

Anglo-American Quality Press Narratives and Discourses of Sexual Revolution, 1958-1979

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Word Count: 66090

A dissertation submitted in part-fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy  
in History

University of Sheffield

March 2017

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## INTRODUCTION

The 'sexual revolution' is something of a mystery in modern Western culture. It is often referenced as something that transformed our society's understanding of sexual norms and mores. Any contemporary challenge to existing views on sexual practices or social mores references 'sexual revolution', either referring to the 'Swinging 60s' or calling for another 'sexual revolution'. Any change in how people conceptualise sexual norms and mores in the present is ultimately defined by this event.<sup>1</sup> The enduring knowledge and popular memory that a 'sexual revolution' occurred in the 1960s or 1970s is at odds with the ability of many people to articulate exactly what this sexual revolution was beyond a feeling or vague reference to a broad historical period. How then were we able to arrive at the conclusion that there was a 'sexual revolution'? The answer is undoubtedly complex, but certainly mass media played a role. This dissertation looks at quality newspapers in the United States and Great Britain to explore this question more fully.

In addition, this dissertation seeks to answer the following questions: What were the limits to the discussion of themes related to sexual revolution in the quality press during this period? What constituted the limits of acceptability, which the quality press would not exceed regarding discussing sexual norms and mores? What does this tell us about the quality press during this period? How was the discussion presented over the period (i.e. positively, negatively, constructively), as well as in what format? Where applicable, how did the quality press present public response to these issues? What do these contribute to the widely-held understandings about sexual revolution?

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<sup>1</sup> A simple internet search reveals any number of results referencing a post-sexual revolution society, see Jen Doll, *Harvard Sex Week and the Next Wave of the Sexual Revolution*, The Atlantic Wire, 2012. [cited February 25, 2013] <http://www.theatlanticwire.com/national/2012/04/harvard-sex-week-and-next-wave-sexual-revolution/51232/>.

The sexual revolution was a transatlantic phenomenon and it cannot be said that it occurred in one country and was then exported verbatim to the other. This dissertation intends to examine the cross-cultural flow of the period as played out in the pages of quality newspapers, particularly because of the special relationship between the United States and Great Britain, where a comparative approach has been neglected. The broad content-based analysis and discourse analysis employed in the pursuit of its findings has been lacking in previous studies due to the lack of digital archives and the tools available therein to make this sort of analysis possible.

### Revolution as Concept

Before making any sort of review of historiography on a ‘sexual revolution’ it is important to discuss the idea of revolution itself and its place within a framework applicable to a society. Though Hannah Arendt’s work on the concept of revolution was inherently class-based and ultimately political, when coupled with an understanding that personal interactions are inherently political themselves, it becomes a primer for studying the underlying forces and concepts at work in a society. Such an examination provides a framework with which to examine an idea of a ‘sexual’ revolution, as opposed to an insurrection or mere evolution.

First and foremost is the concept of revolution as a dialectic of freedom and liberation. Often the two words, indeed the two concepts, are interchangeably employed; this is a mistake. From an Aristotelian viewpoint, liberation is an absence of restraint where freedom is the political condition in which the acceptability of the state of liberation is decided upon by a group. As Hannah Arendt observed, ‘...revolution as we know it in the modern age has always been concerned with both liberation and freedom... it is frequently very difficult to say where the mere desire for liberation, to be free from oppression ends, and the desire for freedom as

the political way of life begins.<sup>2</sup> Therefore a revolution is not necessarily a reassertion of lost liberties (as in ancient, medieval, or early modern periods), but rather can be a consequence (in the modern age) of a discussion or deliberation as to the limits of the restraint of oppression expressed through some sort of conflict.

Carrying this idea forward to examine the social ramifications of revolution, Theda Skocpol argued persuasively that, 'What is unique to social revolution is that basic changes in social structure and in political structure occur together in a mutually reinforcing fashion.'<sup>3</sup> Further, 'Successful revolutions, in turn, depend not only upon the emergence of multiple sovereignty. They also probably depend upon "the formation of coalitions between members of the polity and the contenders advancing exclusive alternative claims to control over the government."<sup>4</sup> Skocpol argued that this was the case in France, Russia, and China over the course of the eighteenth through twentieth centuries. Key to the process of revolution, is the implication that there is some sort of 'coalition' by which an alternative to the status quo is created and then implemented – in such a fashion that it is or becomes more than just a natural progression.

How then is a 'coalition' created? One answer lies in the implications of Arendt and Skocpol and the application of Foucault's understanding of discourse. Arendt observed that a fallacy of history or historical study was:

'...describing and understanding the whole realm of human action not in terms of the actor and the agent, but from the standpoint of the spectator who watches a spectacle. But this fallacy is relatively difficult to detect because of the truth inherent in it, which is that all stories begun and enacted by men unfold their true meaning only when they have come to their end so that it may

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<sup>2</sup>Hannah Arendt, *On revolution* (New York, 1963), p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 4-5.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

indeed appear as though only the spectator, and not the agent, can hope to understand what actually happened in any given chain of deeds and events.<sup>5</sup>

To ignore the role of the agent, or the historical actors in creating the very events in which they participated is to ignore a fundamental principle of historical study – and to engage in fallacy. An understanding of the actors and agents, how they worked, thought, and achieved ‘coalitions’ is paramount to understanding how revolutions occur. The application of an analysis of discourses and discursive practices is a useful method for studying evolution or indeed, revolution in social norms and mores. Jeffrey Weeks, explicating on Foucault, was emphatic that ‘The unity of a discourse, therefore, does not derive from the fact that it describes a ‘real object’, but from the social practices that actually form the object about which discourse speak. The ‘social’ is constituted through these practices.’<sup>6</sup> Discourse, then, is one method by which coalitions may be created or achieved. Further, gender and sexuality itself are ‘constructions’ and therefore, ‘...if the mechanisms of their emergence and reproduction can be understood, they are open to transformation.’<sup>7</sup> If open to transformation, then possibly revolution. After all, ‘...history is political, not simply because “the personal is political”, but because sexual and intimate life is deeply implicated in power relations.’<sup>8</sup> Revolution can be studied from the point of view of power relations, the moments in which there is a palpable shift in power, whether political or in the norms and mores of a society. Discourses are the lenses through which these moments of shifts in power relations can be analysed.

Any revolution is therefore about power, be it political or social, and more importantly, it is about shifts in power. By examining discourses present in society, it is therefore possible to see when and how revolution occurs. A ‘revolutionary’ shift of political power is far easier

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<sup>5</sup> Arendt, *On revolution*, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, 'Foucault for Historians', *History Workshop*, no. 14 (1982), p. 111.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 113.

<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, 'Making the Human Gesture: History, Sexuality and Social Justice', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 70 (2010), p. 10.

to examine than that of social power – be it through election returns, policy proposals, legislation, foreign policy, etc. Social power shifts, by which norms and mores inherent to basic social interactions are understood, acted upon, and change is far more difficult. It is true that the link between the social and the political is present and engaged, but also more difficult to quantify. A change in the most intimate and personal understandings about social interactions, about the daily habits and praxis of social functions is far subtler than a government white paper; it is gradual and only when it reaches a tipping point can a revolution in terms of sexual norms and mores be fully recognised and understood.

### Sexual Revolution(s)

A major underlying consideration for this study arose from the common perception of a 'sexual revolution' found in popular culture at large. This common perception clearly acknowledges that a 'sexual revolution' took place, generally during the 1960s, and it somehow 'transformed' our culture. But there is a problem with the concept of 'sexual revolution'. This problem lies primarily in the existing historiography.

It is because of the common perception that a 'sexual revolution' occurred that research into 'sexual revolution' remains relatively sparse. Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher implicitly acknowledge a 'sexual revolution' in their book by examining a period before 'sexual revolution'.<sup>9</sup> David Allyn's study of sexual revolution is fettered by many constraints. While it engages with a broad variety of source material and clearly argues in favour of a 'sexual revolution', it remains oriented primarily to the United States and generally maintains a worldview heavily biased towards the east-coast liberal elite.<sup>10</sup> This is not to say, however, that

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<sup>9</sup> Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher, *Sex before the sexual revolution : intimate life in England 1918-1963* (Cambridge, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> David Allyn, *Make love, not war : the sexual revolution, an unfettered history* (1st edn, Boston, Mass, 2000)



these are the only sources that engage with themes of sexual revolution. Marcus Collins, Christie Davies, Mark Donnelly and Whitney Strub, among others have contributed to the scholarship addressing the ‘permissive’ society of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>11</sup> The widest scholarship addressing sexual revolution arises from the study of second-wave feminism. Studies range from the political implications of second-wave feminism and the failure of ‘sexual revolution’ as explored by George Frankl, and the work of Linda Grant to the responses towards objectification of women within pornography. These studies are key to understanding the role of gender within ‘sexual revolution.’<sup>12</sup> Dominic Sandbrook acknowledges ‘permissiveness’ without engaging directly with a concept of sexual revolution in his history of the long 1960s, nor does Paul Ferris’ work; whereas Alan Petigny argues that the ‘sexual revolution’ or certainly ‘permissiveness’ was a phenomenon of the 1950s and was well underway by the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>13</sup> Other histories of the period from roughly 1957 to 1980 engage with the narrative of ‘sexual revolution’ in a much more tangential manner. However, the few that stand out provide an excellent framework from which to define sexual revolution and to begin analysis of sexual revolution or revolutions within the quality press.

The idea of a ‘sexual revolution’ has its roots in the work of Michel Foucault. Jeffrey Weeks examined Foucault’s theses in detail and provides a starting point from which to

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<sup>11</sup> Of particular note are Marcus Collins, *The permissive society and its enemies : sixties British culture* (London, 2007), Christie Davies, *Permissive Britain : social change in the sixties and seventies* (London, 1975), Christie Davies, *The strange death of moral Britain* (New Brunswick, 2004), Mark Donnelly, *Sixties Britain : culture, society, and politics* (Harlow, 2005), Whitney Strub, *Perversion for profit: the politics of pornography and the rise of the New Right* (New York, 2011), and Jeffrey Escoffier, *Sexual revolution* (New York, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Of the many works available, Linda Grant, *Sexing the millenium: a political history of the sexual revolution* (London, 1993), Sheila Jeffreys, *Anticlimax : a feminist perspective on the sexual revolution* (Washington Square, N.Y., 1991), and George Frankl, *The Failure of the Sexual Revolution* (London, 1974) stand out.

<sup>13</sup> See Paul Ferris, *Sex and the British : a twentieth-century history* (London, 1993), Arthur Marwick, *The sixties : cultural revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford, 1998), Alan Cecil Petigny, *The permissive society : America, 1941-1965* (New York, 2009), Alan Petigny, 'Illegitimacy, Postwar Psychology, and the Reperiodization of the Sexual Revolution', *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 1 (2004), Dominic Sandbrook, *Never had it so good : a history of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London, 2006), and Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat : a history of Britain in the swinging sixties* (London, 2006).

consider a sexual revolution through Foucault's understanding of the concept of 'power-knowledge.' Weeks argued:

'It is through 'discourse' that power-knowledge is realised...What he [Foucault] is suggesting is that the relationship between symbol and symbolised is not only referential, does not simply describe, but is productive, that it creates. The history of sexuality becomes, therefore, a history of our discourses of sexuality. And the Western experience of sex, he argues, is not the inhibition of discourse, is not describable as a regime of silence, but is rather a constant, and historically changing, deployment of discourses on sex, and this ever-expanding discursive explosion is part of a complex growth of control over individuals through the apparatus of sexuality.'<sup>14</sup>

Jeffrey Weeks writing with Janet Holland cemented the application of Foucault's work in the history of sexuality and demonstrated the importance of sexual cultures within a wider cultural setting. They noted that '...a dawning recognition that an understanding of sexualities in their broadest sense must now be central to the understanding of wider social developments.'<sup>15</sup> Further, Weeks observed that the intricacies of the numerous and varied aspects of sexualities are themselves important and serve as 'a privileged site for the working through of contradictory and intersecting forces, and for the thinking through of the meanings of diversity. Sexuality is less a source of meanings as a site where diverse meanings are constructed and contested.'<sup>16</sup>

An analysis of discourses provides a window into the histories of sexualities. By examining the evolution of the discourses of sexualities it is possible to observe the points at which they change. Radical shifts in the discourses of sexuality can therefore be construed as constituting a 'sexual revolution.' As Stuart Hall argued, an understanding of the study of

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<sup>14</sup>Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, politics and society : the regulation of sexuality since 1800* (2nd ed. edn, London, 1989), p. 7.

<sup>15</sup>Jeffrey Weeks and Janet Holland, *Sexual cultures : communities, values, and intimacy* (New York, 1996), pp. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup>Jeffrey Weeks, *The world we have won : the remaking of erotic and intimate life* (London ; New York, 2007), p. 109.

discourses must necessarily include the ‘...acknowledgement that a different discourse or *episteme* will arise at a later historical moment, supplanting the existing one, opening up a new discursive formation, and producing in its turn, new conception of...“sexuality”, new discourses with the power and authority, “the truth” to regulate social practices in new ways.’<sup>17</sup> Thus, the ‘sexual revolution’ of the 1960s and 1970s may be understood as the emergence of a new discursive formation or a new ‘*episteme*’ within society, that is, a unique historical moment at which the older discursive formation is transformed or supplanted.

