show, Mary herself acknowledges the transference of her role of mother from the setting of the family to the workplace by saying:

> I just wanted to let you know that sometimes I get concerned about being a career woman. I get to thinking that my job is too important to me. And I tell myself that the people I work

> with are just the people I work with and not my family. But last night I thought, what is family anyway? It's the people who make you feel less alone and really loved. And that's what you've done for me. Thank you for being my family. (“The Last Show” 22:30)

Her image as a nurturing and comforting person made it possible for her more progressive and feminist views to be accepted by the average viewer who was still on the fence about feminism as a movement and its overall cause.

Just as Mary Richards represented the ideal liberated and poised young woman, the three protagonists of *Charlie’s Angels* portrayed another side of liberation, one that revolved around sexuality and sex appeal. All Angels were attractive young women who fit the conventional standards of beauty and constantly made use of their sexuality and sex appeal at work. The Angels not only have a high-stakes job that is traditionally male and puts them often in danger but they also manage to perform it while maintaining their femininity. In a 1976 *Time* article, the essence of the show was distilled by journalist Judith Coburn as: “Supposedly about strong women, it perpetuates the myth most damaging to women's struggle to gain professional equality: that women always use sex to get what they want, even on the job” (“TV’s Super Women” 69). The Angels find themselves in situations that put them in bikinis or various states of undress to please the male gaze. What is apparent is that despite branding the show as feminist because of their demanding career in a male-dominated field, the Angels distinctively remain sex objects (Press 25).

Despite revolving around men’s pleasure, the show appealed to women because, instead of showing women being pitted against each other depicting their camaraderie among them, although one that was inclusive to white, thin, super-glamorous women. The Angels helped each other, they were supportive of each other's endeavors, and they always had each other’s backs. Moreover, as the crimes often revolved around other women, their actions “spoke to a fantasy about women being able to help other women against brutish, oppressive men, and they affirmed the importance of sisterly love” (Douglas 214). It played on the concept of sisterhood that was particularly relevant to the feminist movement as a way to band women together against patriarchal oppression. While I encourage the representation of sisterhood among women, I would argue that what the Angels stood for was a bland and superficial version of the sisterhood that feminists were demanding. The Angels stood together against the isolated bad man and not the overall systemic issues that plagued society. Just as Mary Richards’s feminism was individual to her situation and she did nothing to extend it to other women, the Angels pretended the patriarchy did not exist and that the crimes they were investigating were the results of a few bad apples that did not stand for a larger overpowering issue. Susan J. Douglas states: “There wasn’t a system that oppressed women, only a few power-hungry bad guys. And if women worked together to ferret them out, all would be fine”

(216). This approach fails to consider the larger systemic problems that afflicted women's lives in the workplace. In addition, television presented the Angels' over-sexualization as empowerment, instead of the blatant submission to the patriarchy that it was. The first example is evident in the opening credits of the show, which feature a voiceover of the ever-elusive Charlie who introduces the three women:

> Once upon a time, there were three little girls who went to the Police Academy; and they were each assigned very hazardous duties. But I took them away from all that, and now they work for me. My name is Charlie. ("Hellride" 00:01)

These opening lines are the emblem of the not-so-apparent belittlement of the Angels that runs throughout the show. At the same time, it takes away the focus from the Angels and places it on Charlie, a character who is never seen on the program and acts as the almighty voice. First of all, describing the three protagonists as "little girls" actively erases most of the empowerment spouted by the show. It diminishes their status as independent women and turns them into damsels in distress that were saved by Charlie from a life of dead-end jobs traditionally reserved for women that mostly involved clerical and menial work, tasks that he sarcastically refers to as 'hazardous duties'. Second, in the title sequence, Charlie is the active agent who gives the Angels demanding jobs while they remain passive and subservient. Susan J. Douglas analyses Charlie's role in the show and writes:

> They [The Angels] now get to do what men do, but they are still very much women. Charlie, a sophisticated and enlightened man, is the agent of liberation for these women, suggesting that it is smart, modern men who will set women free. But Charlie is also instantly recognizable as a traditional patriarch - commanding, unseen, permeating everything, issuing orders and instructions the girls must obey. (214).

Even the name of the program itself takes the agency away from the three protagonists: the use of the possessive turns three independent and skilled women into the property of a man. Charlie's seemingly distant supervision of the angels keeps them in check from afar and his invisibility is an indication of the existence of the patriarchy in women's everyday lives. Ultimately, Charlie is "a version of the pimp and his girls. Charlie dispatches his streetwise girls to use their sexual wiles on the world while he reaps the profits" ("TV's Super Women" 69). Throughout the five seasons, the Angels systematically use their sexuality to bamboozle men and trick them into a place of apparent submission, whether that is interrogating them while wearing a bikini or offering dinner invitations that ultimately lead to potentially dangerous situations. The program was also rather explicit in its depiction of violence against

women, often portrayal in a casual and light-hearted way: “Night of the Strangler” features a scene that implies a rape attempt. As Kelly comes to Sabrina’s rescue, the threat fails to be addressed. Instead, Kelly acts as the enraged woman caught the man she was seeing red-handed on a date with another woman, completely overlooking the attempted rape. The following conversation about the assault further minimizes the attempted rape and makes a joke out of it. As Kelly and Sabrina are leaving, Sabrina thanks Kelly for her prompt arrival by telling her: “If it had been a couple of seconds later I would have been defiled by that creep” and “if he had been Robert Redford I might have said: ‘Defile away!’” (“Night of the Strangler” 44:15). The episode originally aired in 1976, a period in the Women’s Liberation Movement that was focused around the prevention and erasure of violence against women and these deaf tone remarks further reinforce the anti-feminist sentiment of the show. Scenes and dialogues such as these are additional proof that *Charlie’s Angels* was a seemingly feminist show that was actually constructed in a way to that reinforced patriarchal views and dismissed feminist concerns, such as violence and rape, by making a joke out of them.

The television medium failed to incorporate feminism into its programs without diluting it and twisting it to conform it to the standard that was acceptable to the institution of the media. Mary Richards’s feminism, no matter how inspirational and progressive for 1970, only went so far because it displaced her maternal and nurturing persona from the home to her workplace. On the other hand, the feminism portrayed in *Charlie’s Angels*, seemingly the Angels’ dangerous and independent career in a male-oriented field and their portrayal of sisterhood, vanishes when compared to the objectification of Kelly, Sabrina, and Jill.

5.2. Generational Divergence

“You know, they may say things have changed but basically, they’re happiest when they’re barefoot and pregnant” (“Love Thy Neighbor" 05:55). Although this line might seem like it came straight out of the mouth of *All In The Family*’s older and conservative patriarch Archie Bunker, it was uttered by 19-year-old Alex Keaton on the sitcom *Family Ties*. This line exemplifies the generational reversal that happened in the ‘80s: while both shows revolve around a domestic setting, the role of feminism in these programs is paradoxical, in that it is both completely different yet utterly similar. In *All In The Family* (1971-1979), the Bunkers’ home was invaded by the tumult of the revolutions of the ‘70s and feminist ideology was seen as a nuisance and indoctrination by Archie’s mockery of the fight for equal rights. He reflects the institutional pushback against feminist ideals of the early ‘70s, while, in *Family Ties* (1982-1989), it was the conservative ideology of the ‘80s personified by Alex Keaton that was seen as an intrusion into the liberal sanctuary[2] created in in the Keatons’ household. It is this

reversal in the representation of conservative ideology that is symbolic of the era because just as Archie is a product of the '50s, Alex is one of the early '80s.

Although *Family Ties* portrays a family with a working and a husband who helps around the house and has an active role in his kids' lives, the feminist movement continues to be dismissed and ridiculed by Alex. The way he and Archie behave on the screen reflect the way that feminism was seen both the institution of the media and people's daily lives, that is something to be made fun of or scoffed at. The audience is led to believe sexist and misogynistic jokes are funny and acceptable by the laugh track underneath each punchline. I would argue that it stands as an additional guidance for the audience to decode the message that they are receiving and an indication on how to interpret sexist jokes or statements made by either Archie or Alex and the audience is given permission to ridicule feminism along with the characters. In her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Laura Mulvey associates three looks that are present in cinema, and by extension, television, and accompanying the first two - the camera and the audience - she mentions the look of the character, which is particularly relevant in this case. No matter how insulting or politically incorrect their statements are, both Archie and Alex are characters beloved by their viewers who are quick to sympathize with them, first because their opinions are legitimized by the laugh track and then due to the charismatic performances by Carroll O'Connor (Archie) and Michael J. Fox (Alex).

For instance, in *All In The Family*, although "Archie was weekly put in his place and shown to be wrong" (Levy), and his old-fashioned view of the world gave voice to those who shared his opinions. In "Archie's Helping Hand", Archie berates his wife Edith for going to a women's club meeting, repeatedly telling her to go back to cooking and forbidding her from attending another event with her friend Irene. His sexist and authoritative comments are undermined by the audience's laughter, which downplays his remarks by turning them into meaningless quips[3]. As he complains about equal pay by loudly stating that: "When you see the day that they are giving women the same pay as men, and giving women the same jobs, where in the hell is it all going to end?" ("Archie's Helping Hand" 23:12). As Archie's masculinity is threatened raises his voice to make his point and he comments on women's inferiority to men by referencing that in the Bible, Eve was created from Adam's rib, "a cheaper cut" and therefore she is not equal to him ("Archie's Helping Hand" 22:21). He is made to look like a strong man who stands up for what he believes in. The episode ends with no other input from the women in the room: it is Archie who speaks the last words of the episode, indicating that he is in the right and no further discussions on the matter are needed. His opinion becomes the dominant one and at the end of the episode, there is no resolution. Archie's mind is not changed, and what the audience is left with are his bigoted views about women's equality and by extension, feminism.