While Michel Foucault ‘invented’ sexuality, it was Wilhelm Reich who coined the term ‘sexual revolution.’ Reich examined the practical applications of power to interpersonal relationships and social understanding of those relationships, whereas Foucault thought more systemically. Reich’s work on the subject was part polemic, part pedagogical, but centred on the power dynamics in traditional heterosexual relationships as well as the case study of a move from a traditional family structure towards a non-traditional one within the Soviet Union. He observed themes of dominance and submission in traditional heterosexual relationships and the ways in which education played a seminal role in reinforcing that behaviour.<sup>18</sup> More importantly, he understood the collapse and the reinvention of family structure in the early Soviet Union as being a ‘sexual revolution.’ He noted that:

‘The sexual revolution in the Soviet Union began with the dissolution of the family. It disintegrated in all segments of the population, sometimes sooner, sometimes later. This process was painful and chaotic, causing fright and confusion. It provided objective proof for the accuracy of the sex-economic theory about the nature and function of the compulsory family: the patriarchal family is the structural and ideological breeding ground of all social orders

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<sup>17</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse’, in Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor, and Simeon Yates (eds), *Discourse theory and practice : a reader* (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif., 2001), p. 74.

<sup>18</sup> Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution: toward a self-regulating character structure* trans. Therese Pol, (New York, 1974), p. 131.

based on the authoritarian principle. With the elimination of this principle, the institution of the family is automatically weakened.<sup>19</sup>

Far from applauding the actions of the state, Reich favoured the ends without the means. Writing before the Second World War, the work itself can be considered innovative, however it would take many years before his work was widely translated and considered by a society ready for a 'sexual revolution.'

Scholars have grappled with the meaning of 'sexual revolution' and all touch loosely upon Foucault's understanding of the subject. Indeed, many such scholars touch upon the idea of a mass media-oriented approach to understanding sexual revolution, but have not provided a causal link. Dagmar Herzog considered the 'sexual revolution' to be a narrowing of the '...gap between what people were doing in private and what they were willing to declare in public...what had been covert became overt...'<sup>20</sup> Placing the sexual revolution between 1964 and 1968, the radical shifts in sexual norms and mores were '...suddenly fodder for media and public discussion, indeed for obsessive preoccupation.'<sup>21</sup>

In parallel to the understanding that shifts in discourses constitute a 'sexual revolution', sociologist Ken Plummer has noted that for 'stories' to occur, there must first exist an ideological space for them to happen. Plummer noted that:

'Stories come into their time when a community has been fattened up, rendered ripe and willing to hear such stories. Whilst they can be heard amongst isolated individuals, they can gain no momentum if they stay in this "privatised" mode...For stories to flourish there must be social worlds waiting to hear. Social works are not like communities of old; no locale is required, only a sense of belonging, sharing traditions, having common memories.'<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>20</sup>Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe : a twentieth-century history* New approaches to European history (Cambridge, UK ; New York, 2011), p. 134.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ken Plummer, 'Intimate Citizenship and the Culture of Sexual Story Telling', in Jeffrey Weeks and Janet Holland (eds), *Sexual Cultures* (New York, 1996), p. 36.

Plummer drew analogous conclusions with regards to the above thesis and a ‘sexual revolution.’ He argued persuasively that as spaces for stories to be created occur, so too there is a straightforward process by which inner worlds become acclimatised for public consumption.<sup>23</sup> One such space for these stories to occur is within the pages of newspapers, quality and popular.

Gert Hekma and Alain Giami consider the ‘sexual revolution’ to be ‘...movements that politicised private and everyday life... that sparked a cultural revolution in the sense that many domains of existence were transformed.’<sup>24</sup> They were also careful to define their thesis in terms of modern revolution in the sense of Arendt, noting that ‘...we use the term to indicate important changes in sexual behaviours and beliefs that led to greater freedom and extended agency for individuals.’<sup>25</sup> Thus a ‘sexual revolution’ is by their definition a bona fide social revolution, and not simply an evolution or insurrection. Matt Cook ties the ‘sexual revolution’ to questions of generation, and proposed using criteria of sexual cultures over a specific period in Britain.<sup>26</sup> His work examining a ‘sexual revolution’ in the movements of women’s liberation and gay liberation lends credence to his thesis in that the clear majority of their advancements came outside the typical period of the late 1960s.

Steven Angelides, seizing upon the issue of the generational differences with regards to sexual norms and mores, emphasized the so-called ‘generation gap’ as of key importance to a ‘sexual revolution.’ Though primarily focused on Australia, his work explores a trend in the Anglophone sphere that media served a primary function in sexualising children. As he noted:

‘Throughout the 1960s the mass media debated whether or not the sexual revolution reflected significant shifts in sexual practices or merely an increase in the discourse on sex and sex’s

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>24</sup>Gert Hekma and Alain Giami, eds., *Sexual revolutions*, Genders and sexualities in history, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY, 2014), p. 2.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Matt Cook, ‘Sexual Revolution(s) in Britain’, in Gert Hekma and Alain Giami (eds), *Sexual revolutions* Genders and sexualities in history, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY, 2014), pp. 122-125.

public and commercial visibility. But what was rarely contested was the idea of a seismic shift in attitudes to and representations of sex. The mass media regularly pumped out articles during this time about a revolution in morals and mores rocking the Western world.<sup>27</sup>

This reluctance upon the part of the media is of interest. He noted the role the mass media played, but does not consider the possibility that media drove said shift – as though debate does not indicate social preoccupation, or perhaps more accurately, that said coverage itself did not constitute a ‘sexual revolution.’

Other scholars sought to pinpoint an exact date or time when a ‘sexual revolution’ began or reached an ideological tipping point. Jeffrey Escoffier stated plainly that the beginnings of a post-war sexual revolution can be observed in the January 1964 issue of *Time* magazine.<sup>28</sup> Escoffier hedges around his thesis, arguing in favour of a ‘sexual revolution,’ but simultaneously neglecting to hypothesise how such a revolution occurred. He noted that a sexual revolution ‘...was less a revolution in sexual conduct than a cultural revolution in which the social framework within which sex took place was radically transformed – the everyday sexual scripts, the grand cultural narratives...were all dramatically modified.’<sup>29</sup> His observations regarding media and the implications he notes are worthy of particular note: ‘...public discussion of sexual issues grew dramatically...sex and sexuality and public discussion of it had come to occupy an increasingly significant place in American culture in newspapers, books, movies and theatre; sex had entered the arena of public discourse in an unprecedented way.’<sup>30</sup> Though his own analysis focused more on elements of popular culture, particularly the stage and screen, Escoffier has rightly acknowledged that these physical spaces served also as intellectual spaces, ‘...where it was permissible not only to discuss patterns of

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<sup>27</sup> Steven Angelides, 'The ‘Second Sexual Revolution’, Moral Panic, and the Evasion of Teenage Sexual Subjectivity', *Women's History Review* 21, no. 5 (2012), p. 833.

<sup>28</sup> Jeffrey Escoffier, 'Pornography, Perversity and the Sexual Revolution', in Gert Hekma and Alain Giami (eds), *Sexual revolutions* Genders and sexualities in history, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY, 2014), p. 203.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 208.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 207.

sexual behaviour but also to portray sexuality honestly and bluntly.’<sup>31</sup> The spaces in which the discussion occurs, can therefore, provide clues to the moments when such transformation occurs.

Lesley Hall, too, places the locus of sexual revolution in *Time* magazine, though her analysis focuses on Britain and naturally credits the phrase ‘Swinging London’ with its genesis in April 1966.<sup>32</sup> She was careful to acknowledge the limits of sexual freedoms, noting in particular that ‘The major area of liberalization was, as always, in the range of possibilities available to the heterosexual majority.’<sup>33</sup> While certainly in favour of an argument for a sexual revolution, Hall was cautious in the labelling of the successes and failures of the women’s movement as such. The liberation afforded by contraception was in her analysis a hindrance to social progress leading her to conclude that ‘At the end of the seventies...the picture is ambiguous.’<sup>34</sup>

Hera Cook’s work on the technological importance of birth control – specifically the oral contraceptive pill – to sexual revolution is very valuable. She favoured less the structural or cultural forces at work in precipitating ‘sexual revolution,’ arguing instead that ‘The force propelling the cultural transformation of attitudes to sexual behaviour forwards was the transformation of conception and pregnancy from an uncontrollable risk of sexual intercourse to an outcome largely freely-chosen.’<sup>35</sup> Additionally, she was emphatic that any change in general social mores or norms could not happen quickly, rather taking ‘...decades or generations, not overnight...Sexual desire, gender relations, relations of deference are at one and the same time intangible and transient and yet ruthlessly fixed within the individual, the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 211.

<sup>32</sup> Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, gender, and social change in Britain since 1880* (2nd edn, New York, 2013), p. 153.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>35</sup> Hera Cook, ‘The English Sexual Revolution: Technology and Social Change’, *History Workshop Journal*, no. 59 (2005), p. 123.

relationships, or the institutions.’<sup>36</sup> A technological approach is valid, however, innovation in birth control cannot be the only factor in a ‘revolution.’ Callum Brown provided this same counterpoint to Cook’s work, while also reperiodising the sexual revolution to the early 1960s or late 1950s.<sup>37</sup> Instead, Brown argued forcefully that a sexual revolution occurred before the availability of the oral contraceptive being available to single women, and perhaps more boldly, that it pre-dates the oral contraceptive itself.<sup>38</sup> His analysis cited compelling statistical evidence that it was a decline in traditional Judeo-Christian morality, and not pharmacological innovation that drove ‘sexual revolution.’

More contemporarily, Christopher Strain has stressed a re-periodisation of a ‘sexual revolution,’ arguing for distinct demarcations between different movements, rather than different forms of a single movement. For Strain, there was a ‘reawakening,’ comprised of Betty Friedan’s work *The Feminine Mystique* and the founding of the National Organization for Women, a ‘sexual revolution’ comprised of the generation of Helen Gurley Brown and the mass commodification of sex, and ‘second-wave feminism’, typified by Gloria Steinem and *Ms.* magazine.<sup>39</sup> The tendency to argue for a specific periodisation and new nomenclature of ‘sexual revolution’ is hardly novel, but Strain’s observations regarding the ideological foundations of a ‘sexual revolution’ are of significant merit. As he noted ‘...the sexual revolution of the 1960s was still decidedly one-sided: sexual liberation, while part of a larger feminist project, worked to the advantage of men who exploited the lofty ideals of free(r) love.’<sup>40</sup> This is a departure from Marwick’s overarching thesis of ‘cultural revolution’ – that is, that elements of counter-culture did not ‘...confront society, but rather *permeated* and

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 124.

<sup>37</sup> NB: In this school of thought, Callum Brown joins Alan Petigny in his emphasis on the period of ‘sexual revolution’ lying outside the more common period for social change.

<sup>38</sup> Callum Brown, ‘Sex, Religion, and the Single Woman c.1950–75: The Importance of a ‘Short’ Sexual Revolution to the English Religious Crisis of the Sixties’, *Twentieth Century British History* 22, no. 2 (2011), p. 196.

<sup>39</sup> Christopher B. Strain, *The long sixties : America, 1955-1973* (Chichester, UK ; Hoboken, NJ, 2016), pp. 98-100.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 188.



*transformed it...* – and draws an important distinction that is limited in scope, but expansive in ideological implications.<sup>41</sup>

Outside his thesis of ‘cultural revolution’ or ‘cultural transformation,’ Arthur Marwick’s work on culture in Britain during the post-war period is helpful in illustrating the role of culture in shaping the social character of Western societies. Most important is his differentiation of ‘elite’ versus ‘popular’ culture. Marwick defined ‘elite’ culture as being produced by the rich and powerful for the rich and powerful, with ‘popular’ culture being produced by the masses as well as the rich and powerful for the masses.<sup>42</sup> He specifically excluded news organisations from his analysis, citing newspapers as having a ‘...proper role as purveyors of news.’<sup>43</sup> This exclusion is highly problematic. It neglects the role of news in shaping culture, the perceptions of acceptability within culture, and the fundamental nature of his own thesis of an elite/popular dichotomy. News is ‘elite’, ‘popular’, and both simultaneously. By excluding newspapers as agents of cultural change and not acknowledging the possibility that news itself may have had some entertainment value, Marwick neglected a valuable resource in examination of his own thesis.

Robert Hewison attacked Marwick’s thesis, noting that ‘in both politics and culture the elite controls the mass, through the institutions of the corporate state, and the control of mass communications by corporations run by elites.’<sup>44</sup> Where Marwick perceived a gradual democratization or evolution with respect to culture towards popular culture, the ‘underground’ notwithstanding, Hewison noticed that at the same time as television was growing, the demand for high culture increased.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See Marwick, *The sixties : cultural revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* , p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Arthur Marwick, *Culture in Britain since 1945 Making contemporary Britain* (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA, 1991), pp. 1-2.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Hewison, *Too much : art and society in the Sixties, 1960-75* (London, 1986), p. 7.

<sup>45</sup> Marwick, *Culture in Britain since 1945* , p. 115, Hewison, *Too much : art and society in the Sixties, 1960-75* , pp. 36-37.

Despite the broad scholarship of the themes of ‘sexual revolution’, examination of mass media narrative and practice is severely limited. Adrian Bingham has examined the role of the popular press in Britain between 1918 and 1978. While not engaging with the term ‘sexual revolution’ directly, he has demonstrated the range, prominence and the evolving nature of the explicitness of the discussion of sex during this period.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, he noted the role of advice columnists on issues ranging from adultery, contraception and abortion.<sup>47</sup> Another author that seriously employs an examination of media attitudes towards issues of ‘sexual revolution’ is Kaitlynn Mendes. Her study used a combination of quality and popular papers from both the United States and Great Britain, focusing primarily upon representations of second-wave feminism, specifically the women’s movement and equal rights between 1968 and 1982.<sup>48</sup> However, her use of critical discourse analysis severely limited her findings and influenced her overall method. Her goal was to contrast representation in newspapers between 1968 and 1982 with representations of second-wave feminism from 2008 to answer questions regarding ‘sexual revolution’. Also of note is the study done by Joseph Scott and Jack Franklin, which provides an expanded interpretation of analysis conducted by Albert Ellis in 1950 and 1960 on the frequency of references to sex in mass circulation magazines.<sup>49</sup> Scott and Franklin added a sample from 1970 using similar methodology and concluded that public references to sex increased within magazines during the period 1960 to 1970 as well as between 1950 and 1960. This serves to illustrate the fact that people were referring to sex more in their day-to-day lives, at least within magazines. These studies clearly indicate that mass media had some role within ‘sexual revolution’, however further investigation is necessary.

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<sup>46</sup> Adrian Bingham, *Family newspapers? : sex, private life, and the British popular press 1918-1978* (Oxford, 2009), p. 88.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Kaitlynn Mendes, *Feminism in the news : representations of the women's movement since the 1960s* (Basingstoke, 2011).

<sup>49</sup> Joseph E. Scott and Jack L. Franklin, 'The Changing Nature of Sex References in Mass Circulation Magazines', *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1972).

Key to understanding these concepts of sexual revolution is that the underlying assumption is that there was a shift from public to private in terms of social discourses regarding sex and intimacy and a shift in gender power relations. What remains clear is that a significant struggle between or shift in public discourses of socio-political freedoms versus discourses of liberation or the freedom from societal oppression could constitute the definition of a revolution in a social context. But so too the concept of basic transformation of culture could also constitute a revolution in a social context. For a sexual revolution to occur, there must be clear conflict between competing discursive positions, a transformation of the discourse, or both.

### The Choice of Newspapers

The newspapers chosen for examination by this study are *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*. Understanding the choice of newspapers begins with an understanding of their circulation, ownership, readership, and those who worked to create their content. By the 1960s television had replaced newspapers as the primary source of news.<sup>50</sup> However, this does not mean that newspapers were irrelevant. Even in an age where television was the bright new thing, newspapers lost little ground. As media theorist Marshall McLuhan concluded: ‘the medium is the message.’<sup>51</sup> This statement, though seemingly gross over-simplification, is quite profound. The full explication of ‘the medium is the message’ is that ‘...it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action.’<sup>52</sup> As a dedicated forum for the dissemination of news and opinion, newspapers occupy and create a distinct ideological space. The messages found in newspapers

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<sup>50</sup>Colin Seymour-Ure, *The British press and broadcasting since 1945* (Oxford, 1996), p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding media; the extensions of man* (1st edn, New York,, 1964), p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

cannot be directly translated into radio or television, where brevity, tone of voice and actor's mien all take on their appropriate and given roles in dissemination of that message. The ideological space afforded by newspapers has the potential to be highly intellectual, where a reader must merge his or her own conceptions of ideas with his or her own experiences that can be found to a lesser extent in radio, and still less than that in television where the whole of the message is staged or framed in specific ways absent to newspapers. As circulation of these newspapers remained steady, so too did the reading public experience the world, as newspapers constructed it, through them.

Indeed, circulation figures remained steady throughout the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>53</sup> Another factor to consider is a phenomenon unique to newspapers that is vital to the understanding of their impact. It is known as 'duplication' or the process whereby many people read the same copy of a newspaper, without necessarily paying for it. This, as media historian Colin Seymour-Ure acknowledges, would make the number of people who read the newspaper much higher than official circulation figures might suggest.<sup>54</sup>

The question of political bias cannot be ignored, however, particularly when many of the themes of 'sexual revolution' have political overtones, often tied to governmental policy. The clear editorial political bias of *The Times* and *The Guardian/Observer* is well established. *The Times*, owned first during the period by the Astor family then by Roy Thomson generally displayed a conservative political bias, favouring the Conservative Party during elections.<sup>55</sup> *The Guardian* and *The Observer*, owned by the Scott family trust and another branch of the Astor family respectively, generally exhibited a more liberal political bias, during elections, favouring Labour or Liberals.<sup>56</sup> *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* owned by the

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<sup>53</sup>Seymour-Ure, *The British press and broadcasting since 1945*, p. 17. NB: For US papers, circulation data is controlled by a private entity and is only available at great cost. Every avenue was explored in gaining access to this data.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 218-219.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

Ochs-Sulzberger family and the Chandler family, respectively also exhibited editorial bias at opposite ends of the political spectrum.<sup>57</sup>

The choice of quality newspapers for this study, as opposed to say popular newspapers, is based primarily on the lack of scholarship in this area. Many historical studies are quick to use newspapers to bolster an argument or for a quick citation. An event happened in such a way, because the newspaper said it did. The tendency on the part of historians to employ newspapers or other mass media citations in this way lacks an understanding of how the cited source material contributed to the overall publication ideologically and systemically. A few historians have noted that study of these sources in a more thorough manner is lacking and would greatly benefit scholarship.<sup>58</sup> This lack of engagement with the source material is of considerable interest, particularly as the language used in these sources can be interpreted in such a variety of ways. Therefore, a thorough examination of these texts is warranted. Scholars have demonstrated key aspect of the popular press is entertainment over depth of coverage.<sup>59</sup> And while there is considerable merit in examining these widely circulated and commercially successful newspapers, a study of the quality press has been neglected.

Another reason to examine quality newspapers as opposed to popular newspapers lies in their readership. The readership of quality newspapers during the period in question generally consisted of more educated people with middle to upper class backgrounds.<sup>60</sup> These were the newspapers that the policy-makers, the opinion-shapers, the political and social elite

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<sup>57</sup> See Dennis McDougal, *Privileged son : Otis Chandler and the rise and fall of the L.A. Times dynasty* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), Ch. 3, and *New York Times Timeline*, The New York Times, 2013.[cited 25 February 2013] <http://www.nytc.com/company/milestones/timeline.html>. The New York Times in particular is difficult to categorise in this instance.

<sup>58</sup> In particular, see Peter Mandler, 'The BBC and National Identity In Britain, 1922–53', *Media History* 18, no. 2 (2012), p. 246.

<sup>59</sup> NB: While this is certainly true, it in no way diminishes the value of the research into the popular press. See in particular Bingham, *Family newspapers? : sex, private life, and the British popular press 1918-1978* and Martin Conboy, *The press and popular culture* (London, 2002).

<sup>60</sup> See Seymour-Ure, *The British press and broadcasting since 1945* , pp. 146-147. NB: These distinctions were possibly similar in both the United States and Great Britain. However, a study of this sort has not been done for the United States possibly due to the large volume of data that would need to be analysed.

read on a daily basis. People read these newspapers not only to stay informed, but also because they cared what these newspapers had to say – that is their institutional authority and role influencing public opinion was greatly respected. This interest in the content of these newspapers is more than reason enough to warrant a thorough examination of their content and opinion, especially in matters concerning matters such as sexual norms and mores.

Also of importance are the individual actors working to create the content of these newspapers. The journalists and editors of publications such as *The Guardian* or *The New York Times* are generally regarded as being consummate professionals at the top of their fields, respected for their abilities and integrity. Throughout the period, the number of university graduates working on staff at newspapers was rising.<sup>61</sup> However, most journalists tended to be men.<sup>62</sup> Jeremy Tunstall points out that women were generally not employed in ‘hard’ news areas. However, considering that a great deal of the content analysed for this dissertation is ‘soft’ news, the role of women and thus of gender must be considered. While the purpose of the popular newspaper is primarily to entertain, the quality newspaper exists to inform and perhaps to provoke thought within a reader in a more serious manner. Additionally, the status ascribed to these publications by society is key to understanding their importance. Two of the newspapers selected for this study are regarded as ‘newspapers of record’. That is, they are by law, or more commonly by reputation, custodians of representations of the political and cultural life of a nation, which can only be afforded through journalistic excellence.

This attention to the points of view presented to the professional, managerial and administrative element of society is crucial to the understanding of a ‘sexual revolution’. Among the newspapers chosen for this study are those with a commonly acknowledged liberal political bias. However, past studies have shown that they do not always retain this bias in

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<sup>61</sup>Jeremy Tunstall, *Newspaper power : the new national press in Britain* (Oxford, 1996), p. 138.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid. NB: Again, data for the United States is unavailable.

regards to social issues, and vice versa with newspapers having a more conservative political bias.<sup>63</sup> When considering the nature of 'sexual revolution', the popular narrative is well established. What this study seeks to examine, therefore, is how the more educated, and possibly more moneyed interests responded to these changes and how that narrative was presented to and engaged with by a public audience.

In addition to basic understanding of readership, circulation, ownership and readership, a brief examination of structural processes within newspapers in the creation of its content is necessary to understanding how this content must be approached during analysis. The newspaper is somewhat difficult to define. One could say that it is organic in nature, different elements working together towards one overall goal. It could also be described as mechanical, every person representing a cog in a grand machine. This fragmented nature of newspaper structure is key to understanding exactly how the content of its pages, articles, features, and editorials are compiled together from a multitude of viewpoints, political, social and economic.

While not discounting different theories of media control, it is the social forces within the newsroom that have the most impact upon the content of the newspaper.<sup>64</sup> These range from institutional authority to mobility aspirations to the absence of conflicting group allegiance.<sup>65</sup> But these instruments of social control, generally balanced by a 'don't rock the boat' mentality on the part of editors can be bypassed in favour of certain considerations including deliberately 'planting' a story, starting a public discussion on a particular topic.<sup>66</sup> Studies have demonstrated that mass media can be analysed by these organizational approaches as well as functional approaches, which examine ideological hegemony.<sup>67</sup> However, beyond

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<sup>63</sup>Seymour-Ure, *The British press and broadcasting since 1945*, p. 218.

<sup>64</sup> On theories of media control see in particular Jean Seaton and James Curran, *Power without responsibility: the press, broadcasting, and the internet in Britain* (Abingdon, 2010), part IV, pp. 291-341, and for social forces of control within the newsroom see William Breed, 'Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis', *Social Forces* 33, no. 4 (1955).

<sup>65</sup>Breed, 'Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis', p. 330.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>67</sup> In particular see Edward Jay Epstein, *News from nowhere : television and the news* (Chicago, 2000), Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester, 'News as Purposive Behavior: On the Strategic Use of Routine Events, Accidents,

organizational analyses, and functional analyses is the culturological approach, which examines the ‘symbolic determinants of the news in the relations between ideas and symbols.’<sup>68</sup> Focusing primarily on the concept of ‘cultural givens’ a culturological approach enables the researcher to examine the content produced by journalists that is part of the everyday.<sup>69</sup> Such ‘cultural givens’ are absolutely vital to the understanding of how journalists viewed everyday topics, critical to the understanding of views of sexual norms and mores. Thus, it is a balance of determining when an author is stepping beyond the bounds of controlling social forces in an article or working within a ‘cultural given’ when attempting analysis of newspaper sources.

### Methodological Approaches

My research method stems first from the text and the language of the newspapers themselves. The primary focus of this research is to determine a discursive formation of ‘sexual revolution’ within quality newspapers in the United States and Great Britain. I do so by examining the text of these newspapers in order to study how journalists, those who wrote letters and other notable figures considered worthy of publication represented attitudes towards sex and gender as well as cultural practices surrounding those identities.

Understanding of these concepts begins with the idea of representation within the field of linguistics. Representation is the production of meaning through language.<sup>70</sup> When studying newspapers from a historical perspective, representation is complicated by not only the multiple voices that aid in the construction of a newspaper, but also by the nature of language and representation itself. Representation has the potential to be reflective or mimetic as well as

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and Scandals', *American Sociological Review* 39, no. 1 (1974), and Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York, 1978).

<sup>68</sup>Michael Schudson, 'The sociology of news production', *Media, Culture & Society* 11, no. July (1989), p. 275

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 276. Also see remarks by Richard Hoggart in Tony Bennett, 'Media, "Reality", Signification', in Michael Gurevitch, et al. (eds), *Culture, Society and the Media* (London, 1982), p. 303.

<sup>70</sup> Stuart Hall, *Representation : cultural representations and signifying practices* (London, 1997), p. 16.



constructive.<sup>71</sup> By this, meaning that language can indicate both how something is perceived to be, as well as how the author wishes it to be within a body of text.<sup>72</sup> However, as Martin Conboy demonstrated, newspapers have a language all their own. It is important to consider that a study of newspapers in a historical perspective must consider the social and cultural understandings of language of the period under study and that this in turn is imperative to the larger understanding of the discourse that emerges from it.<sup>73</sup> This is further complicated by the fact that every single aspect of a newspaper is a part of a constructed version of reality.

A newspaper is by its very nature a social document. Editors, journalists, letter-writers, and owners all have input into a newspaper's final composition, every day, year-round.<sup>74</sup> A newspaper serves as a forum for social, economic, and political issues where a public discussion is carried out by writing articles, receiving feedback and asking questions. This is a realisation of what sociologist Jürgen Habermas called 'The Public Sphere'.<sup>75</sup> But a newspaper is also a form of mass medium, the key word being *medium*. Newspapers, indeed all organs of mass media frame reality and construct meaning; every word, phrase, and idea printed within a newspaper has been selected by the author and screened by an editor for inclusion in that composition. Following the tenets of communication theory and a constructionist approach to philosophy, the nature of words to construct meaning is inherent in their use; the tone and inflection of words composing a sentence and constructing paragraphs lends profound insight to the reader as to how the author views a particular event or concept.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, inclusion or

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. For more on the multiplicities of meanings within texts and perspectives on the applications of critical theory to this methodology, see Alan McKee, *Textual analysis : a beginner's guide* (London, 2003).