On the other hand, when it is Gloria who stands up for what she believes in and tries to share her views about the Women's Liberation Movement and Archie's poor treatment of his wife Edith, her characterization is that of the hysterical woman. In the episode "Gloria Discovers Women's Lib", Gloria tries to persuade her mother to stand up for herself and stop being treated unfairly by her husband, but the two are seen standing in the kitchen in what I would argue is an attempt to reinforce their traditional role of homemakers. Gloria confronts her father saying: "a woman sure has no chance to express herself around you. It's as if she were in prison. She can't grow, can't change. She's second-class, half a person" ("Gloria Discovers" 05:10) and she is immediately called 'little girl' by her father, an expression intended to belittle her and her opinions. Furthermore, Archie's reaction reflects the threat that he believes feminism poses because it "comes from outside the home, from initially persuasive but shallow propaganda that infects women and turns them into something they're not" (Douglas 198). In fact, he asks Gloria: "Them ain't your words. Where are you getting all that from?" ("Gloria Discovers" 05:25), confirming the perception of feminism as a source of brainwashing that drills these ideas into women. In fact, in the rest of the episode, Gloria is made to look like she has been indoctrinated by feminist ideals and she is portrayed as hysterical, crying and screaming, so much so that it leads to her father asking "What time of the month is it?" (10:08), alluding that it is Gloria's menstrual cycle that has forced her to behave like that. The episode is filled with stereotypes about feminists, including the ever-present myth of feminists as bra-burners (06:20). The ending of this episode is just as inconsequential as the one of "Archie's Helping Hand": Gloria's supposedly strong convictions about the feminist cause are immediately abandoned by the end of the episode, only confirming the notion that feminism turns women hysterical. There is no denying that Archie's opinions are the dominant ones and the show is mostly focused on his reaction to the changes in the world. In the episode "Gloria Has a Belly Full", Gloria experiences a miscarriage, but the episode features her father and husband's reaction rather than hers. In her essay "'Do I Look Like a Chick?': Men, Women, and Babies on Sitcom Maternity Stories", Judy Kutulas gives reason to this issue by writing: "Gloria's mixed feelings as she came to terms with being pregnant and then dealt with her loss were both less interesting and less attractive than her father's fumbling response to her miscarriage" (Kutulas 19). Once again, *All In The Family* shows that the world is Archie's and the rest of his family members are just living in it.

Just as Archie's views are legitimized by the laugh track, so are Alex's. From the first episode, we are told of Alex's love for Republican former President Richard Nixon and his wholehearted endorsement of Reagan, whose policies had a profound impact on the shift towards conservatism in all aspects of society. Alex's conservative views are chastised by his parents and his sisters, and although Alex - just like Archie - is shown wrong all the time, he

does not change. Instead, Alex's sexist comments are not deemed derogatory or insensitive, but simply amusing. Alex is also a promoter of the return to strict gender roles: in "Oh Donna" he reinforces the stereotype of the father outside the delivery room while the mother is having the child by saying: "the natural way to have a child, Mom, is for the man to be in the waiting room, smoking, pacing. And... And the woman to be in the delivery room drugged out of her mind" ("Oh Donna" 01:19). Moreover, in "Nothing But a Man", Alex's girlfriend Ellen gives a doll as a present to baby Andrew - the latest addition to the Keaton Family in season 3 - and he is uncomfortable at the prospect of his brother playing with it. "This is not a toy for a boy. This is a doll. [...] So this better fold out into a truck" (01:44). Alex is the manifestation of the '80s return to essentialist gender roles and the ideas around biological determinism.

Despite the ever-present nature of quips and jokes aimed at the feminist movement and feminists in general, the analysis of *All In The Family* and *Family Ties* shows how feminist ideas had become part of people's daily lives and Edith Bunker and Elyse Keaton are a testament to the influence of feminism in how women were represented on television. Edith was depicted as the typical wife and homemaker who was always the butt of the joke as Archie is often disrespectful to her and admonishes her for not being good enough at satisfying his every need. Instead, Elyse Keaton has a fulfilling career as an architect that allows her to work from the comfort of her kitchen and to be always accessible to her family. Just like Mary Richards on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* was the model for the newly liberated woman of the early '70s, Elyse Keaton was the image of the 'super mom', one that after a long day at work, came home and effortlessly took care of her children and the house. It was a time when "families were coming to terms with the economic realities that made two-paycheck households the necessity for attaining and maintaining a middle-class standard of living" (Leppert 8). In the second season's finale, Alex tries to reassure his mom that it is not important to 'have it all':

> Mom, I sympathize with what you're going through. I mean, today's woman is in a very difficult position. Tradition and certainly biology have put her in the home. Now there are these ridiculous new feminist pressures for her to do things outside the home, like developing a career. Your anxiety is natural, Mom. You can't fool with Mother Nature. ("Working At It" 13:03)

Indeed, the fantasy of 'having it all' was ever-present in sitcoms in the '80s, indicating that what women ought to aspire to was having a career and a family (Leppert 8), and forced them to juggle both lives outside and inside the home. At the same time, Alex's speech to his mother is evidence of a return to conservatism ideology that saw women returning to the home, one that did not take into consideration the economic struggles that a middle-class family would

face were it to happen. The same rhetoric can be found in Archie's beliefs regarding the placement of women in the workplace.

Contrary to Archie's constant admonishments of Edith, Steven goes out of his way to support Elyse's career as an architect, even if it makes him unhappy. As feminism seeped through culture and society as a whole, it made the portrayal of a somewhat equal marriage possible. In the season one finale "Elyse d'Arc", it is Elyse who is too busy to celebrate Steven's accomplishment at work, and Steven's frustration takes up most of the episode as he tries to accommodate her busy schedule while feeling confused and neglected by his wife. The couple seems to enjoy spending time together as equals and, while Archie forbids Edith from attending other women's group events, Steven is supportive of his wife. In the same episode, Elyse draws the contrast between the older generation and theirs by telling her husband:

> You see, I was brought up to think of a husband as the be-all and end-all of my existence, that a man should be the center of my life and that I should learn to live in his shadow and sublimate my ambitions to his and wait on him hand and foot and satisfy his every need, answer his every desire. Well, you can see how ridiculous that is, can't you? ("Elyse D'Arc" 21:35)

Elyse's description sums up Edith's subservient role as a dutiful wife to Archie, one of a past generation that two liberal individuals like Elyse and Steven want to live behind. Moreover, what separates Elyse from the traditional role of mother and homemaker personified by Edith is her husband's involvement. Steven provides "fantasies of co-parenting and shared domestic chores for women viewers" (Leppert 28) because he shares the domestic duties of family life. He serves as the model of the man who is invested in domestic life and is willing to provide support to his wife and perform traditionally female roles while also being emotionally available to his children, both consoling Jennifer after she gets her heart broken ("Love Thy Neighbor") and talking to Alex about having sex for the first time ("Summer of '82").

Both *All In The Family* and *Family Ties* represent the generational divergence in the two families which demonstrates the impact of feminism in television, as it seeped more and more into people's lives, but also showcases its diminishing popularity throughout the '80s. In the short span of a decade, television audiences experienced a radical shift in how women were portrayed on television because they were no longer relegated to the kitchen or as servants to their husband's needs as Edith was but, like Elyse Keaton, they tried to 'have it all', both by having a fulfilling career and taking care of their family in partnership with their husbands. The Keatons' views reflect the parents' coming of age during the late '60s and '70s and their liberal ideology while *All In The Family* tries to grapple with Gloria's feminist views as the father makes fun of her.

5.3. The Strident Feminist

The '70s *Maude* and the late '80s *Roseanne* were both centered around a female character that defied all expectations of what women should behave and look like. Both protagonists are brash women who are not afraid of speaking out for what they believe in and what they stand for, the embodiment of the 'strident feminist'. Their sarcastic and fed-up demeanor was not only reserved for the life they led outside the home but also for their domestic life. Both women stood out because they were not representative of conventional standards of beauty and went against the traditional representation of women on television, which saw them as thinner, younger, and always dressed fashionably. Both women stand opposite to Mary Richards's happy and polite personality: they are often sarcastic, mean, and they say whatever comes through their head, no matter how impolite that might be.