<sup>73</sup> Martin Conboy, *The language of newspapers : socio-historical perspectives* (London, 2010), pp. 8-9.

<sup>74</sup> See in particular Schudson, 'The sociology of news production', and Gaye Tuchman, 'Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity', *American Journal of Sociology* 77, no. 4 (1972).

<sup>75</sup> For a full explanation of The Public Sphere, see Jürgen Habermas, 'The Public Sphere', in Paul Marris and Sue Thornham (ed) *Media Studies: a Reader* (Second edn, Edinburgh, 1973) and Alan McKee, *The public sphere : an introduction* (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>76</sup> Hall, *Representation : cultural representations and signifying practices*, p. 16. Also see Seymour-Ure, *The British press and broadcasting since 1945*, p. 7, and Norman Fairclough, *Analysing discourse : textual analysis for social research* (London, 2003). For a concise counter-argument to constructionist theories of media culture

exclusion of material is fundamental to understanding how these individuals that composed the newspaper viewed and understood the events of the period. This of course is predicated upon the understanding that journalists are social beings and do not live in a cultural vacuum. Thus, as asserted by other scholars, newspaper journalists can be observed as both reflections and agents of social change.<sup>77</sup> Also important to note is that the majority of people rely upon news media for their information about what goes on in the world around them.<sup>78</sup> When considering this in the context of a ‘sexual revolution’, the point of view expressed by journalists has enormous impact both on how individuals during the period would have had to evaluate their own personal views upon sex, gender and cultural practices against those expressed in the mass media.

As a newspaper is a conglomeration of text, compiled by an editorial staff, discourse analysis is a useful framework for its analysis. Iara Lessa summarized Foucault's definition of discourse as “systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak.”<sup>79</sup> Jeffrey Weeks’ expanded the definition: ‘Put at its simplest it is a linguistic unity or group of statements which constitutes and delimits a specific area of concern, governed by its own rules of formation with its own modes of distinguishing truth from falsity.’<sup>80</sup> Stuart Hall summarised

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and communication see Theodor W. Adorno and J. M. Bernstein, *The culture industry : selected essays on mass culture* (London, 1991), pp. 85-92.

<sup>77</sup> See Douglas Kellner, 'Critical Theory and the Culture Industries: A Reassessment', *Telos* 1984, no. 62 (1985), Mendes, *Feminism in the news : representations of the women's movement since the 1960s*, and to a lesser extent Bingham, *Family newspapers? : sex, private life, and the British popular press 1918-1978*, Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A social history of the media : from Gutenberg to the Internet* (3rd ed. edn, Cambridge, 2009), Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, *The manufacture of news. Social problems, deviance and the mass media*. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, editors (London, 1973), and Kevin Williams, *Read all about it! : a history of the British newspaper* (Abingdon, 2010).

<sup>78</sup> See Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (London, 1992), Mendes, *Feminism in the news : representations of the women's movement since the 1960s*, p. 2, Deborah L. Rhode, 'Media Images, Feminist Issues', *Signs* 20, no. 3 (1995), and Elisabeth A. van Zoonen, 'The Women's Movement and the Media: Constructing a Public Identity', *European Journal of Communication* 7, no. 4 (1992).

<sup>79</sup>Iara Lessa, 'Discursive Struggles Within Social Welfare: Restaging Teen Motherhood', *British Journal of Social Work* 36, no. 2 (2006), p. 285.

<sup>80</sup>Weeks, 'Foucault for Historians', p. 111.

discourse more broadly, noting discourse was ‘...a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment...the production of knowledge through language.’<sup>81</sup> Further, ‘Social relations are inescapably the effect of language and the ceaseless workings of power...What political struggle is inevitably about, therefore, is “reverse discourses”, radically different definitions, different organisations of power relations.’<sup>82</sup> Foucault also explored the power relations that evolved from discourse. In *Archaeology and Knowledge*, he outlined that those who participate in the creation of the discourse determine its formation, as determined by a variety of factors.

Where discourse is a group of statements or ideas that provide the limits of conversation about a particular topic at a particular point in time, a discursive formation is best understood as being ‘...whenever discursive events refer to the same object, share the same style and...support a strategy...a common institutional, administrative or political drift or pattern then they...belong to the same discursive formation.’<sup>83</sup> In the context of this study, then, the discursive formation is the whole of the discursive statements or events of the frames selected for study from the pages of quality newspapers. This does not mean that there weren’t competing discourses, different opinions or methods of discussing issues, but that as they refer broadly to the same event and share an institutional pattern, they are therefore part of the same discursive formation. The application of Foucault's theory is essential to the analysis of the discursive formation as part of a larger context of 'sexual revolution' within quality newspapers.

The application of Foucault's work comes in a form of socio-linguistic content analysis as outlined by Krippendorff and Fairclough.<sup>84</sup> Elements of the texts of the newspapers are therefore studied with regards to genre, tone, grammatical mood along with intertextuality,

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<sup>81</sup>Hall, 'Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse', in , p. 72.

<sup>82</sup>Weeks, 'Foucault for Historians', p. 118.

<sup>83</sup>Hall, 'Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse', in , p. 72.

<sup>84</sup> See Fairclough, *Analysing discourse : textual analysis for social research* and Klaus Krippendorff, *Content analysis : an introduction to its methodology* (2nd edn, London, 2004), pp. 87-89 and pp. 178-179.

speech function and modality. From this method, it is possible to determine the discursive formation, the extent to which the quality press engaged with concepts of 'sexual revolution', whether there was any thematic crossover as well as the nature of the quality press itself. Such analysis has been demonstrated successfully in other studies of media including representation of race, manifestations of ideological visions of economy, 'age markers' and peace movements.<sup>85</sup> Thus the discursive formation found within the content of the newspapers under study will be analysed by textual and rhetorical strategies. While a majority of the research done in this dissertation is necessarily qualitative, it does not exclude the possibilities offered by quantitative functions.

Another element of my research method is based upon frame analysis as first outlined by sociologist Erving Goffman. His premise is that what one individual experience of events has its own value and a subjective truth, that may not necessarily be what is really going on; '...in fact what is actually happening is plainly a joke, or a dream, or an accident, or a mistake, or a misunderstanding, or a deception, or a theatrical performance, and so forth.'<sup>86</sup> Therefore, a plurality of voices is necessary to establish an accurate account of experience; as Goffman described it: '...a small, manageable problem having to do with the camera and not what the camera takes pictures of.'<sup>87</sup> Plurality, particularly from the standpoint of the historian, is often difficult to establish within a single body of primary sources. The sheer number of source materials needed to establish an accurate definition of a shift in social norms and mores, particularly with regards to an issue as sensitive as sexual norms and mores is enormous. However, Goffman and others who have employed this method in similar studies have asserted

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<sup>85</sup> Notable studies of discourse in the media include Robert A. Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao, 'Challenging a Master Narrative: Peace Protest and Opinion/Editorial Discourse in the US Press During the Gulf War', *Discourse & Society* 5, no. 4 (1994), Jake Harwood and Howard Giles, "'Don't Make me Laugh': Age Representations in a Humorous Context", *Discourse & Society* 3, no. 4 (1992), Teun Adrianus van Dijk, *Racism and the press* (London, 1991), and Pamela L. Wonseck, 'College basketball on television: a study of racism in the media', *Media, Culture & Society* 14, no. 3 (1992).

<sup>86</sup> Erving Goffman, *Frame analysis : an essay on the organization of experience* (Northeastern University Press edn, Boston, 1986), p.10.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

that achieving such a plurality can be done through an examination similar to how one reads a comic strip.<sup>88</sup>

A strip is therefore '...any arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing [sic] activity...as seen from the perspective of those subjectively involved in sustaining an interest in them; in this case, the 'sexual revolution' from the point of view of quality newspapers.'<sup>89</sup> As mentioned previously, the newspaper is a social document, achieving a kind of plurality of voices, although not necessarily a full plurality. It is therefore possible to examine individual frames, or the basic units of each strip, which are clearly identifiable.

Robert Entman has greatly expanded upon Goffman's work, and provides for the employment of frame analysis or 'framing' in the examination of power dynamics. As he noted: 'Analysis of frames illuminates the precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location – such as speech, utterance, news report, or novel – to that consciousness.'<sup>90</sup> Simplifying it further, Entman argued that framing '...essentially involves *selection* and *salience*. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.'<sup>91</sup> Such selection and increase in salience, Entman explained, '...enhances the probability that receivers will perceive the information, discern meaning, and thus process it, and store it in memory.'<sup>92</sup> Further,

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<sup>88</sup> Gaye Tuchman, 'Telling Stories', *Journal of Communication* 26, no. Fall (1976)

<sup>89</sup> Goffman, *Frame analysis : an essay on the organization of experience* , p. 10.

<sup>90</sup> Robert Entman, 'Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993), pp. 51-52. For more works on the application of frame analysis see Jim A. Kuypers and Paul D'Angelo, eds., *Doing news framing analysis: empirical and theoretical perspectives*, (London, 2009), and Paul D'Angelo, 'News Framing as a Multiparadigmatic Research Program: A Response to Entman', *Journal of Communication* 52, no. 4 (2002).

<sup>91</sup> Entman, 'Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', p. 52.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53. See also, Susan T. Fiske and Shelley E. Taylor, *Social Cognition : from brains to culture* (2nd edition. edn, Los Angeles, 2013), and Doris A. Graber, *Processing the news : how people tame the information tide* (2nd edn, New York, 1988).

framing guides judgements in communications on the part of communicators according to their belief systems thus placing power in the hands of communicators inherently. If as Entman argued ‘...the frame determines whether most people notice and how they understand and remember a problem, as well as how they evaluate and choose to act upon it...the frame has a common effect on large portions of the receiving audience...’ then the implications for power dynamics are highly significant.<sup>93</sup> Additionally, ‘...the power of news frames can be self-reinforcing...any critique transcending the remedies inside the frame breached the bounds of acceptable discourse, hence...unlikely to influence policy.’<sup>94</sup>

An application of the understanding of framing or frame analysis to the study of history through mass mediated discourses provides a means to analyse the vast number of sources necessary to that analysis in a way that limits the effort required while at the same time maximising the most salient elements of discourses under study. Entman illustrated this concept further, noting that frames ‘...are manifested by the presence or absence of certain key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments.’<sup>95</sup> This is critical in the analysis of a discursive formation or competing discourses within such a discursive formation in the context of mass media. Examination of certain key words in the case of quality newspapers can reveal a frame, the examination of multiple sources within that frame then reveals a discursive formation. As Entman noted ‘...content analysis informed by a theory of framing would avoid treating all negative or positive terms or utterances as equally salient or influential.’<sup>96</sup> Such avoidance, then, allows an analysis of discourses to examine shifts in those discourses.

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<sup>93</sup>Entman, 'Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', p. 54. See also Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, 'Choices, values, and frames', *American psychologist* 39, no. 4 (1984).

<sup>94</sup>Entman, 'Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', p. 55. See also William A. Gamson, *Talking politics* (Cambridge England ; New York, NY, USA, 1992) on the effects of framing on social policy.

<sup>95</sup>Entman, 'Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', p. 52.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 57

I have chosen to employ a case study approach, which examines broad themes relating to sexual revolution as well as particular events and individuals who were deemed 'newsworthy' as the basis for analysis of the particular frames.<sup>97</sup> This as Goffman acknowledged can be done within such a study as without violating the overall analysis.<sup>98</sup> Such an approach allows for a broad analysis, allowing for greater depth of discourse analysis, while also engaging questions of representation of 'sexual revolution' beyond discursive formation and considering possible answers with regards to the positive or negative nature of newspaper contribution to the overall discourse of 'sexual revolution,' the role of gender to a certain extent, and the constructive nature of any criticism or the lack thereof. Further, it enables consideration of media narrative both in context of alternative to reality as well as reflecting reality.

### Types of Sources to Be Analysed

When stating that the content of newspapers will be analysed in pursuit of this dissertation, it is important to fully address precisely what that means. Content refers to the text of the various articles, headlines, features, editorials and letters to the editor published in the newspapers chosen for this study. Each of these types of news item requires certain modes of consideration when analysis is attempted. The following serves to outline the approach taken with each type of news item considered.

Articles, or short items discussing a single news value and generally without a listed author, are the most common types of news item analysed in this research. They generally offer

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<sup>97</sup> Newsworthy as defined by Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge, 'Structuring and Selecting News', in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (eds), *The manufacture of news. Social problems, deviance and the mass media* (London, 1973), pp. 69-70.

<sup>98</sup> Goffman, *Frame analysis : an essay on the organization of experience* , p. 12. Also see D'Angelo, 'News Framing as a Multiparadigmatic Research Program: A Response to Entman', .

a single viewpoint and are typically quite short in length.<sup>99</sup> However, despite many who would dismiss these as unimportant or as simple reporting neglect the consideration that these were included in the first place. Thus, these news items should be examined closely with regards to the ‘cultural given’ concept referenced above. Articles can provide insight into the everyday reflection of the contemporary social norms and mores of journalists. A particular subset of article is the headline, which conveys more in a few short words than many editorials can in hundreds. It is essential to analyse those articles that offer relevant information carefully, as they exhibit greater salience about prevailing social norms and mores than other news item types. It should also be noted that this type of article (excluding the headline subset) is also the least persuasive and its individual role in shaping discourse, excluding the headline, is therefore limited.

Feature articles or investigative reports are less common than articles; however more so than editorials or letters to the editor, but generally cover more than one news value and usually list an author. These news items are unique as journalists may often use feature articles to advance their own viewpoints on subjects while simultaneously reflecting reports that may differ from their own outlook on a specific subject. Feature articles are therefore prime examples of demonstrating how journalists can reflect society while also acting as agents within society.<sup>100</sup>

Editorials are as their name suggests the viewpoint of the editor on a specific subject or event.<sup>101</sup> They serve as the most direct example of the journalist as an agent of social change. The editorial always offers opinion and delivers a firm position on the subject or event in question. Like headlines, editorials or opinion pieces by a guest author have great potential to be provocative, and thus can operate outside the bounds of social controls under which

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<sup>99</sup> NB: This is not always necessarily the case, however. Parliamentary debates might be considered articles based on the criteria above, excluding the length qualification.

<sup>100</sup> For more on feature articles see Mass-Observation, *The Press and its Readers* (London, 1949), p. 63.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.



newspaper staffs generally operate. This has key importance to how those at the top of the journalistic hierarchy viewed ‘sexual revolution’.

The final news item that must be considered is the letter to the editor. Written by members of the public, letters to the editor serve as direct feedback to the newspaper with regards to previously published content.<sup>102</sup> Letters are vital to the understanding of how the public engaged with and understood the viewpoint expressed either actively or passively by the newspapers themselves and thus have tremendous impact upon public understanding of ‘sexual revolution’. However, letters to the editor must also be analysed with caution because of the constructed reality of newspapers. Editors chose those letters that were published and they do not represent the open comments that one might find today on a website or social media platforms.

As the foundation of this dissertation is based upon content and discourse analysis, the time and effort required to examine the newspapers involved has undoubtedly been reduced by the digitization of newspaper archives. As has been pointed out, the digitization of newspaper archives has the potential to create problems for the historian’s work process.<sup>103</sup> Keyword searching is a potential minefield for methodological misstep. However, it must be noted that the type of analysis this project seeks to undertake would be impossible without it.<sup>104</sup> As this project seeks to ascertain among other questions the discursive formation of ‘sexual revolution’ within the quality press during this period, the wide net of keyword searching allows for the broadest possible of interpretations to be examined and then honed into more pointed analysis. To avoid missing vital sources, research proceeds from using the most inclusive of search

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<sup>102</sup> For a detailed examination of the role of letters to the editor, see Karin Raeymaeckers, 'Letters to the Editor: A Feedback Opportunity Turned into a Marketing Tool : An Account of Selection and Editing Practices in the Flemish Daily Press', *European Journal of Communication* 20, no. 2 (2005), as well as Mass-Observation, *The Press and its Readers*, p. 56.

<sup>103</sup> See Adrian Bingham, 'The Digitization of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians', *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no. 2 (2010) in detail.

<sup>104</sup> Teun A. van Dijk, *Discourse and communication : new approaches to the analysis of mass media discourse and communication* Research in text theory = Untersuchungen zur Texttheorie (Berlin ; New York, 1985), p. 2.

terms, taking note of other key words that are related to the initial search terms and refining them to obtain more relevant primary source material. This is by no means an exact science, and even by using compound search functions, searching for two or more specific terms together, or searching for one or more terms and excluding others still has the possibility to yield many irrelevant sources. With consideration to the imperfections associated with optical character recognition in the digital newspaper archives this already high number can then expand. Even with keyword searching, the process is still marked by the perusal of thousands of individual articles, however significantly less than without the availability of keyword searching. In addition to keyword searching key news items are examined in the context of their placement on full-page views. Such attention to this detail is necessary to consider how the reader would have viewed and consumed the newspaper. Related advertisements, stories and other visual items such as political cartoons or photographs have great impact on how a reader processed the information available.

For this study, I used frame analysis to narrow the amount of material for study through keyword searching, employing the broadest possible terms for each topic of study. The creation of a frame through employing certain keywords, as outlined above, does not detract from the overall analysis and by using multiple search terms per theme, it was possible to return an adequate number of sources for analysis without sacrificing significant elements of the overall discourse. For the first chapter I used search terms of ‘feminism,’ ‘feminist,’ ‘women’s rights,’ and ‘women’s liberation.’ For the second chapter I used search terms of ‘obscenity,’ ‘pornography,’ and then refined the results further by considering the relevant public trials and governmental reports relating to obscenity and using search terms such as ‘lady Chatterley’ and ‘Oz,’ for relevant years. The results were then examined with regard to publication date, newspaper, and country and then totalled. This total was then used to calculate the percentage change in topic area yearly and from one year to the next or year-over-year change. The full

results are detailed in the respective appendices. These year-over-year percentage changes constituted so-called ‘peaks’ in coverage and were easily observed when plotted graphically; the years where the peaks existed were the starting point from where analysis was initially conducted. Generally, peaks conform to the greatest changes in the overall discourse, however, there are exceptions, and so content from all years was examined, but not necessarily included for final analysis. Relevant exceptions are outlined at the beginning of the respective chapters for each topic.

## Chapter Structure

The substantive chapters will conform to the following general structure. Each chapter will begin with a short introduction outlining its aims and goals followed by notes on general editorial policies or trends where applicable. This shall be followed by a review of relevant historiography. Analysis of primary sources will be on a case study basis while noting overall trends in coverage and how they may have differed from a cause celebre. Additionally, it will outline general article placements within the pages of the newspapers in question, while noting specific or outstanding examples. Of interest is how the discourse of these events evolved throughout the period, including the use of specific rhetoric or literary devices, particularly the similarities or differences in British versus American content and public response to ‘sexual revolution’ in various thematic contexts, with a short conclusion summarising the main points of each chapter.

The first chapter explores how the quality press both engaged with and constructed ‘second-wave’ feminism and the women’s liberation movement. Feminism was chosen for analysis in this study due to the profound shifts in cultural understandings of biological sex and

the emergence of gender as a social construct during this period. Sex after all, is experienced by both genders and to ignore the experiences of women, particularly feminists, would be a disservice to a study of ‘sexual revolution.’ This chapter seeks to explore the quality press discourses about how established media entities considered feminism and women’s liberation as a component of ‘sexual revolution’ through content and discourse analysis of quality newspaper sources. Research will focus on major events important to these themes, including major concepts and events, including the respective defeat and success of the Equal Rights Amendment and Equal Pay Act, the foundation of the National Organization for Women, and the emergence of women’s liberation groups and their ideological positions in both the United States and Great Britain. Of great importance are editorial opinions and published letters that will provide a sense of how feminism was viewed in the quality press. It will also consider any quality press editorial opinion of major figures in second-wave feminism including but not necessarily limited to Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer.

The second chapter will explore the permissive society and ‘permissiveness’ in the context of obscenity and pornography, and will focus on how the quality press made use of major obscenity trials in the United States and Great Britain to engage in public debate about sexual norms and mores throughout the period through content-based analysis. The overarching concepts of ‘permissiveness’ and the ‘permissive society’ are highly important in the context of a ‘sexual revolution.’ The general liberalisation of attitudes and norms following the Second World War has been remarked upon and studied by many historians, and includes everything from legal strategies and decisions to the sexualisation of nightclubs and the ‘vulgar’ or ‘obscene’ materials distributed through the postal systems in several countries. As the scope of this topic could prohibit a detailed examination of public discourse, analysis is directed at major legal cases and relevant social commentary of the various public trials and governmental reports concerning obscenity and pornography. Major trials including those for

*Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Oz 28*, *Fanny Hill*, and others helped to define legal as well as social definitions of obscenity during the period, and are thus worthy of further consideration. Additionally, reports were commissioned by both the United States and the United Kingdom during this period on obscenity and pornography in response to overwhelming public outcry and receiving great political support. This chapter draws upon sources from the quality press to demonstrate how newspaper content played a role in influencing public opinion regarding obscenity, and thus public discussion of sexual norms and mores in relation to those trials and reports. It will draw upon the historiographical tradition to demonstrate the role of the quality press as an exception to post-war liberal consensus regarding obscenity as well as to expand upon the existing media narratives of the period.

The conclusion will summarize my research findings as well as identify new avenues for researching media content and discourses within the broader social and cultural histories of Great Britain and the United States. It will consider the analysis presented in each of the substantive chapters in relation to the question of contribution to a widely-held understanding of 'sexual revolution'.

## CHAPTER 1: FEMINISM AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION

To understand the full impact of the 'sexual revolution' within the context of feminism in the 'elite' or quality press, one must consider the breadth and depth of the discourse found within it. This is a difficult task, however, by employing a frame analysis it becomes possible to examine discursive patterns and outliers methodically. In addition, frame analysis provides a useful paradigm to consider the so-called 'peaks' in coverage; that is, those years when the 'frame' returned greater than average results or results that challenge the established discursive pattern. By employing this frame analysis to articles in the quality press of both Great Britain and the United States it is possible to analyse how the discursive pattern changed within the selected time period and also when it changed; a full break-down of the data for this chapter is included in Appendix I. Below, I detail the peaks in coverage, including the pattern of the discourse within the quality newspapers selected, changes in the primary frame's meaning within the discourse, a broad analysis of the overall tone of the discourse, as well as the socio-political bias of the newspapers themselves in both Britain and the United States, and the role of discourse in the revolutionary dialectic.

### Literature Review

#### Concept(s) of Feminism

Before reviewing the existing literature regarding representations of feminism in media, it is necessary to both define feminism and to examine the wealth of feminist thought born from the scholarship during and after the so-called 'second-wave' of feminism. Seemingly straightforward, the definition of feminism is surprisingly difficult to pin down. The following

are by no means the full extent of feminist thought and theory, rather they serve as a blueprint for how feminism is constructed as an identity and how this identity might be studied in historical context.

Though many definitions of feminism exist – and indeed did exist throughout the period between 1959 through 1979 – the work of Rosalind Delmar provides an excellent broad characterisation from which to begin an analysis of feminism. She argued:

'Many would agree that at the very least a feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change (some would say a revolution even) in the social, economic, and political order. But beyond that, things immediately become more complicated.'<sup>105</sup>

However, as Delmar rightly acknowledges, her definition is highly subjective and open to interpretation. It makes far more sense to argue for a plurality of feminisms than to pursue a single definition. Delmar, writing in the mid-1980s constructs a plurality of feminisms as:

'...naming of the parts: there are radical feminists, socialist feminists, Marxist feminists, lesbian separatists, women of colour, and so on, each group with its own carefully preserved sense of identity. Each for itself is the only worthwhile feminism; others are ignored except to be criticized.'<sup>106</sup>

This characterization was almost certainly a product of the time, and one might argue, of sexual revolution itself. Most important to Delmar's work, however, is her assertions regarding 'feminists' themselves:

'It is, in practice, impossible to discuss feminism without discussing the image of feminism and feminists. Feminists play and have played with a range of choices in the process of self-presentation, registering a relation both to the body and to the social meaning of womanhood. Various, sometimes competing, images of the feminist are thus produced, and these acquire

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<sup>105</sup>Rosalind Delmar, 'What is feminism?', in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (eds), *What is feminism?* (Oxford, UK, 1986), p. 8.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9.

their own social meanings. This is important to stress now because in contemporary feminism the construction of new images is a conscious process.<sup>107</sup>

Feminists, therefore, are conscious actors and work to construct their own identity. Implicit in Delmar's argument is a relationship to gender, without being predicated solely upon it. A man could be a feminist, or not. So too can a woman be a feminist, or not. This is a truism, but important in historical examination of feminism and feminists, particularly with regards to construction of those ideologies and identities.

Nancy Cott, in an historical examination of feminist theory and movements, traced the meaning of feminism to the fusion of social and political. Though she acknowledged the inherent problems of identity politics, she nevertheless insisted that '...feminism requires some extent of conceptualization of sexual difference, to generate identification with the group 'women'; and that such a conceptualization must build around the belief that gender - or, let us say, 'woman's condition' - is socially constructed and thus can be dismantled or changed.'<sup>108</sup> In another article, Cott bridged the gap between the problems of identity politics and feminism by questioning the periodization by historians of feminism into first and second 'waves.' By using feminism in a way that applies to any advancement by or for women, renders it '...inadequate to capture the multifarious ways that women through the ages have protested male domination or attempted to redefine gender hierarchy.'<sup>109</sup>

However, as has been established, it is necessary to consider feminism in a plural sense. Juliet Mitchell argued that feminism is a result of class: 'Feminism does emanate from the bourgeoisie or the petit-bourgeoisie...gives its values to the society as a whole.'<sup>110</sup> Dale Spender defined feminism as:

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<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>108</sup>Nancy F. Cott, 'Feminist Theory and Feminist Movements: the Past Before Us', in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (eds), *What is feminism?* (Oxford, UK, 1986), pp. 54-55.

<sup>109</sup> Nancy F. Cott, 'What's in a Name? The Limits of 'Social Feminism;' or, Expanding the Vocabulary of Women's History', *The Journal of American History* 76, no. 3 (1989), p. 809.

<sup>110</sup> Juliet Mitchell, 'Reflections on twenty years of feminism', in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (eds), *What is feminism?* (Oxford, UK, 1986), p. 47.