Maude embodied the liberated woman of the upper-middle class who brought feminist ideas into her home. Susan J. Douglas describes her character by writing:

> Outspoken, sharp-tongued, and sarcastic, eager to take on any man in a debate about politics and especially about the status of women, Maude said all the things you wished you had said when, at 2:00 A.M., you reviewed how badly you'd handled your day, and how you had failed to stand up, verbally, to men you wanted to kill. (Douglas 202)

Maude's inability to hold her tongue turned her into a relatable figure for feminists who wanted to see someone who didn't conform to society's standards of what a woman should say and how she should appear. A particularly controversial episode that some CBS's affiliates even refused to air (Kutulas 22) was the two-part episode "Maude's Dilemma", in which Maude discovers she is pregnant and ultimately decides to have an abortion. In the early '70s this was a point of contention, with feminists like Gloria Steinem and Kate Millett at the forefront of the struggle, fighting for pro-abortion laws and trying to show how important bodily autonomy was for the average woman. In her essay "What It Would Be Like If Women Win" Steinem reiterates that "free legal abortions and free birth control will force writers to give up pregnancy as the deus ex machina", a sentiment framed in literary terms to push back against the representation of women solely as mothers. This statement looks at a broader picture: from literature the issue could be transmediated to real life, which means relieving women from surprise and unwanted pregnancies that transformed them into baby-making machines because abortions and family planning would allow women more freedom to be in charge of their own bodies. The episode showed that the movement affected and was beneficial to women of all ages and all walks of life. It was particularly eye-opening because they aired in 1972, before the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling (Mangan and Breuninger) and it was

an issue that carried a lot of stigma around it. These controversial episodes portrayed a much more realistic way of what pregnancy meant for some women, especially at a late point in their reproductive life. Maude's reaction to her own pregnancy was one of despair, from the moment she confesses to her daughter that she is pregnant at the age of 47, her emotions regarding her pregnancy are mostly negative and quite distant from the picture of domestic bliss that was represented in TV programs even less than ten years before. The option of abortion is brought up almost immediately after Maude reveals her condition to her daughter, reminding her mother that it is a legal procedure and that "we're free. We finally have the right to decide what to do with our bodies" ("Maude's Dilemma: Part 1" 20:00). Throughout the episode, the word abortion is mentioned twice ("Maude's Dilemma: Part 1" 21:30, "Maude's Dilemma: Part 2" 13:55), but there are numerous allusions. Moreover, Walter, Maude's husband, removes himself from the equation and lets her be in charge of the final say on whether or not to terminate this pregnancy. By having Maude be the one deciding whether or not to terminate the pregnancy, the show makes a statement that underlines how carrying a baby and then raising it is particularly taxing for any woman. Moreover, it shows Maude pondering the decision for two entire episodes, pushing back against the notion of levity that is sometimes attached to the issue of abortion and showing how difficult a decision it can be.

These two episodes also touch upon contraception, additional proof of the influence of feminist topics and ideas. Walter's indecision about having a vasectomy takes up the majority of the second episode, telling the audience that it has nothing to do with virility and helping to take away the stigma around it for male viewers. The episode ends with Maude's decision to have the 'procedure', and with its controversial status, "Maude's Dilemma" brought a salient feminist issue closer to people's homes and added fuel to the fire around the discourse. Even if Maude's upper-class life did not reflect all women's, it was still fundamental in highlighing the central role that access to safe abortions is for women of all ages and backgrounds.

Sixteen years after *Maude*'s first episode, another woman embodies the role of the strident feminist: Roseanne Conner. Created by the namesake Roseanne Barr, the show rejects the qualities of femininity that women like Elyse Keaton and Mary Richards personified. Instead, Roseanne is a working-class mom of three who struggles to make ends meet. Throughout the show[4], she is seen being as rude to her kids as they are to her and making sarcastic quips to her boss and authority figures. The show strives to portray the condition of working-class women, as the audience often sees Roseanne at her place of work, whether that is a run-down diner or her kitchen, as she sells magazine subscriptions over the phone. But just because she is a working mom, has a messy house and a rude personality it does not mean she is a feminist. Although she does portray a different version of motherhood that Elyse Keaton and Edith Bunker showcase, I would argue that it is not enough for Roseanne to be considered

a feminism. Throughout the show, Roseanne is shown in a variety of circumstances that place her in strict gendered roles. Her portrayal is one a new kind of womanhood that distanced itself from the other reiterations, because her house is unkempt, she is loud and sarcastic and working-class. But Roseanne and her apparent feminism seem sends mixed messages to its audience. Was Roseanne a feminist character? Or was the audience told that she was while the program continued to show her performing gendered roles? Andrea L. Press is equally hesitant to call this portrayal of women and of so-called liberated ideas as 'feminist' and she writes:

> By the late seventies and early eighties, it was no longer unusual to see images of strong women working in nontraditional positions. I have tentatively called some of these representations "feminist" because they stress women's activities in the public, rather than the domestic, realm. (35)

She is a proponent of a strict adherence to gender roles is evident right from the first episode when Roseanne repeatedly asks her husband Dan to fix the sink and after she threatens to take care of the issue herself, he tells her: "Fixing the sink is a husband's job" ("Life and Stuff" 16:50). In addition to strengthening gender stereotypes, this exchange is indicative of the type of women's liberation the show portrays. Roseanne is represented as loud and anti-feminine a woman who does not need her husband's help because she is self-sufficient and independent, and while it is an important message, it overshadows another side of the issue: by doing everything herself because her family members do not help out that much in the house, she takes on all responsibilities, effectively pulling what Andrea Press refers to as a "double-shift" (43) that meant that after working all day, working-class women like Roseanne had to come home, take care of her children and the house: it is Roseanne who prepares the food for Dan's poker game ("Five of a Kind") and it falls on her to console her daughter Darlene when she hurts herself while Dan is actively ineffective and seems not to know what to do ("Life and Stuff"). I would argue that is an oversimplified version of feminism because while it might seem that Roseanne is more liberated than Edith, both women continue to be oppressed by patriarchal values, just different ones. And at the same time, the media pushes its audience into believing that Roseanne is a feminist character.

Roseanne's portrayal of motherhood is in stark contradiction to that of previous moms represented on television. On *Family Ties*, Elyse Keaton is trying to have it all, balancing both her career and motherhood while maintaining a perfectly clean house and spending quality time with all her kids. Roseanne embodies the typical mother who does not have a high-paying job as a lawyer or an architect, but rather they are waitresses or secretaries or even worked in a factory (Douglas 285). She is not a career woman, in fact she often switches jobs, she is unemployed and is seen struggling to find one that matched her skills. Roseanne is forced to

face this issue from the very first episode of the show after her daughter's teacher informs her that Darlene has been barking in class and expresses that Darlene would benefit from some 'quality time' with her mother given that her disruptive behavior in class might be a consequence of neglect at home. Roseanne's response is one of indignation and outright mockery, telling her that she has "three kids and I work so I don't have any free time" ("Life and Stuff" 13:10), rejecting the image of the dutiful stay-at-home mom.

While in her book Andrea L. Press depicts Dan, Roseanne's husband as "a breakthrough image for working-class male", I would dispute her claim because some family dynamics shown on *Roseanne* point to a return to the gendered roles seen in shows such as *All In The Family*. Although Roseanne is treated far better than Edith ever was, she is still the one who does most of the cooking and takes care of the kids. Roseanne and Dan's relationship is both similar to the Keatons on *Family Ties* while also appearing as just a slightly updated version of those in the '50s. Both couples are seen enjoying spending time together and have funny back-and-forth moments with each other, whether that is about deciding what to eat for dinner or something funny one of their kids said. In "Crime and Punishment", the Conners get a call from D.J.'s school after he brought what they refer to as 'obscene reading material' to class and there is a running joke revolving around both Dan not knowing where his son's school is and the shared belief among the teachers that Dan had passed away because he had never been seen on school grounds before. Although it might seem a harmless joke, it is a reflection of the fact that Dan's involvement with his kids' lives is limited.

Although the audience is not a passive entity that does not employ any sort of critical thinking, television is positioned to be accepted unconsciously as reality (Press 17): *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *All In The Family*, *Maude*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Family Ties*, and *Roseanne* are all television programs that reflect a version of feminism that has been transformed and repurposed to fit into what the institution of the media deemed acceptable to endorse and therefore broadcast to its audience. The media as an institution has absorbed feminist ideas, mixed them with their own values aimed at preserving the status quo of society and broadcast into millions of people's homes. In her 1980 essay "Sex and Power: Sexual Bases of Radical Feminism", Alix Kates Shulman envisioned a rather grim decade for feminism, and by extension, its representation in the media:

> As the radical ideas of feminism, developed under the powerful insight that the personal is political, are absorbed by institutions adept at deflecting change through co-optation, and as our radical programs come under direct attack by an increasingly vocal conservative backlash, our awareness of the political dimension of sexual relations, with its powerful potential for change, is in danger of being lost. (604)

Television's watered-down and distorted version of feminism put its original theories in jeopardy. That is due to the fact that, contrary to literature texts authored by feminists, what was broadcast on television was elaborated to fit into the media's fixed structures, therefore depriving its audience of an unfiltered feminist perspective.What this chapter demonstrates is that although there are feminist elements in all the shows analyzed, they are all undermined by patriarchal values that never seem to abandon the women on these programs. Where that is Mary Richards' maternal embrace of her co-workers or Roseanne's double shift as a homemaker and working woman, it is clear that the media was still holding tight to its own belief of what values women should be allowed to portray on television.

Chapter 6: Institutions

"The term 'politics' shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another" (Millett 23). In *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millett is one of the first feminists to emphasize the correlation between institutions and power, connecting the dots among the different ways in which institutions, power, and feminism are interconnected. Feminists have had to face the obstacles put in place by systemic and male-oriented institutions such as the media when trying to spread their message. The movement's goal of equality between all members of society collided with the harsh reality of patriarchal institutions. The establishment of a society that is equal for all individuals and void of any imbalance of power poses a series of questions on how to obtain this final result. For a feminist approach to influence the core principles of institutions, change needs to happen. The two previous chapters have established the interconnection between feminism, popular culture, and institutions as three entities interlocked in a continuous fight and highlighted the issues that feminists face when making use of popular culture to spread their message due to the existence of institutions. The feminist goal of lessening gender inequality cannot be achieved without transforming institutions into an entity that has shed their male-oriented values and given equal power to those that they had oppressed. The analysis of magazines, the news, and television in this thesis showed that if a feminist and effective approach to popular culture were to take place, the structures of institutions needed to adapt to a model that did not actively work against feminism. What remains uncertain is the best way to enact this change. Can institutions be improved from within? Or is a complete revolution necessary to dismantle patriarchal dominant values that are set in place in male-oriented institutions? The debate around the issue has been lively and this chapter explores the tight correlation between popular culture and institutions and their influence on each other, and it also questions the method of how to bring about change that encompasses feminist ideology into institutions, whether that is with long-term solutions or a single revolutionary event that will dismantle and rebuild institutions as we know them.

According to liberal feminists, the most straightforward solution for the improvement of male-dominated institutions is what Celeste Montoya calls the "add women and stir" approach (372). This approach sees institutions as neutral entities that can be adapted to ensure that women are given the same benefits as their male counterparts. Its answer to the question 'Would the workplace be more equal were more women hired and promoted to positions of power?' is a resounding yes. Theoretically, this solution should solve all issues. The presence of more women in institutions should guarantee their influence to be equal to men, and their points of view taken into consideration and implemented. What this attitude fails to recognize is that institutions are inherently not neutral entities but rather, they are highly

skewed towards the exclusion of women, people of color, and those who do not conform to the institutional standard. The dominant culture and values have been imposed on society at large by different sets of institutions that have been created around men and their needs while actively excluding all those who do not meet that requirement. This approach is exclusionary and fails to realize that the majority of structures set in place within institutions are at the expense of women and therefore reflect the inequalities that emerged from social structures. In her essay "Institutions", Celeste Montoya takes a close look at institutions as structures that "connote the wider social outcomes that result from the confluence of many individual actions within given institutional relations" (368). Montoya connects social practices and their subsequent naturalization within institutions. This naturalization creates structures that are deemed 'natural' or 'given' and have become an integral part of institutions and "have created patterns of constraint on individual choice" (Montoya 368). Given their embedding in institutions, a cyclical relationship is created between the two: social practices influence the creation of structures that become ingrained in institutions, and on their part, institutions reinforce these structural systems. Society influences institutions and institutions influence society back. Even if the number of women in both production and decision-making roles were to increase, it would not automatically mean a more equal and fair adaptation of feminist theories and women-related issues in the media.

Feminist ideas broadcast by the media had to go through an institutionalization process that often stripped them of the nuanced facets and boiled them down to an issue that could appeal to the majority of the audience. In *Women Watching Television*, Andrea L. Press connects the feeble representation of feminism in television to the principle of availability:

> The creators of network television images straddle a wobbly fence as they assess how best to appeal to the largest segment of the public while offending as few as possible, when treating issues that have become controversial as feminism in our society. (41-2)

Consumer products created by the media - such as magazines, newspapers, and television - depend on how popular they are and how much money revolves around them. Popular culture is a great means to achieve this goal exactly because it was popular, and therefore that meant it was consumed by a large sect of the population.

Whether it is through formal or informal institutions, the "rules of the game" (Waylen 213) are stacked against the advancement of feminism that can bring about both social change and social justice as to strive towards implementing practices aimed at political, economic, social, and gender equality because formal institutions are clearly laid out, it is the unspoken nature of informal institutions that makes it so difficult to dismantle them as they are strenuous to both recognize and isolate because they are "socially shared rules, usually

unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels" (Waylen 214). And it is because they are so ingrained into people and subsequently, their behaviors, that informal rules can even stand in direct opposition to formal ones. For instance, if every single individual working at a newspaper bands together and shuns female employees in the press room by only giving them assignments centered around women's issues or one that are deemed less important, no matter what the formal institution says, there are no systems set in place for women to complain or do something about escape this predicament. Feminist Gloria Steinem lamented this practice as she recalled being assigned to cover the newly opened *Playboy* Club because she was a woman and therefore, she could go undercover as a playmate. This practice is also evident in the articles concerning the Miss America Protest in 1968 and the Women's Strike for Equality in 1970 analyzed in Chapter 4 of this thesis. What emerged was that despite the coverage of both events in *The New York Times*, most articles appeared in the 'Style' section of the newspaper, showing that the protests were not taken particularly seriously. In addition to being relegated to an insert, the majority of the articles were authored by women, which is another indication that it was deemed a 'woman's issue' rather than one that granted the attention of all newspaper readers. On television, few women had direct control over the product. Even though Mary Tyler Moore's production company was behind the show, out of the 65 writers credited throughout the seven seasons, only around 20% were women ("THE MARY TYLER") and, just like most programs, it was created by men. These examples show that the revolution women were aiming for could not be turned into reality due to the stability of both formal and informal rules. This does not mean feminism did not have an impact on institutions as a whole but feminist influence was restricted to issues on a surface level. Eventually, it led to marginal change. On television, the role of mother was transformed from the dutiful and subservient wife embodied by Edith Bunker in *All In The Family* to the fouled-mouthed Roseanne on *Roseanne*: instead of portraying women as objects to be bossed around by their husbands, it was Roseanne who laid down the law in the Conners' family. And yet, she also showed traits that unite her and Edith. Roseanne was still responsible for taking care of the children, cooking, and doing the housework, and in addition to all these tasks she also had to work a full-time job. The program portrayed her as an independent woman who stood up for what she believed in when in reality she was just as oppressed as Edith, although in different aspects of their lives.

This begs the question: could feminism advance by employing their own informal institutions? Were feminists to create their own presses and groups aimed at spreading feminist principles, would they be able to counteract the already-established male-oriented institutions? Could they build their own feminist institutions? I would argue that this work shows that feminists are perfectly capable of setting up their own institutions, and Gloria

Steinem's *Ms.* magazine immediately comes to mind; but I reckon it would be counterproductive to the task of spreading feminism. Creating two distinct factions would only polarize and further divide individuals, creating two separate echo-chambers in which people would only encounter opinions that are reinforced by others who shared the same beliefs without ever considering an alternative idea. Were feminists to create their own echo-chamber, it would be made up of likely minded people but they would not be able to breach the already-existing institutions. I would emphasize that if feminists aimed at ending the oppression on both men and women by the patriarchy, it would be against the movement's interests to seclude themselves and be separate from others who do not share the same principles.

For institutions interested in maintaining their status quo, feminism was a persistent threat to that stability. The movement was so widespread and it became such a focal point of the '70s that they were forced to recognize its impact and incorporate it into its structures. The turmoil of the '70s forced institutions to give some leeway to the movement's demands and improvements did happen: feminist ideas were being discussed in magazines, television, and newspapers, reaching people through a variety of mediums. Women began to make use of the media as a way to spread their message, staging protests, writing articles, and going on TV programs. For instance, Gloria Steinem was a frequent guest on TV programs such as NBC's *Meet The Press*, where she advocated for women's rights and feminist issues (NBC News), and Robin Morgan's "The Media and Male Chauvinism" featured an indictment of the media and its relationship with sexism (Morgan). But at the same time, their new-found visibility also incited an avalanche of negative blowback towards feminists and feminism as a whole. The coverage in the press helped spread the message but it also created an easy way to denigrate and diminish feminists' efforts. Case in point, Buchwald's article "The Bra Burners" helped create the stereotype of the angry feminist whose goal was to destroy society as they knew it.

This issue became particularly relevant in the 1980s when the term 'identity politics' became mainstream. It referred to "a new form of political mobilization" that was "built around membership in a specific group and asserting the distinctiveness, dignity, and distinctive needs of that group" (Connell). Feminism in particular placed a lot of importance on using the correct terminology and as a movement, it was focused on giving the right vocabulary to other women to express themselves and being able to call out sexist and oppressive situations. Terms like 'male chauvinist' and 'consciousness-raising' became deeply attached to the feminist cause, signaling an affiliation to the cause. In her essay, Raewyn Connell claims that identity politics might lead to a return to essentialism because "this means claiming that identities such as 'woman', 'gay', or 'black' are based on *natural* categories and express unchangeable characteristics" (Connell). But even without claiming an identity based

on natural aspects that might be impossible to alter, identifying as a feminist or belonging to the Women's Liberation Movement meant that an individual was identified as such by others. Identity politics and dominant codes allowed an easy way to refer to feminism as a whole. Linking feminism to specific stereotypes of strident women, lesbians, or man-haters allowed the media to ridicule those who claimed to be feminists. It was tightly connected to efforts by institutions to demonize feminism - and by extension feminists - by showing it in a way that was advantageous to them and also helped them maintain their well-established formal and informal rules. Reducing all feminists to embody those stereotypes resulted in the belief that all feminists were gay, angry and hated men. Ridiculing and mocking feminism was advantageous for institutions in two instances: first, organizations such as newspapers - no matter how committed to reporting the news objectively and from a neutral position - heavily rely on advertisements and selling their product to as many people as possible. This meant that sensational news stories like thousands of women taking to the streets to protest the confines of the patriarchy were events that people were interested in, whether that was to learn more about the movement or to mock it. They were a segue to selling more copies by creating a controversial discourse around it. Second, while news stories such as the Women's Strike for Equality were financially advantageous, they also served the purpose of controlling both the movement and feminists and keeping them at bay. By employing the power they yielded as a well-established and widespread institutional machine, they were able to contain the threat that feminist theories of revolution posed to their male-oriented structures by portraying it in a way that was advantageous to them and that neutralized the threat of change.