‘...a set of explanations which make the most sense of my experience, and my life and the lives and experiences of many other women I know...I am a feminist because I think that feminism is based on a 'better' set of assumptions than any other worldview I have encountered. I think it is a fairer way of viewing and organizing the world. I assume that human beings are equal, that we can learn to live in harmony with each other - and the planet - and that there is no necessity for violence, exploitation, persecution, war. These assumptions underlie feminist philosophy: they do not underlie patriarchal philosophy.’<sup>111</sup>

Linda Nicholson argues that feminism ‘...recognizes power as an important dynamic in the discursive construction of identity.’<sup>112</sup> Further, for Nicholson, feminism ‘...should recognize its own meaning as evolving out of the multiple input of actors who are diversely situated...’<sup>113</sup> Thus feminism is necessarily a diverse and nuanced ideology, loosely constructed around gendered identities and the socio-political realities it works for and against. Similarly, feminists are people who, per their own conception of feminism or their own identification with ‘feminism’ work to achieve the ‘goals’ of feminism as an ideology.

For the purposes of this study, feminism follows the loosest definition, subject to the guides of the frame analysis. It is not only the definitions of feminism posited by these scholars, but also the definitions asserted by the plurality of voices within the primary source materials. Thus, feminism can and does mean different things to different sources. Further, I argue that in the tradition of Marshall McLuhan’s thesis ‘the medium is the message,’ that the quality press created their own definition of feminism and that this definition is no less valid than those posited by individual voices or by its constituent parts.

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<sup>111</sup>Dale Spender, 'What is feminism? A Personal Answer', in Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (eds), *What is feminism?* (Oxford, UK, 1986), p. 215.

<sup>112</sup>Linda J. Nicholson, 'Feminism In "Waves": Useful Metaphor or Not?', in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds), *Feminist theory reader : local and global perspectives* (Third Edition edn, New York, 2013), p. 5.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

## History of Feminism(s)

Feminism as a historical category poses problems for historians of feminism and 'feminist' movements. Historians struggle with not only what 'feminism' is, but also with how to argue and write about it. Rosalind Delmar once more provides an excellent overview:

'In the writing of feminist history it is the broad view which predominates: feminism is usually defined as an active desire to change women's position in society. Linked to this is the view that feminism is par excellence a social movement for change in the position of women. Its privileged form is taken to be the political movement, the self-organization of a women's politics. So unquestioningly are feminism and a women's movement assumed to be co-terminus that histories of feminism are often written as histories of the women's movement, and times of apparent quiescence of the movement are taken as symptomatic of a quiescence of feminism.'<sup>114</sup>

Thus, most histories of feminism are histories of the women's movement – that is, of political organization, and the organization of identity politics. It is therefore difficult to separate political histories with histories of social movements, though this is not necessarily a hindrance. Indeed, as feminists of the second-wave were keen to stress, the social was certainly political. This ethos formed a great deal of the momentum for feminists of the period, especially for those who considered themselves part of the movement known as 'women's liberation.'

Issues of identity politics aside, most historians of feminism broadly group feminism into so-called 'waves.' It is true that certain historians and feminist theorists have questioned the validity of the terminology, but with few exceptions, chronology bears out a categorisation based upon a first 'wave' followed by a second 'wave.' The first 'wave' is generally categorised by the initial struggle on the part of women and men in favour of women's suffrage.

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<sup>114</sup>Delmar, 'What is feminism?', in , p. 13.

The second 'wave' is broadly categorised as the movements begun upon the part of women in the 1960s who worked to change the status of women in society by various means and methods.

Beyond the general agreement on 'waves,' the history of feminism diverges substantially. Broadly speaking, the central question of the second 'wave' was whether there were multiple 'movements' within it. The school of thought arguing in favour of a singular movement without differentiation with regards to ideology or praxis tends to ignore the concept of generation gap and follows a thesis of women working for women and their issues. As Christopher Strain put it: '...the efforts of a stalwart few in the 1960s...women who refused to accept that their gender was an obstruction, who fought and broke barriers, and who made things happen so that subsequent generations of women would be free to work in the marketplace alongside men as equals...and to explore their bodies and enjoy sex.'<sup>115</sup> However, this seems to be gross oversimplification of the complex and nuanced actions and interactions of the women (and men) committed to change in the social norms and mores that governed women and their roles in society during this period.

Another school of thought argues for two distinct wings of the movement: liberal feminists versus women's liberationists. This school does not ignore the issue of generation gap and argues generally that younger activists within the movement tended to ignore traditional power and organizational structures whereas older activists tended to respect them: women's liberation and liberal feminism respectively. As Alice Echols noted: 'Women's liberationists also took issue with liberal feminists' formulation of women's problem as their exclusion from the public sphere. Younger activists argue instead that women's exclusion from public life was inextricable from their subordination in the family, and would persist until this larger problem was addressed.'<sup>116</sup> Most historians and feminist theorists tend to ascribe to this

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<sup>115</sup>Strain, *The long sixties : America, 1955-1973* , pp. 93-94.

<sup>116</sup>Alice Echols, *Shaky ground : the '60s and its aftershocks* (New York, 2002), p. 83.

point of view, however, with certain caveats and semantic differences. Bonnie Anderson and Judith Zinsser were one such pair, concluding that the two branches of the same movement were feminist in nature and that the women's liberation movement '...demanded more for women than earlier feminists had been able to.'<sup>117</sup> They also traced the networks by which nascent feminists and activists for women's rights connected with each other: 'Feminists made contact with each other through women's newspapers and journals, in women's studies seminars, in the new women's bookstores, coffee shops, and shelters created by the growing network of women's liberation groups.'<sup>118</sup> This provides an interesting impetus for the dissemination of feminist thought, however, it ignores the question of how new members were brought into the movement – merely providing explanation for existing members.

Olive Banks also recognized the two distinct threads of post-war feminism. Her work remains unique in that it differentiates between the ideological pedigrees of the two branches of the movement. She noted that, 'When the new equal rights feminism emerged in the 1960s, therefore, it was not entirely a re-birth, since nineteenth-century feminism had not completely disappeared.'<sup>119</sup> Banks concurred with other scholars that Betty Friedan's seminal work *The Feminine Mystique* was more a '...consequence rather than a cause of a new mood amongst middle-class women.'<sup>120</sup> However the category of 'radical women's liberation feminism' remained a unique phenomenon of the post-war period.

'The movement known as Women's Liberation in fact had its own beginning in the United States independently of the equal rights movement and independently too of the whole tradition of feminism as it had developed in the past. Later, it is true, it was to search for, and discover, its founders, but initially at least it was a spontaneous response of a group of young women to their own experience of domination. Later the liberation movement and the equal rights

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<sup>117</sup>Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, *A history of their own : women in Europe from prehistory to the present* Vol. 2, (1st edn, New York, 1988), p. 409.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 410.

<sup>119</sup>Olive Banks, *Faces of feminism : a study of feminism as a social movement* (New York, 1981), p. 207.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., p. 211.

movement were to lose their distinctive identities, and in Britain at least they were never so far apart as they were in the United States. Nevertheless, if the division is at times an arbitrary one, it is useful as well as convenient.<sup>121</sup>

This distinction separates Banks' work from the broader body of literature in the subject and opens new avenues of inquiry within existing fields of analysis while preserving the existing categories for that analysis.

Judith Hole and Ellen Levine likewise place themselves in the singular movement with multiple branches with their analysis of the second 'wave' of feminism. Their work is crucial to the chronology of feminism, establishing the beginning of the women's liberation movement with Shulamith Firestone's emigration to New York from Chicago following the National Conference for a New Politics at the end of August 1967. This move led to the formation of the group New York Radical Women by Firestone with Pam Allen, which Hole and Levine considered to be the genesis of women's liberation as a distinct branch of the women's movement.<sup>122</sup> Hole and Levine were also the first historians of the movement to consider the impact of media on feminism, noting: 'The effects of media exposure are hard to assess. On the one hand, coverage by the media has brought new women into the movement; on the other, the image portrayed has more often than not been sufficiently flippant and derogatory that many women have felt both alienated from and antagonistic to the movement.'<sup>123</sup> While they acknowledged the power of the media, their evidence remained anecdotal at best.

Still another school of thought exists regarding feminism during the 1960s and 1970s. Those who diverge from the assertions of a unified women's movement or one movement with two distinct branches are those scholars who have broken down the women's movement into distinct ideological branches or even sub-branches. David Bouchier identified four distinct

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<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>122</sup>Judith Hole and Ellen Levine, *Rebirth of feminism* (New York, 1971), p. 115.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

branches of the women's movement in his sociological analysis. These included four branches – three revolutionary, one reformist – that corresponded in both Britain and the United States. His analysis included 'reformism or women's rights feminism, often just called "feminism" by American supporters; radical feminism, sometimes called "women's liberation"; socialist or Marxist feminism: and radical lesbianism.'<sup>124</sup> Bouchier, like Banks, traced the ideological pedigree of the various branches and examined the radical ideologies of three movements in New York during the period 1965-1970. He concluded that the strength of the feminist movement was distinct from other 'revolutionary' New Left movements during the same period, noting:

'The revolutionary new left movements of the late sixties appear to have made little lasting impact on the lives and consciousness of most people. The same cannot be said of the feminist movement which, in an astonishingly short space of time, created an almost universal awareness of women's problems and demands in western Europe and the United States, together with substantial changes in social policy.'<sup>125</sup>

Bouchier also engaged with the role of mass media, and concluded that mass media engaged with feminism or the women's movement relatively late during the period: It was not until 1970 in America and 1972 or 1973 in Britain that journalists – especially women – began to read the growing theoretical literature of the movement, to report its campaign more seriously and, in general, to take notice of it as something other than a joke.'<sup>126</sup> This has interesting implications. He did not differentiate between different media types nor did he make any conclusions as to any media effects outside his period of analysis. Most important were his assertions regarding mass media and feminism. He argued:

'The public gets its image of feminism through the mass media, so the advances in communication which have been made are important. But there are still serious difficulties in

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<sup>124</sup>David Bouchier, *Idealism and revolution : new ideologies of liberation in Britain and the United States* (New York, 1978), p. 105.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p. 104.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p. 135.

the way of drawing women into the movement by this route, as well as the dangers of distortion and reification which have been outlined. Working-class women, like working-class men in Britain and America, have been notoriously difficult to organize in radical causes, and certain ideas, especially on liberated sexuality and the abolition of the nuclear family, met with enormous cultural resistance. Winning the battle of the media did not necessarily give feminists a line of communication to the public. On the whole, therefore, they came to prefer the gradualist tactic of the slow accumulation of new groups formed by women initially on the basis of particular and localized problems.<sup>127</sup>

Though he made bold and compelling statements, Bouchier failed to consider if the media might have conceived their own version of feminism.

Focusing more on 'liberal' feminism, Linda Nicholson's analysis remains important to establishing the unique iteration of feminism within the 1960s. She noted, as distinct from the 1950s or the post-war 1940s, 'The consequence was that in the early 1960s, the ideology of liberal feminism - that women are equal to men, and that women, like men, should be judged as individuals - the very ideology that could NOT generate a mass following in the 1920s, could now begin to generate such a mass following.'<sup>128</sup> Further, she established the importance of linking the political with the social for the feminist movement, noting: '...liberal feminism was only one part of the feminist movement of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Also constituting an important part of this movement was radical feminism... "...the personal is political"....'<sup>129</sup> This phrase is crucial to the understanding of not only the evolution of feminism during this period, but also to the concept of sexual revolution as well.

Equally as important to the history of feminism, and the women's movement is that of those women who did not espouse an agenda that championed the new social norms and mores those within the movement wanted to achieve. Though present less in the literature, as their

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<sup>127</sup>Bouchier, *Idealism and revolution : new ideologies of liberation in Britain and the United States* , p. 136.

<sup>128</sup>Nicholson, 'Feminism In "Waves": Useful Metaphor or Not?', in McCann and Kim, p. 53.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid.

political activities would not be considered feminist in the strictest sense, scholars have made the argument that many, if not most women during the 1960s were far less liberal in their politics. Michelle Nickerson has argued most persuasively about these ‘moral mothers’ and ‘Goldwater girls.’ She noted that ‘Women, mostly homemakers and mothers, executed much of the work behind these home-grown efforts...embracing political work as an extension of their household duties.’<sup>130</sup> The class and ethnic categories of Nickerson’s cannot be excluded from the overall historical picture, but the socio-economic and ethnic makeup of the United States during this period was overwhelmingly white and middle-class. Nickerson and others explore the voice of the less-studied, but statistically more prevalent majority in terms of population. In her analysis, Nickerson has managed to explore the second part of Rosalind Delmar’s thesis regarding the women’s movement, that is, that not all who worked to advance women would consider themselves feminists.<sup>131</sup> In doing so, Nickerson and others explored the difficult and often painful reminder that: ‘By not calling attention to themselves as women and not working toward a set of goals specifically for women, these activists fit awkwardly in the history of the women's liberation movement.’<sup>132</sup>

### Historiography of Feminism and Media

Few scholars have focused on representations of feminism in mass media during the so-called ‘second-wave.’ Due to the complex nature of the work, most remain highly theoretical or focus on process instead of content.

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<sup>130</sup>Michelle Nickerson, ‘Moral Mothers and Goldwater Girls’, in David R. Farber and Jeff Roche (eds), *The conservative sixties* (New York, 2003), p. 52.

<sup>131</sup>Delmar, ‘What is feminism?’, in Mitchell and Oakley, p. 13.

<sup>132</sup>Nickerson, ‘Moral Mothers and Goldwater Girls’, in Farber and Roche, p. 53.