As delineated in his essay "Encoding/Decoding", Stuart Hall's analysis of production led him to observe that the creation of media products cannot rely on the relatively simple linearity of sender/message/receiver (117). Employing terms related to Marxist theories of production, he swaps 'sender' with 'producer': while 'sender' implies a neutral party who is simply relegated to the task of sending the message, 'producer' holds a different connotation. A producer is an entity that fabricates an item, whether that is a physical one or a piece of news for instance, and it has agency in how the message is crafted and distributed to the masses. By extension, this means creating a message from a specific point of view and that leads to the framing of an issue through lenses that cannot be considered neutral. Although, as Hall posits, producers cannot be entirely sure their message will be decoded as they intended it to be by the consumers (S. Hall 125), the media heavily relies on codes that resonate with the audience, such as the stereotype of feminists as bra burners. It did not matter that no bras were actually burned during the protest, but the codes framing the message implied that feminists were disrupting the identity of what a woman was, they were violent - hence the burning of the bras - and were interested in making a spectacle. The truthfulness behind the issue becomes

irrelevant once the message - and its code - is repeated over and over again. It embraces the features of a mythological event, becoming a sort of common knowledge held by the majority of individuals. Were feminists to push back against this narrative, the colossal presence and influence of institutions would be there to contradict them and perpetuate their narrative. As Chapter 4 of this thesis shows, feminist issues and concerns were indeed covered in magazines and on the news but they were still under the umbrella of patriarchal structures. At the same time, Steinem's *Ms.* magazine was an instituting moment: feminism became part of the institution and gave legitimization to the feminist cause and the movement around it. It transmediated the concerns and principles into paper and became a trailblazing publications that cemented feminism into the publishing industry and allowed many others to flourish. And yet, espite its all-female staff and feminist tone, was part of that institutional environment and its approach was adjacent to the 'add women and stir' approach Montoya described in her essay. No matter how trailblazing and fundamental in advancing feminist thought the magazine was, it was still connected to the institutions the movement was trying to reform. Gender quotas, although impactful, fail to address the systemic practices that are pervasive through institutions ranging from government agencies to the private sector. The same can be said regarding television, specifically, sitcoms and network television programs. The movement was often ridiculed, mocked, and represented on screen as something that turned women hysterical or that made them loud and strident. The unconscious acceptance of the reality portrayed in television is a contributing factor to the stronghold that the media as an institution hold on its audience. Popular culture is a vessel through which institutions are able to spread their ideology and their message while seemingly supporting a cause such as feminism. The previous chapter about television has shown examples such as the figure of Mary Richards on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* who, while sporting a liberated façade, moved the role of the nurturing and loving mother from the private sphere of her home to the public one. Bonnie J. Dow calls this aspect "hegemony or hegemonic process" which refers "to the various means through which those who support the dominant ideology in a culture are able continually to reproduce that ideology in cultural institutions and products while gaining the tacit approval of those whom the ideology oppresses" (Dow "Hegemony" 262). In their respective works "Hegemony, Feminist Criticism and The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and *Women Watching Television*, Bonnie J. Dow and Andrea L. Press explore the concept of hegemony to showcase the intricate and strong connection of institutions to various aspects of popular culture. While Antonio Gramsci originally developed this theory as a way to demonstrate how the dominant and ruling class is able to gain people's consent to its ideology (Press 16), its adaptation in popular culture illustrates how easily influenced people can be by

institutions such as the magazines, newspapers, and television that pluck from feminism the ideas that are more compatible with their own core beliefs while actively shunning the rest.

The instances mentioned in chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis showed that institutions are an intrinsic part of popular culture and they hold sway in how feminism is represented in all products created by the media. It is the inscrutability of the sets of rules, both formal and informal, deeply ingrained in the patriarchy that are detrimental to the assimilation of a feminist perspective. In her book *Feminism Is For Everybody*, bell hooks is a proponent of radical change. She writes:

> To end patriarchy (another way of naming the institutionalized sexism) we need to be clear that we are all participants in perpetuating sexism until we change our minds and hearts, until we let go of sexist thought and action and replace it with feminist thought and action. (ix)

hooks calls for a transformation that would involve all individuals in changing their beliefs and their way of thinking about institutionalized sexism in favor of replacing it with a feminist outlook. But how can feminists come up with a plan to dismantle dominant structures in an institution if they are not able to name them? This leads to the inquiry at the beginning of this chapter: can change happen from within the institutions of the media or is a revolution and a complete overturning of the status quo necessary for said change to happen? Furthermore, which of the two options is the best one to enact feminist ideals? I would argue that for permanent change to happen while maintaining the institutional practices it would require a considerate amount of time before any sort of change were to see the light of day. This process of altering institutions from within would require decades to come to fruition, while products created by the patriarchy - maybe with a hit of feminist theories - would continue to be created and spread through popular culture. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that a big structural change would reflect feminist interests. Is it possible to completely dismantle a well-established institution, rebuild it from scratch, and have it express feminist theories? In her famous speech-turned-essay, poet Audre Lorde sums up this debate by writing “for the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they never enable us to bring about genuine change” (Lorde “The Master’s” 113). Lorde reaffirms the importance of taking a chance at enacting radical changes rather than carrying on perpetuating the dominant values of the patriarchy while feeble results ensue as attempts at change are being made. What remains to be seen is how to bring about change that will reflect feminist values and create a society that is more equal and just for all individuals.

Appendix: The Case of the Erotic Feminist *Viva*

I am offering this case study at the end of this thesis because, as well as being the flame that ignited my interest in examining the correlation between feminism and popular culture, it is a tangible example of how feminism as a complex, multifaceted, and nuanced concept was continuously dimissed and reduced to fit what male-dominated institutions, even in the pornography industry, deemed acceptable. *Viva* mirrors the unexpressed potential of what feminism in popular culture could have achieved, had it not been for the pushback of institutions: the magazine could have been able to have in-depth conversations about feminist issues from a variety of points of view without shying away from incendiary issues such as sex and sexulity in a period that saw women distancing themselves more and more from it. Instead, *Viva* was forced to comply to what the industry, and especially its publisher, wanted.

"*Viva* was always a man's idea of what women wanted. And I don't believe that they really knew what women wanted" (Bryant qtd. in Romolini, "Good Girls" 35:00). This is Gay Bryant, former senior editor, talking about the short-lived '70s feminist porn magazine *Viva*. Published from September 1973 to January 1979, *Viva* is the emblem of the '70s. What made - and still makes today - the magazine stand out is its many paradoxes and contradictions because it showcases the difficulty of adapting feminism to the masses while working within the already established institutionalized system. Next to thoughtful and provocative articles about feminist issues, readers could find full-frontal male nudity or a six-page spread called "Crotch Watching" which featured close-ups of men's crotches in trousers, swim trunks, or underwear (Schwartz 80-90). *Viva* was never able to join together its erotic nature and its feminist stance seamlessly because no matter how progressive and daring *Viva* was, the staff at the magazine was never free to toy with a feminist approach to pornography because of publisher Bob Guccione. Just like the 'woman experience' and the feminist movement, *Viva*'s core identity was not a monolithic one for two reasons: first, its staff was a collection of women who considered themselves feminists and had different ideas of what was considered erotic, and sexually provocative and what should be printed on an erotic magazine targeted at them; then, the biggest and most pervasive internal division was between the feminist staff and the management. It was simultaneously a groundbreaking magazine, a tool for social change - thanks to its eye-opening and daring feminist articles - but also a means to reinforce a brand of pornography and eroticism that was male-oriented and patriarchal. Every issue published was a game of push and pull played by the staff of editors and contributors against Bob Guccione and Kathy Keeton who were in charge and had the final say on what appeared in the magazine. And yet, *Viva* was "smart and cool" (Romolini, "Good Girls" 04:20). The story of *Viva* revolves around "scrappy feminist journalists with their best intentions coming up against the reality of Guccione, of the patriarchy, of the limitations of the time" (M. Taylor) and it was the reflection

of the complex and multi-faceted discourse that was running rampant in the '70s. Consciousness-raising groups and the overall Women's Liberation Movement had awakened both women's minds and their libido. Tired of being treated as empty minds and sex objects, they were in search of a magazine that could represent the newly liberated version of themselves. And *Viva* could have been the one to fulfill that void. And yet, its potential mostly went unexpressed, or rather drowned by the adorning elements of the magazine. Ultimately, Bob Guccione's refusal to relinquish his own brand of dominant codes that reflected those of the patriarchal society and his personal view of what women wanted to see in an erotic magazine led to the downfall of *Viva*. Given the magazine's short-lived existence and its relative anonymity, finding copies of the issues was extremely difficult and only two were obtained, the ones published in January 1975 and September 1974. Therefore, in analyzing the contents of other issues, it was necessary to rely on second-hand accounts.

Viva did not manage to become a progressive feminist erotic publication because of mogul of the erotic magazine industry Bob Guccione. In a review amusingly titled "Guccione's Ms.Print" - a clear wordplay on Steinem's *Ms.* magazine, and a comment on *Viva*'s disappointing debut - future director Nora Ephron heavily criticized *Viva*'s first issue by writing: "It seems absurdly clear at this point that any man who believes that the main thing to remember about a woman is that she just may be some man's sister knows nothing whatever about women, much less about how to edit a magazine for them" and she continued by saying that "these men put their heads together, decided that what women want in a women's magazine is a men's magazine" (Ephron 68). Ephron manages to encapsulate Guccione's approach to *Viva*. She not only attacked the production behind the magazine but also took aim at its contents by writing: "the pictures don't have to be good: the articles don't have to be good. In short, nothing matters" (Ephron 69).