Elisabeth A. van Zoonen studied media discourses and feminism within the Netherlands during the 1970s. Though her analysis was limited to Dutch-language media, located within the cultural context of that country, the women's movement followed a similar trajectory to those in other Western countries of the same period. Most importantly, van Zoonen illustrated the factors involved in producing a media narrative and the impact of that narrative upon society and collective memory. Of interest was her conceptual framework, answering simple questions through discourse analysis – the 'who', 'what', and 'how' of the Dutch women's movement, as well as the pointed observation that discourses of feminism often exclude men; that 'Journalists usually assume that women's movements wrongly exclude men.'<sup>133</sup> She was particularly careful to broaden her analysis to social movements in general and concluded by proposing that her model could be applied to other social or historical movements.

Although Bernadette Barker-Plummer confined the bounds of her thesis to political resources for social movements, her work is important in understanding both mass media operation during the period and also, more importantly, how news media establish themselves as a 'privileged form of knowledge' and 'representation of authority.'<sup>134</sup> Particularly important is the claim that 'news voice translates into legitimacy,' because it illustrates the modalities of power present in the relationship of media to society. While she acknowledged the notion that media will often exclude more radical social movements because they don't serve the status quo, as posited by sociologist Todd Gitlin, she notes that Gitlin's study was limited to a peace movement that ultimately failed.<sup>135</sup> What she failed to ask was the possibility that if news media did give voice to social movements, was there a corresponding change in the status quo, or the possibility that the status quo had changed and no one noticed?

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<sup>133</sup>van Zoonen, 'The Women's Movement and the Media: Constructing a Public Identity', , p. 468.

<sup>134</sup>Bernadette Barker-Plummer, 'News as a Political Resource: Media Strategies and Political Identity in the U.S. Women's Movement, 1966-1975', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12, no. 3 (1995), p. 308.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 309.

Sharon Howell's study of the rhetorical evolution and strategy of the women's movement and its articulation in mass media (particularly print media) is important in several respects. Howell draws a clear line of rhetorical evolution from the civil rights movement and the New Left to the contemporary women's movement. More important, however, is that it outlines a useful paradigm for social evolution:

'The philosophical perspective underlying this study is that of dialectical materialism/dialectical humanism. It rests on the belief that social reality is constantly changing...This change comes about because of the emergence of contradictions growing out of human interaction with objective reality. It is out of conflicting ideas and methods for addressing these contradictions that individuals must choose one course of action over another. As a result, human beings are constantly engaged in the process of arguing, persuading and cajoling one another. This is the essence of politics and of rhetoric. Conflict over ideas, policies, values and direction is essential for social growth. Inherent in this philosophy is the recognition that human beings live not only in a material world but in a socially constructed world expressing our unique capacity to symbolize our environment, to endow it with meaning and to make judgments and to reflect upon and evaluate our actions.'<sup>136</sup>

While this is true of rhetoric, it is also a method to assess historical change by analysing the discourses involved. The inherent problem of Howell's rhetorical analysis, however, is that she ascribed too great an influence on the part of language itself and its creators; feminists were not the sole voice in creating metaphors to frame the movement. Put another way, the media were not simply the press office for 'second-wave' feminism. There was dissent and argument, played out through mass media (especially print media) and it is naïve to assume otherwise. That is not to discount the ways in which women came together and found ways of describing their emotion and experience merely that it assumes too great an influence on the rhetoric of only one interested party.

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<sup>136</sup>Sharon Howell, *Reflections of ourselves : the mass media and the women's movement, 1963 to the present* American university studies Series XXVII, Feminist studies (New York, 1990), p. 18.

Charles Conrad similarly analysed the rhetoric of social movements, focusing primarily on first-wave feminism, though particularly interested in print media. His analysis of the rhetoric of first-wave feminism in the movement's newspaper demonstrates the evolution of thought within social movements and illustrates the process by which the message of a movement is shaped by internal and external factors as well as the ebb and flow of ideological influence by key actors within the movement itself. Of interest are his observations regarding how the ideology of social movements changes and the consequences thereof: 'As an ideology becomes more pragmatic, it becomes less visionary. When visions are modified or abandoned, the ground for unification is weakened.'<sup>137</sup> Conrad concluded forcefully that all social movements have the capacity to evolve and that this transformation is implicit to a movement's origin and dynamics. Although not directly related to feminism of the 1960s and 1970s, the parallels and implications cannot be ignored.

Such theoretical studies are useful for conceptualizing the women's movement and considering the implications of the 'second-wave' of feminism during the period, particularly regarding a concept of 'sexual revolution', work that has a more direct engagement with media itself is necessary to situate a historical analysis.

Patricia Bradley's analysis of mass media and American feminism during the 1960s and 1970s focused less on the content of the message – or rhetoric and discourse – but rather on the strategies of media elites, including Gloria Steinem and especially Betty Friedan. Her work weaved a complex and detailed narrative of the behind-the-scenes politicking and scheming to advance the cause of women. Of the most importance is the marked silence on the part of the press about the combative nature of Betty Friedan as described by her biographers.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Charles Conrad, 'The Transformation of the "Old Feminist" Movement', *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 67, no. 3 (1981), p. 285. For a similar perspective on the evolution of second-wave feminism to third-wave feminism, see Amber E. Kinser, 'Negotiating Spaces for/through Third-Wave Feminism', *NWSA Journal* 16, no. 3 (2004).

<sup>138</sup>Patricia Bradley, *Mass media and the shaping of American feminism, 1963-1975* (Jackson, 2003), pp. 16-20.

Most quality press narratives featuring Betty Friedan during this period border on hagiographic. Her portrayal of the success of Gloria Steinem as an opportunist, when her achievements are so widely lauded in the present day, is particularly striking.<sup>139</sup> Bradley's conclusion implies that more was achieved by television, than by print media. Using the televised tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs as an archetype for her period of analysis, Bradley opined that this visual did more than all the newspapers or magazines ever could.<sup>140</sup> In this sense, she credited McLuhan's thesis 'the medium is the message,' however, the historicity of this interpretation of that match is difficult to establish fully.

Hilary Hinds and Jackie Stacey used indexes of quality newspapers to sketch an intellectual portrait of feminism in the British press from the late 1960s through the end of the 1990s. Although their conclusions were biased due to their method, they did note the rhetorical and discursive similarities of constructing/re-constructing feminism based on generation for women in the 1990s as being 'new' – distinct from the 'old' feminism of the 1960s.<sup>141</sup> This is like patterns found in the quality press of the 1960s regarding 'first-wave' feminism.

Victoria Hesford focused her recent analysis exclusively on Women's Liberation and radical feminism, and ascribed direct motives to journalists in constructing and perpetuating a women's liberationist-as-lesbian pejorative narrative.<sup>142</sup> It neglected to mention, or rather obfuscated with endnotes that the mainstream feminists wanted little to do with lesbians in 1970. Her media analysis examined almost exclusively, the case-study of Kate Millet and *TIME* magazine and the imagery used therein. Hesford almost purposefully conflated liberal feminism with women's liberation to castigate historical actors, which ultimately failed, but

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<sup>139</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 143-166.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 273-279. This match was billed as the 'Battle of the Sexes'.

<sup>141</sup> Hilary Hinds and Jackie Stacey, 'Imaging Feminism, Imaging Femininity: The Bra-Burder, Diana, and the Woman Who Kills', *Feminist Media Studies* 1, no. 2 (2001), p. 153.

<sup>142</sup> Victoria Hesford, *Feeling women's liberation* Next wave : new directions in women's studies (Durham, 2013), see, Chapter 1. Also, footnote 38, p. 280.

succeeded in illustrating the problems with media narratives as unconscious of race or class in relation to women's liberation and the second-wave feminist movement while posing critical questions regarding social memory, drawing on the work of Maurice Halbwachs as interrogated by Andreas Huyssen and Lauren Berlant.<sup>143</sup>

Perhaps the most in-depth study to date of feminism during the 1960s and 1970s was conducted by Kaitlynn Mendes in her book comparing 'second-wave' feminist representations in newspapers with contemporary narratives using a critical discourse analysis. However, it is important to note that Mendes was attempting a feminist analysis of newspaper discourses during a historical period, rather than a historical analysis of feminist discourses in newspapers during a given period. At first glance, these might seem quite similar, however, though it remains a fine distinction, the outcome of these different approaches would be different in the conclusions drawn.

Although thorough, Mendes' method created several issues, including: her implicit acknowledgement of second-wave feminism yet the lack of engagement with its impact (an issue of employing critical discourse analysis); chronology: her choice to begin with 1968 as her starting year, considering NOW was founded in 1966 (which plays into her polemic against 'liberal' feminism, creating a confirmation bias); the conclusion lacked an explanation of 'radical' discourses (complicated by the historical relativism of the characterisation – what was radical in 1962 would have been quite mainstream by 1969, for example). Her work is important in acknowledging a triumph of 'liberal' feminism over 'radical' feminism through the discourses in the newspapers she analysed.<sup>144</sup> Mendes did not seem to indicate any reason as to why this might be however, merely acknowledging the reality and not providing a paradigm for the reasons it was so – of course this was not part of her aims. Mendes sought to

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<sup>143</sup>Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>144</sup>Mendes, *Feminism in the news : representations of the women's movement since the 1960s* , pp. 128-129.

approach her analysis in terms of feminism and the responsibilities of journalists – feminist journalists particularly – in articulating feminist message by using historical examples.

Similarly, Deborah Rhode's 1995 article is a structured polemic against the problems feminists faced in ensuring that their aims and practices were well-represented. Though it lays out a case for the demonization of women since the advent of women's liberation, its analysis relied upon cherry-picked examples and feminist studies that prop up her own biases. Rhode used only a handful of examples from the 1970s to argue her point that feminists are often demonized, and neglected to include any real engagement with a broad number of historical sources, instead focusing the majority of her analysis on the issues of deviance or race, rather than other women's or feminist concerns present in the discourse.<sup>145</sup> The clear majority of her sources came from the 1990s and failed to reveal the impact of media coverage during the 1960s or late 1970s and the unique cultural milieu they fell within, instead opting to illustrate a failed insurrection leading to a depressed, yet militant status quo for feminism.

### The Second Wave and Sexual Revolution

Second-wave feminists had distinct opinions regarding sexual revolution, particularly the intersection of so-called 'sexual revolution' and its implications for women. As a contribution to feminist literature, *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan is comparable to *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft or *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir. In terms of a 'sexual revolution' however, *The Feminine Mystique* occupies a distinct and important space in the historical and public discourse of feminism and women's rights, their experiences, and aspirations during this period. As a founding document of the 'second wave,' Friedan's book illustrates many of the concepts present in the public

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<sup>145</sup>Rhode, 'Media Images, Feminist Issues', pp. 689-691, pp. 694-701.

discourse surrounding women and women's rights during the period. Most importantly, 'the feminine mystique' was itself a media construct in the critical theory tradition. As Friedan argued:

'American woman as she was written about in women's magazines, studied and analyzed in classrooms and clinics, praised and damned in a ceaseless barrage of words ever since the end of the Second World War. There was a strange discrepancy between the reality of our lives as women and the image to which we were trying to conform, the image that I came to call the feminine mystique.'<sup>146</sup>

This conception though, directly contradicts Adorno's theories of media in *The Culture Industry*.<sup>147</sup> Beyond this, however, it represented an intellectual contradiction to other authoritarian discourses present in contemporary society. Too, it must be stressed, Friedan did not invent the feelings that women had during this period, she merely gave it voice.<sup>148</sup> Friedan sought to reframe the public discussion, conceptualizing it as a problem of identity, rather than sexuality – though the rejection of sexuality as an inherent part of identity is itself problematic.<sup>149</sup> The fame she achieved with her work suggests in this respect she was successful to an extent. One might try to frame the discursive formation of *The Feminine Mystique* as liberatory, but as Stephanie Coontz argued, this is a mistake. Where Friedan described a golden age of feminism in the 1920s and 1930s, Coontz argues that this was patently false, rather that the movement 'lost momentum' until the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s.<sup>150</sup> Friedan did not argue for the social equality to the extent sought by the women's liberation movement later in the decade, merely serving to reawaken the drive for full political freedoms and extended social freedoms of first-wave feminism; a necessary

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<sup>146</sup>Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 9.

<sup>147</sup> See Adorno and Bernstein, *The culture industry : selected essays on mass culture* , Ch. 1 and pp. 85-92.

<sup>148</sup> Friedan called it 'the problem with no name'. See Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, p. 29.

<sup>149</sup>Stephanie Coontz, *A strange stirring : the Feminine mystique and American women at the dawn of the 1960s* (New York, 2011), p. 68.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 38, p. 46.

stepping stone towards liberation.<sup>151</sup> Regardless, *The Feminine Mystique* remains a crucial element of second-wave feminist thought and existed with few other ideological challengers until the emergence of the women's liberation movement.

Writing at the dawn of the women's liberation movement, historians Judith Hole and Ellen Levine in their extensive examination of feminism in the United States, articulated the contemporary view of sexual revolution vis-à-vis a feminist or women's liberationist perspective. They noted: 'The sexual revolution has been understood to mean the relaxation of social taboos and restrictions on the sexual behaviour of women. Most would agree that the relaxation of restriction does indeed constitute a freedom.'<sup>152</sup> The rhetoric at work here groups most people, including women, while creating a standpoint from which 'feminists' would argue. Hole and Levine then articulated a feminist position: "'The sexual revolution which oppresses her ('the liberated woman') is a revolution made in her behalf by other women, wrested from men and assented to by them...in the face of the power of the revolutionaries, and not from some notion of particular advantage to themselves.'<sup>153</sup> Though seeming simple, this language verges on great importance. It implies either multiple sexual revolutions, or a figurative *coup d'état* on the part of all women, and a subsequent oppression by a majority upon a vocal minority – the implicit power dynamics had not shifted in women's favour. It is here that the voices of the second wave, and women's liberation are key to understanding the social milieu in which the primary sources of this study are analysed.