Guccione's influence was evident from the conception of the publication. According to Gay Bryant, a former senior editor, the original concept of *Viva* was hers. Her *Viva* - which was actually called 'Mia' as a tribute to actress Mia Farrow - was born out of an interest in having a magazine that could encompass both the sexual revolution and the women's liberation movement examined from women's perspectives (Romolini, "Good Girls" 17:50). Despite Bryant's 50-page proposal, Guccione claimed the concept as his (Romolini, "Good Girls", Ephron 69) and took over the tone of the magazine, and a publication that once was "an erotic, general-interest magazine for intelligent women" (Ephron 69), ended up being produced by men and reflecting their patriarchal values. Eventually, Guccione realized he needed to hire women if he wanted to produce a magazine targeted at them: he strips himself of the title of editor, puts his second wife Kathy Keeton in charge, and he hires not just female writers but feminist ones. Peter Block, former editor of *Penthouse*, summed up Guccione's approach to

Viva by stating: "he'd call you honey, but he'd make you editor in chief" (qtd. in Romolini, "The Last" 26:10). Guccione professed himself as someone who loved and respected women and yet Guccione continued - just as Hugh Hefner did - to produced magazines that objectified the female body. Journalist Jennifer Romolini, creator and writer of the podcast *Stiffed,* clarifies Guccione's double standard: "Guccione may have thought that women did a better job, but that didn't mean he always let them do it. And if you didn't let them do their jobs, if he sidelined them or took credit for their work" (Romolini, "Good Girls" 24:00). Although he despised the word feminist and did not want it associated with the magazine (Romolini, "Time Off" 21:25). In the end, no matter how much power feminists had at *Viva*, it was still Bob's magazine.

This begs the question: why would feminists work for a porn magazine published by the same editor as *Penthouse*? Contrary to *Playboy*, both at *Penthouse and Viva*, women had the opportunity to become executives, to make a name for themselves, and "working for a porn king like Bob Guccione, who gave them opportunities, was often worth the price of admission" (Romolini, "Good Girls" 24:00). "*Viva* attracted a cadre of women writers who didn't want to play a part in the *Cosmo* complex or work at a news magazine where they would likely be slotted into an assistant role" (Mechling) and so the magazine becomes a way to both cater to the sexually liberated women who found full-frontal male nudity erotic and those who preferred reading the well-written and daring articles. *Viva* was something new. So many feminists were happy and proud to work at *Viva* because the magazine had daring and feminist sections such as 'Graffiti', in which feminist writers on staff could explore and write about any topic they wanted, and with executive editor Patricia Bosworth steering the ship, *Viva* featured groundbreaking reporting such as 'The Rape Issue' and articles such as "Confessions of a Former Woman Hater" (Rinzler 32) and "Women on the Move in Journalism" (Epstein 26). Annie Gottlieb, contributing editor from 1974 to 1975, details what the staff saw in *Viva* and its potential:

> [We recognized] that women were interested in men, that women were interested in sex, and that women also had minds. The notion was that women had full agency, both mental and physical. That they could be desirous, that they could be bright, that they could be interested in ideas, and they could be interested in men's bodies — that there was no contradiction anywhere there. That women were as active in all those areas as men were. That we didn't just [want to] sit around and be looked at and thought about and written about. (qtd. in Savard)

Gottlieb's remark encapsulates why the magazine was so progressive and, had it been allowed to fulfill its potential, why it would have been a thought-provoking publication.

Instead, it turned out to be a product of constant fighting between a staff who aimed at creating an experimental and daring magazine and a boss, whose vision of what women wanted, reflected only his own. “It really shows how it was practically two magazines” commented former *Viva* editor Bette-Jane Raphael while looking at the cover of the January 1975 issue (qtd. in Romolini, “Soft Focus” 30:25). This cover is the emblem of the mixed messages *Viva* was sending to its readers and reflects the subversion of Mulvey’s theory on the passivity of women in cinema.

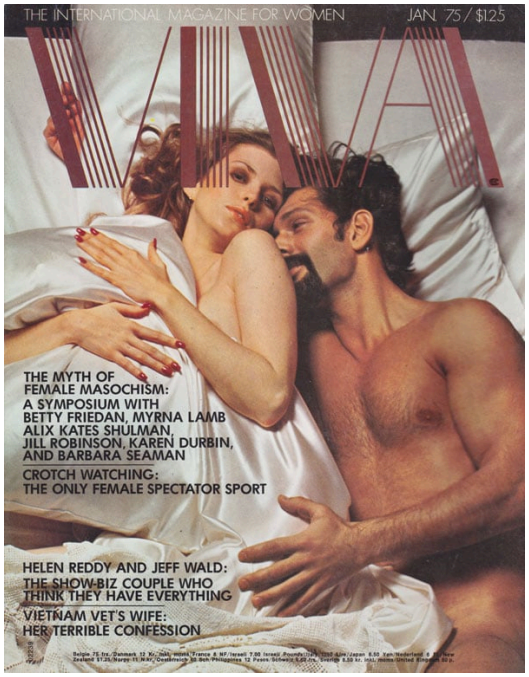

Fig. 4 Cover of a man and a woman lying in bed of the January 1975 issue of *Viva* from: King, Bill. “Cover.” *Viva: The International Magazine for Women*. vol. 2, no. 4, January 1975

The image features a woman and a man in bed together and while her body is mostly covered, he is almost naked with a sheet barely covering his genitalia. What is of note is that it is the man who is aversing his gaze, while, just like in *Playboy*, it is the woman who stares into the camera lenses. I would argue that having him look away might be a way to appear less threatening and more passive to women who were not comfortable with the aggressiveness that the male gaze might entail. On the other hand, the woman’s sultry look at the camera is a reflection of Guccione’s male-oriented vision. In fact, in their essay “Viva "Viva"? Women's Meanings Associated with Male Nudity in a 1970s "For Women" Magazine”, Beggan and Allison analyze the magazine’s take on nudity: “Nude men as the object of gaze represent an inversion of the power relationship assumed to operate with respect to the male gaze and male ways of viewing women. Both men and women are more comfortable viewing female, rather than male, nudity” (Beggan and Allison 448). Had not *Viva* been under Guccione’s scope, could it have become a means to showcase pornography made by women for women? And given that Guccione had hired feminist writers to write the articles, why not hire feminist photographers who could better exemplify the executive editor’s vision?

This cover is also a clear example of Stuart Hall's theory which reminds us that "there is no intelligible discourse without the operation of a code" (S. Hall 123). And in this instance, Guccione was the sole producer of the discourse. He adopted specific codes regarding sex that were internalized by those at the receiving end of his message and so commonly used that they went unacknowledged. "It's not enough, as *Viva* learned, to simply invert subject and object and assume straight women will respond" (Gilbert). Instead, in the eyes of Guccione, to create an erotic magazine for women, swapping naked women for naked men was enough.

Women felt like they were in an ambiguous bind because the potentially groundbreaking sexual revolution of the late '60s did not come to fruition. After all, it was still very much focused on men and seen through the male point of view. Writer Annie Gottlieb reflected on women's precarious position as sexually liberated women: "It was pretty bad time for women. Because we were making ourselves sexually available, but we really didn't have any sense that [...] we still felt like we needed men's attention to make us worthy" (qtd. in Romolini, "Not-So-Porno" 28:40). In her *Stiffed* interview, writer Nona Willis-Aronowitz emphasized that "All of a sudden, after the sexual revolution, there were all kinds of pressures to be groovy and be with it and not have hang-ups. [..] I think it really did put women in this frustrating bind. (Willis-Aronowitz in Romolini, "Not-So-Porno" 28). And with headlines such as "The Myth of the Female Masochism: A Symposium with Betty Friedan, Myrna Lamb, Alix Kates Shulman, Jill Robinson, Karen Durbin, and Barbara Seaman", a deep dive into the practice of masochism explored by six different feminists and an insert called "Crotch Watching: The Only Female Spectator Sport", *Viva*'s mixed messages further muddied the waters. This symposium features a thoughtful discussion on masochism framed as "personal power and personal autonomy" (Burbin qtd. in "The Myth" 46) and "pathology ingrained in women, from which we hopefully, or our daughters at least, may emerge" (Friedan qtd. in"The Myth" 45). This piece is *Viva* at its best, a magazine in which serious topics are given the space to discuss them and the nuance they deserve. And yet, in the same issues, an 11-page spread called "Crotch Watching: The Only Female Spectator Sport" containing two close-ups of men's crotches titled 'the hustler', 'the flasher', and 'the boy next door' takes up more pages than the aforementioned article. The juxtaposition of nuanced feminist articles and Guccione's brand of porno-chic photographs of naked men and women sent contrasting messages to an audience who was already self-conscious and confused about their sexuality and the possible dangers facing a sexually liberated woman.

There is no denying that people were - and are still to this day - constantly surrounded by sexist images, videos, texts, and pieces of news that depicted explicit violence perpetrated against women. WAP (Women Against Pornography) claimed that all pornography fitted a monolithic genre that only portrays explicit violence against women but not all pornography

revolves around dehumanization and abuse. In her lecture "The Feminist Sex Wars: A Retrospective", feminist Gayle Rubin emphasized that there was a "nascent genre of lesbian-produced and lesbian-focused erotica" (Rubin 01:01:04) but it quickly disappeared because it became clear that anti-porn activists intended to eradicate all forms of pornography. It would be hypocritical not to state that there is such pornography as the one WAP described, that is images, videos, and content that is degrading to women, but I would argue that this crusade against all types of pornography and erotica might deny women part of their identity. The generalization of equating pornography and violence made by WAP bled into a moralizing and conservative outlook that - whether that was their intention or not - deeply affected women and their relationship with sex. If anti-porn feminists equated all pornography to violence, did that mean that all feelings of arousal brought on by images, texts, and videos lead to violence? And if that were the case, is all sex violent? That might lead to abstinence which for some feminists was a valuable ending point, but others might feel shame for wanting to explore their sexuality. The fact that what was considered pornography was so subjective and tailored to one's sensibilities and experiences with sex rendered the opposition to it very broad. I would argue that it is also fundamental to dismantle the notion that women were not interested in pornography in favor of bringing forward the idea that men and patriarchal institutions should stop refusing to fund female-oriented pornography, and instead of catering to and targeting women as consumers of pornography.

Despite often butting heads with Guccione and Keeton and being forced to tolerate his photographs in her progressive publication, in a 2005 *Vanity Fait* article, Patricia Bosworth, editor of *Viva* from 1974 to 1976, was extremely proud of the contents of the magazine. One of *Viva*'s highest accomplishments under Patricia Bosworth's leadership were the magazine's first steps towards a cohesive publication, one with a big-picture vision and articles of substance while also featuring more and more sexually explicit images under Kathy Keeton's supervision (Romolini, "Phallus" 13:00, 14:45). Bosworth's push to make the magazine as good as the staff knew it could be culminated in the November 1974 issue, dubbed 'The Rape Issue', one of the more daring and challenging issues that would later on contribute to an abrupt shift in tone in the magazine. On *Stiffed*, editor Betty-Jane Raphael recounted that they wanted to explore the issue of date rape, especially because of "how it wasn't reported and how most women suffer in silence." (qtd. in Romolini, "Phallus" 20:40). The issue is not only a thought-provoking and detailed report on rape, but it is also a helpful and informative spread that included "a self-defense handbook, a guide to rape centers all over the country [...] and a sexual assault survey" as well as "a thoughtful, sensitive, non-shaming examination of rape as a sexual fantasy and what that might mean." (Romolini, "Phallus" 25:40). It was one of the first publications to publish survivors' stories in their own words (Romolini, "Phallus" 29:49) and it

created a space for women to share their experiences and their struggles without shaming them or regarding them with disdain. 'The Rape Issue' brought to light the widespread and deep-rooted fracture around pornography that the Women's Liberation Movement was experiencing in the mid-70s. But after its publication editors were let go. But for Guccione, no matter how many copies they were selling and the attention the magazine was getting, hard-hitting journalism was not part of his vision for *Viva*. For Bosworth, the straw that broke the camel's back was brought on by Guccione's request of conducting an interview with an alleged rapist that was interested in writing a love-advice style column. In her article "The X-Rated Emperor", Bosworth looked back at her time at *Viva* and recalled the aspirations she had when she accepted the job at the magazine. She wanted to inform and inspire women (Bosworth). But after "The Rape Issue" came out, she recalled being faced with disappointment and the brutal realization that "*Viva* would never be anything but hopeless" (Bosworth qtd. in Romolini "Phallus" 31:25). Bosworth's exit signaled *Viva*'s turn towards its downfall that would culminate with *Viva*'s last issue in January 1979.

In lieu of the relentless attacks by anti-porn feminists and internal discontent by some staffers, the April 1976 issue featured a radical shift in tone which meant the removal of full frontal male nudity. It was a signal that society and culture were changing too, because by the late '70s, people were not interested in sexually explicit images, the years of Reagan were at the door, and Guccione's brand of porno chic was out. The days of Guccione's "soft, dreamy aesthetic" (Laneri), achieved "by smearing his camera lens with Vaseline" (Savard) were numbered and so were *Viva*'s. This shift begs the question: what had *Viva* become? Guccione and Keeton transformed *Viva* into a carbon copy of any other magazine oriented towards women. Gone were the provocative feminist articles which were replaced by trendy fashions spread, albeit put together under the supervision of future Vogue editor Anna Wintour. This shift in tone was further proof that "the social experiment called *Viva* ended when its editorial staff rejected the constructivist orientation that operated at its conception and, instead, embraced an essentialist view of women's sexuality" (Beggan and Allison 454). Dr. Judy Kuriansky, former sex advice columnist at *Viva*, explained: "we went backwards. Society went backwards, and I watched it happen. What happened was that society stopped being open about sex" (qtd. in Romolini, "The Last Word" 21:50). Even Kathy Keaton altered her image and the content of her editor's letter, moving away from lines such as "being a sex object is just another way of saying that I'm glad I'm female, glad I'm womanly. I enjoy being loved, pampered and needed" (qtd. in Romolini, "Midlife" 02:51) and starting to share her thoughts on opportunities and injustices for working women (Romolini, "Midlife" 33:40). In just two years, *Viva* went through three different editors and men began writing about feminism. In short, *Viva* was left in disarray.

Ultimately, it is clear that *Viva* was doomed to fail from the start. Just as Gloria Steinem struggled to find advertisement partners in line with her feminist magazines, most companies did not want their product to be next to pictures of full-frontal male nudity. *Viva* also struggled to expand its readership as it was a magazine that was almost exclusively sent through the mail[1] and was made up of gay men who might not have been interested in *Viva*'s new tone. Overall, the magazine's demise was due to its own publishing house. As repeatedly stated in this chapter, Guccione assured *Viva*'s premature demise. His stubbornness in perpetuating his vision of what he thought women wanted stopped *Viva* from achieving its potential and becoming a magazine for the truly liberated woman, created by women and continuing the vast multitude of voices within the Women's Liberation Movement. Finally, the systemic and patriarchal institutions that have shamed women for being interested in pornography left women might unable to express their take on erotica and were instead subjected to the kind of pornography men like Guccione thought they wanted to see. Had the women at *Viva* been allowed to break the mold of what constituted society's expectations of women and the narrative around sex and its taboos, the magazine might have helped to chip away at the institutionalized and close-minded version of what was deemed acceptable. Had Guccione let female photographers take the reins, could have *Viva* fulfilled its potential instead of closing its doors after a rocky, short-lived existence? Cindy Gallop, founder of a feminist sex site, put it best when she explained the patriarchal resistance to change saying: "It's like the old joke about the light bulb. How many therapists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one. But the light bulb has to really want to change" (qtd. in Romolini, "The Last Word" 14:56). And because the patriarchy-infused mindset did not want to change, a progressive and innovative magazine like *Viva* could not survive.

Just because *Viva*'s production ceased, it did not mean that it was a failure. On the contrary, the magazine's legacy was just as important as its articles. It was able to come to life because "*Viva* came out of a culture of risk-taking, of progression, of flawed people using their power to give others at least a bit more freedom to try something innovative and new, even if it too was flawed" (Romolini, "The Last Word" 34:00). Despite his flaws, Guccione's practices of hiring women and promoting them to positions of power were extremely influential in launching many of his staffers' careers: Anna Wintour's tenure at *Viva* turned into her breakout job, and many staff editors ended up launching their own publications or becoming authors. There is no denying that *Viva* was a product of its time, "racial and other biases included. Most of its stories were written from one place of privilege or another — white, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied, neurotypical — and most of the people profiled, photographed, and interviewed were those things, too" (Savard) and yet *Viva* could have been so much more and played a more important role in an environment torn apart by disputes

around homosexuality and pornography. Thanks to her thorough investigation into the magazine, Jennifer Romolini is able to both distill and capture *Viva*'s ultimately unexpressed potential:

> a magazine like *Viva* could have been a bridge to be both anti-violence and pro female desire to push boundaries, to bring together anti-porn and pro sex feminists who really did have a lot of the same goals in mind. [...] And consciously or not, the Viva editors were in real time trying to deliver something that combined the two perspectives by interviewing sex workers and writing openly about straight women's sexual fantasies, while also covering topics like sexual violence and consent in the rape issue. This utopian goal of liberated sexuality is the direction they were starting to go, but given everything they were up against, this is a tall order. (Romolini, "Not-So-Porno" 32:28)

Conclusion

Throughout this work, I have examined the close and contentious relationship between the feminist movement and popular culture in the '60s, '70s, and '80s, one that might seem like a friendly game of push and pull. What emerged from my research is the duplicitous role that pop culture played in sharing feminist principles with the American people in this era: it was both the vessel through which feminists could spread their message and the entity that constantly demonized the movement. This research has shown that it was fundamental for the feminist movement to make use of magazines, newspapers, and television to spread ideas of political, economic, social, and gender equality and bring about social change, even if feminists became synonymous with labels such as 'man-hater' and 'bra-burners'.

This project highlighted the approaches that feminists Gloria Steinem, Kate Millett, and Audre Lorde used to break through male-dominated institutions, whether within the confinements of the already-existing institutions or outside. Steinem's more direct use of popular culture through her magazine *Ms.* launched feminism on newsstands, while Millett's book led down the core concepts of the movement and gave feminists the language tools to express their dissent against the patriarchy, and Lorde's intersectional poetry reminded feminists that the 'sisterhood' must include all women. Despite their efforts to use popular culture to their advantage, making these principles known to those outside of the bubble of academics proved itself to be a difficult task.

There is no doubt that they contributed to the legitimization of feminist principles: women's studies helped validate feminism and gave it a solid foundation on which they could create a movement geared towards change. At the same time, it also locked feminist theory in the constraints of the world of academia, and bursting out of that bubble forced feminists to confront the institution of the media and its own codes. Socially constructed signs reflected the male orientation of the institution of the media which distorted the message produced by feminists to turn it into one that could appeal to the majority of its audience, effectively altering the message and removing all nuanced aspects. No matter how hard feminism tried to use pop culture to spread its message, it was always the institution of the media that pushed back against the intrusion of feminist principles that were deemed a threat to the preservation of the status quo and patriarchal power.

The exploration of popular culture solidified its link to institutions and their pervasive nature: even if some instances of feminist principles managed to seep through popular culture, the media's efforts to water them down and distort them to reiterate its own patriarchal values left feminism a shadow of its former self. *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Playboy* showed that they were both reluctant to feature feminism in their issues as well as selective in what feminism principles they supported. The *Journal*'s dismissal of the movement turned into a marketing

strategy to link feminism to consumerism and *Playboy*'s mixed messages of pro-abortion laws and depictions of naked women for men's pleasure reflected the media's unwillingness to accept feminism, preferring instead to pick and choose which causes to support; articles published in newspapers showed an overall dismissal and ridicule of the movement. While feminists tried to use the media to their advantage, they were met with the newspapers' refusal to engage with the issues around the movement; sitcoms in the '70s and '80s tried to balance introducing feminist principles - Gloria Bunker standing up to her conservative father or Mary Richard's happy and childless life - but they were all undermined by the reiteration of patriarchal values that molded feminism to fit its male-oriented structures.

Stripping away the nuances of the movement also removed the social justice aspect that is intrinsic to feminism: it is activism and engagement with these theories that remove feminism from a theoretical standpoint and bring it into the real world through popular culture. Steinem's imagination of what 'the world would be like if women win' would have remained an article in a newspaper if these ideas had not been read by fellow women who transformed it into tangible actions and tried to make it a reality. Fighting for equal pay, sexual and reproductive rights, bodily autonomy, domestic violence, and overall gender equality means taking concrete steps toward their actualization.

Overall, this research shows that popular culture is fundamental in spreading feminism to vast audiences: it might ignite the flame that would push both men and women to learn more about it, or go back to the original texts by Steinem, Millett, and Lorde and read their words. Even if it has been mixed with the institutional values of the media, feminism thrived then and continues to flourish to this day. Over time, feminism has evolved from concerning mostly white upper-class suffragettes in the '20s and the more diverse Women's Liberation Movement in the '60s and '70s to the exploration of gender and queer studies in the '90s and 2000s and it is still progressing to this day, focusing even more on intersectionality and moving the discourse from the press and television to the internet and social media. Just as feminism has changed and evolved, so has its rapport with popular culture, and with the advent of social media, future research should consider what state the relationship between feminism and popular culture is today and how that has changed from the one in the '60s, '70s, and '80s.

In conclusion, this thesis began with Audre Lorde's quotation "If we don't name ourselves, we are nothing" (Lorde, "An Interview" 19) but this research has proved that when all people unite under the banner of feminism, it is anything but "nothing". As bell hooks reminds us: "Feminist politics aims to end domination to free us to be who we are - to live lives where we love justice, where we can live in peace. Feminism is for everybody" (hooks 118).

Notes

Chapter 2

[1] Conservatives and anti-abortionists' discontent with *Roe v. Wade* led them to a series of attacks toward the decision, which culminated in the 24 June 2022 5-4 majority ruling that declared *Roe v. Wade* unconstitutional. This has meant that the power to regulate abortion has been given back to each states which has resulted in a series of laws outlawing the procedure or severely restricting it (Mangan and Breuninger).

[2] Steinem received backlash in the media for scolding young women who voted for Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders instead of backing Sec. Rodham-Clinton in the 2016 primaries, citing their interest in meeting young men rather than supporting a female candidate (Rappeport). An analysis of Sen. Sanders and Sec. Rodham-Clinton political platforms showcased Sanders' more progressive approach leaning towards more progressive ideas instead of the more moderate positions Sec. Rodham-Clinton embodied (Keegan 112-3).

[3] Reagan's conservative politics ranged from attacks on 'big government', the economic policies of Reaganomics, and tax cuts to a 40% increase in the military budget and the downsizing of welfare programs, paved the way for the uprising of the New Right, a movement born out of the backlash against the '60s and '70s counterculture (S. Grant 370). Reagan's wars on poverty and drugs, the attacks on the LGBTQIA+ community, and the influence of religious moralism became intertwined with the spread conservative values and the government's handling of the AIDS crisis in the '80s is a testament to their discriminatory views.

[4] In a 2022 lecture at the Cornell University Library, Gayle Rubin reminds the audience that "the Sex Wars were much more extensive than the fight over porn" (Rubin 09:16). As women became more vocal about the issues that were plaguing their lives, the one that stood out and united women was the violence men subjected to them. The fight against violence evolved into one against pornography and the feminist movement was subsequently torn into two factions, the pro-sex feminists and the anti-pornography feminists.

Chapter 3:

[1] It would take until 1989 for US civil rights advocate Kimberlè Crenshaw to coin the term 'intersectionality' to describe the interconnection of different forms of oppression and it would be until the mid-'90s that critical race theory began to circulate among scholars, a concept - that Kimberlé Crenshaw describes as "a way of seeing, attending to, accounting for, tracing and analyzing the ways that race is produced" (Fortin). The issue came back into the

spotlight around the 2021 Midterm elections in the US. It became part of the narrative of culture wars promoted by Florida's Republican Governor Ron DeSantis and the conservative media. Their efforts include allowing "parents to sue school districts if their children are taught critical race theory in classrooms" (Finn). Other states have been considering bills thatt would allow them to ban books that deal with race and gender (Finn).

Chapter 4:

1 Future Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg thanked *Playboy*'s charitable foundation for its contributions to her organization American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights Project in a public letter (Pitzulo 287).

2 In her article "The Women Who'd Trade In Their Pedestal for Total Equality", Marylin Bender takes the time to pen a rather sympathetic overview of five issues the Women's Liberation Movement was concerned with, mentioning abortion, free child care, discrimination in the workplace, marriage, and homosexuality (Bender).

3 There are constant references to women's clothes: For instance, in the article "Women's Group Pressing Reforms" journalist Linda Greenhouse takes up space in the short piece to describe a spokeswoman's clothes. Even their weight was mentioned: in "1968: For Women, It Was A Year Marked by Numerous 'Firsts'", the author of the piece, Judy Klemesrud, mentions Shirley Chisholm's weight in the midst of praising her accomplishments as the first African-American woman to be elected to Congress, and in the following paragraph, Klemesrud comments on the attractiveness of two equestriennes who had received their jockey licenses. Whether this is a way to detach both feminists and women from the label of 'ugly' and 'strident' or a remnant of male-oriented journalistic practices, it is impossible to assert.

4 A similar principle can be seen in politics, specifically the 2016 and 2020 Presidential elections, in which democratic socialist Bernie Sanders' influence on both campaigns helped push more moderate candidates to the left of many issues, mainly revolving around climate change and health care.

Chapter 5:

1 While Jaclyn Smith, who portrayed Kelly, remained a member of the main cast throughout the entire show, Kate Jackson and Farrah Fawcett, who played respectively Sabrina and Jill, were replaced by Cheryl Ladd (Kris) and Shelley Hack (Tiffany). Hack was then

replaced in the fifth season by Tanya Roberts who portrayed Julie. To avoid any confusion, the three original cast members will be mentioned as representatives of the six.

[2] Liberal Elyse and Steven stand in direct contrast to conservative Edith and Charlie: the first episode "Pilot" opens with a slideshow of young Elyse and Steven during the '60s protesting the Vietnam War. Throughout the show, they openly talk about protesting nuclear weapons ("No Nukes Is Good Nukes") and tackle an instance of sexual harassment in "Give Your Uncle Arthur a Kiss".

[3] A subversive version of this sitcom format has been revived in the 2021 AMC *Kevin Can F**k Himself*, which is centered around married couple Kevin and Allison, a sharp critique of the antifeminist nature of TV programs like *All In The Family* in the '70s and even more recent programs such as *Kevin Can Wait*. The show alternates between a multi-camera sitcom whose dynamic resembles that of Edith and Archie in *All In The Family*, but it has the additional twist of making use of the single-camera shot to represent Allison's point of view. Contrary to Kevin's bright, fun perspective (filled with laugh tracks), Allison's bleak atmosphere stands for more a realistic representation of her life as the butt of her husband's every joke. And while their storylines Allison's perspective is symbolic of the misogyny and sexism typical of sitcoms that only sees the 'wife' character as an object to be bossed around and made fun of.

[4] In 2018, *Roseanne* was revised for a short-lived 10th season and subsequently canceled after Roseanne Barr posted on Twitter racist comments. Barr had stirred controversy even before the revival was abruptly canceled by the network due to both her and her character's staunch support for then-President Donald Trump. After Barr was fired, ABC decided to create a spin-off program called *The Conners* which deals with the aftermath of the character Roseanne's sudden death and the lives of her family. This turn of events taints the legacy of the show: *Roseanne*, who handled sensitive topics such as LGBTQ rights and feminist issues, was transformed into a program in direct opposition to the working-class life and values that were emblematic of its original run.

Appendix:

[1] Another reason why *Viva* could not publish even more explicit images of male genitalia was due to a 1974 Obscenity Law that deemed sending specific types of explicit images through the mail illegal.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my Supervisor, Professor Mena Mitrano, for her constant support and advice. She has taught me so much in the process of researching and writing this thesis and I am extremely grateful for her guidance throughout all the stages of this work; another thank you goes to my Assistant Supervisor Professor Ashley Riggs for her comments and insights;

A debt of gratitude is owed to all my extended family who have supported and motivated me throughout my University career. Thank you for giving me the tools to navigate University life, thank you for arguing with me about commas, thank you for pushing me to be better and to persevere, and thank you for all your encouragement. Your unwavering support means the world to me. I love you all very much. That being said, I know you are probably tired of hearing me talk about feminism but I guess this is as good a time as any to tell you it is not going away anytime soon;

A special thank you goes to my friends, Silvia, Giulia, and Giulia, who have been there for the freakouts and the extremely long voice messages. They have been a source of strength throughout this process and it would have been so much more difficult without you all;

I would also like to acknowledge the TV show *Minx*, the source of inspiration behind the original idea of this thesis. It made me question the connection between popular culture and feminism and ignited my interest in the topic;

Last but not least, thank you to the extraordinary people who have fought and are still fighting for the feminist cause and to those around me who showed me what it means to be a feminist. I am eternally grateful to all of them, for the courage they have shown and for their determination in turning feminist ideas into reality. I know it is an uphill battle but that should not discourage people from getting involved and participating. As bell hooks tells us: “Feminism is for everybody”.