Though arising from the ashes of the New Left, women's liberation's ideological pedigree cannot be ignored. One such essay, was a collaboration by three authors whose work shaped second-wave feminism as ideology. Evelyn Goldfield, Sue Munaker, and Naomi Weisstein synthesized a new interpretation of sexual norms, and were careful to include a

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 149. Also, this thesis lends credence to Christopher Strain's argument about the periodization of 'sexual revolution'.

<sup>152</sup> Hole and Levine, *Rebirth of feminism*, p. 218.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.



critique of mass media. Unlike implicit acknowledgments of the power of media by so-called equal rights feminists, they stated it bluntly and included a personal acknowledgement, stating: 'We are all children of Coca Cola.'<sup>154</sup> They excoriated women's magazines for perpetuating messages that 'woman exists for man,' concluding that '...the advertising industry...has helped to condition women to their secondary status.'<sup>155</sup> Unlike previous equal-rights feminists, Goldfield et al. were keen to place their keen dissatisfaction in media, and sex itself (in many senses of the word) as the locus of the problems they sought to rectify in society. This essay, tucked inside a volume of essays of the New Left, seems representative of the late 1960s, yet it sparked a veritable tidal wave of feminist literature.

Shulamith Firestone, considered a founding mother of women's liberation had specific intentions regarding the concept of sexual revolution. For her, sexual revolution was the creation of a new historical materialism:

'Historical materialism is that view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all historical events in the economic development of society, in the changes of the modes of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggles of those classes against each other.'<sup>156</sup>

Firestone believed that it was possible to create a materialist view of history based on sex itself. Her imagery and rhetoric were by nature bellicose, denoting a *de facto* warfare of sorts between the sexes. Her thesis, through drawing upon Marx, ultimately rejected socialism; instead favouring something else: 'We shall need a sexual revolution much larger than - inclusive of - a socialist one to truly eradicate all class systems.'<sup>157</sup> This is not to say that Firestone favoured moderation, rather the opposite. She called feminist arms of trade unions and other women's caucuses the 'Ladies' Auxiliaries of the Left,' and disparaged other 'politicos' while playing

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<sup>154</sup>Evelyn Goldfield, Sue Munaker, and Naomi Weisstein, 'A Woman is a Sometime Thing', in Priscilla Long (ed) *The new left; a collection of essays* (Boston, 1969), p. 243.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>156</sup>Shulamith Firestone, *The dialectic of sex; the case for feminist revolution* (New York, 1970), p. 4.

<sup>157</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

up the generation gap calling Betty Friedan and the National Organization for Women and other like groups ‘conservative feminists.’<sup>158</sup> Firestone felt that the largest obstacle to true liberation for women was the abolition of the stranglehold of reproduction. Though some of her proposed solutions were akin to something out of science fiction, more feasible recommendations included the full self-determination of women and children in society, with full economic independence and the abolition of traditional family structures.<sup>159</sup> One interpretation of the elements Firestone introduced into the larger social discourse is that they were a bargaining position, an opening gambit. From this point, women’s liberation could achieve better conditions for women, though perhaps without artificial gestation. Regardless of aims, Firestone’s work re-defined sexual revolution – making it truly ‘feminist.’

Where Firestone might be considered a long-haired, free-wheeling radical, Kate Millett was an intellectual, having post-graduate education in Britain and earning a doctoral degree at Columbia University. Her dissertation was the basis for her book *Sexual Politics*, widely regarded as an influential feminist text. Its importance is three-fold. First, it established matters regarding biological sex as political and drew analogous links between discrimination based on sex with similar discrimination based on race.<sup>160</sup> Second was that it expanded upon the pithy statement ‘the personal is political’ and grounded it in ideology. As Millett noted: ‘The term "politics" shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another.’<sup>161</sup> If the sexual was political, then the political system by which different sexes interacted with each other must exist. The final point of importance was the Millett defined the social-sexual-political system as ‘patriarchy;’ a system with a dominant political class and a submissive one.<sup>162</sup> The language of dominance and submission, of the

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<sup>158</sup>Ibid., pp. 37-45.

<sup>159</sup>Ibid., pp. 235-240.

<sup>160</sup>Kate Millett, *Sexual politics* (1st edn, Garden City, N.Y., 1970), p. 44.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

concept of *herrschaft* and a nascent definition of 'gender' was present throughout her work. Though confined to a theoretical framework, and drawing on historical sources, Millett's work nevertheless implies that a sexual revolution would be the abolition of such political structures, or at the very least, a significant transformation of them.

Juliet Mitchell, a British psychoanalyst, wrote extensively on feminism and explored the roots of sexual revolution and of feminism in both the United States and Great Britain. Mitchell viewed women's liberation as either a new sexual revolution, or as part of a continuing sexual revolution begun in the 1960s. She observed in her 1971 work that:

'The so-called 'sexual revolution' and the cult of libertarianism have probably permeated further in England than in the other countries of Women's Liberation. Among students and the young professional groups there is a renunciation of marriage not to be found in America where urban violence and loneliness seem to preserve a need for the institution. This renunciation means something different from that found amongst comparable groups who have done so for a long time in Sweden or Denmark. It is hard to define this difference. To me, it is perhaps best expressed as a quality of seriousness.'<sup>163</sup>

Additionally, and perhaps most important to understanding of sexual revolution is her observations about media. Mitchell linked the concepts of sexual revolution and sexual objectification explicitly: 'For women, as to a lesser extent for men, the 'sexual revolution' has meant a positive increase in the amount of their sexual (and hence social) freedom; it has also meant an increase in their 'use' as sexual objects.'<sup>164</sup> Further, she circumspectly observed that it was women who as a result of sexual revolution, were conscripted into their own objectification where before a sexual revolution, women were only objectified by men on a societal level.

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<sup>163</sup>Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's estate* Pelican books (Harmondsworth,, 1971), p. 140.

<sup>164</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 142.

'The woman working for the media, supervises the activities of the media, which themselves re-produce the product by means which, as often as not, are herself...the means of creating this is to sell a product - the means to sell a product is a sexy woman.'<sup>165</sup>

Mitchell departed from her American counterparts in her adherence to socialism as a means of remedy for woman's social inequities. Though she agreed implicitly with Firestone's new historical materialism based on sex, she insisted that before any progress was to be made between man and woman, the oppression of capital versus labour must first be addressed.<sup>166</sup> Mitchell did concur with Firestone regarding the family, but linked the family to the preservation of older means of production and division of labour, rather than simply an existing reality.

Germaine Greer's 1971 book *The Female Eunuch* was for many a new awakening. Greer linked the permissive society to sexual revolution. She noted that:

'The permissive society has done much to neutralize sexual drives by containing them. Sex for many has become a sorry business, a mechanical release involving neither discovery nor triumph...indeed any kind of sex which can escape the dead hand of the institution...has flourished, while simple sexual energy seems to be steadily diffusing and dissipating...because sexual enlightenment happened under government subsidy, so that its discoveries were released in bad prose and clinical jargon upon the world.'<sup>167</sup>

Greer too agreed that objectification was a consequence of society, though choosing to focus less on a political structure like Millett or Mitchell and instead employing the emotion of objectification to convey her dissatisfaction. She termed this objectification 'gynolatry', noting:

'The gynolatry of our civilization is written large upon its face, upon hoardings, cinema screens, television, newspapers, magazines, tins, packets, cartons, bottles, all consecrated to the reigning deity, the female fetish. Her dominion must not be thought to entail the rule of women,

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<sup>165</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>167</sup>Germaine Greer, *The female eunuch* (1st American edn, New York,, 1971), p. 35.

for she is not a woman. Her glossy lips and mat complexion, her unfocused eyes and flawless fingers, her extraordinary hair all floating and shining, curling and gleaming, reveal the inhuman triumph of cosmetics, lighting, focusing and printing, cropping and composition.<sup>168</sup>

Unlike her contemporaries, Greer was the first to acknowledge the possibility that men were victims of their own domination, just as much beneficiaries of feminism or women's liberation as women would be. Greer sought revolution as abolition leading to liberation: 'Privileged women will pluck at your sleeve and seek to enlist you in the "fight" for reforms, but reforms are retrogressive. The old process must be broken, not made new. Bitter women will call you to rebellion, but you have too much to do. What will you do?'<sup>169</sup> The lack of reliance upon the work of so-called 'privileged women' or 'bitter women' signals a clear break with organizations that sought only reform, lending militancy to both women's liberation and sexual revolution.

Maren Lockwood Carden's contribution to the wider literature of women's liberation and sexual revolution was two-fold. She first rejected the hypothesis that the feminist movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s was a continuation of first-wave or nineteenth-century feminism, instead echoing Kate Millett's thesis of patriarchy, but calling it the result of a process of socialization instead.<sup>170</sup> Second, Carden professed blanket hostility to women's liberation by mass media, observing:

'The press and other mass media had a field day making fun of the "women's libbers." The reactions they reported were often highly charged emotionally, negative, and frequently contradictory. These women were sexually promiscuous, sexually deprived, lesbians, or frigid. They hated men, "wanted to take over the world," or wanted to subordinate men to women. They were portrayed variously as rejecting both marriage and motherhood, as considering childbirth a barbarous experience, as rejecting the aid of obstetricians at childbirth, as unwilling

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<sup>168</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>170</sup>Maren Lockwood Carden, *The new feminist movement* (New York, 1974), p. 2, pp. 10-11.

to sacrifice any personal whim for the sake of their children... Strident, hostile, hysterical, and maladjusted, they lacked human compassion and perspective.<sup>171</sup>

It must be stressed that Carden's analysis was purely anecdotal, drawn from emotion, and not from systematic data collection. This does not mean it is less valid in a capacity of how a member of the women's liberation movement felt at the time, but is less valid as a formal study. Carden went further than Greer or Mitchell and ascribed malice towards the men who controlled the mass media, drawing heavily on Betty Friedan's analysis of mass media – out of date by over a decade at this point – noting:

'...the men running the mass media actually believe in the stereotyped female they portray. The women who sees herself only in these terms and lacks the challenge of anything outside her immediate environment believes the soap operas and the advertisements that portray her as a scatterbrained [sic], dependent, submissive, and passive creature with very little intelligence...'<sup>172</sup>

Carden's polemic aside, she remained convinced of the power of women's liberation as a force for self-determination for all women.

Closing out the second-wave literature is Jo Freeman's work on the political impact of women's liberation. It is here, that there is finally an intellectual justification for the oft-repeated maxim 'the personal is political.' Freeman was keen to explicate that:

'Social movements are one of the primary means of socializing conflict; of taking private disputes and making them political ones. This is why a successful movement provides an intersection between personal and social change. Personal changes can be a vehicle to more concrete social changes, and are also often a result; but if a movement restricts itself to change purely on the personal level, its impact on society remains minimal. It is only when private disputes that result from personal changes are translated into public demands that a movement

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<sup>171</sup>Ibid., p. 1.  
<sup>172</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

enters the political arena and can make use of political institutions to reach its goals of social change.<sup>173</sup>

Though lacking a mechanism for social change, beyond the movement's own momentum, Freeman's socio-political justification for women's liberation remains an important component of realization of sexual revolution. In addition, Freeman's observations regarding media and what she termed the 'grand press blitz' following the national women's strike of 26 August 1970, are of note:

'This strike marked a turning point for the whole women's liberation movement. It was the first time that the potential power of the movement became publicly apparent; and with this the movement came of age. It was also the first time the press gave a feminist demonstration purely straight coverage.'<sup>174</sup>

Such focus on the impact of the national women's strike and the impact it had on media hint at another possible meaning of sexual revolution; that the strike itself was the figurative 'spark' that signalled the advent of 'revolution'.

As a sort of post-script to the second-wave and women's liberation, Sheila Rowbotham's work occupies an interesting place in the historiography of feminism and women's liberation. Being both an actor of feminism and women's liberation during the period in question – a leading intellectual of British feminism, and historian of feminism and women outside the period of study – her work is important to understanding not only the aims of feminists during the period of study, but also how feminists conceptualised their own actions in the decades since. She too was conscious of the role of feminists in constructing their own identities and engagement with media in a 'sexual revolution,' noting:

'In opposing a representation of women which we saw as offensive we wanted to express our conception of an alternative, liberatory sexuality. Instead we were caught up in the dominant culture's fascination with women as sexual beings. 'Women's Lib' was titillating. Equal pay

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<sup>173</sup>Jo Freeman, *The politics of women's liberation : a case study of an emerging social movement and its relation to the policy process* (New York, 1975), p. 5.

<sup>174</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 84.

was not. In attempting to transcend the split between the personal and the economic we had become fenced in neatly by the media in the domain of sexuality which made us newsworthy. It was not only that we had insufficient control over the media's recording of our action to turn around the meaning of the spectacle. We were to learn that once you take political arguments to ethos, interpretation can get lazy.<sup>175</sup>

This argument offers several facets for historical analysis. First, that women's liberationists were after liberation in the sense of Aristotle, advocating for the liberatory pole in the revolutionary dialectic. Second, that women became complicit with the dominant culture or rather submitted to that culture's desires, agreeing with Jo Freeman. Third, the media's focus on sex or sexuality described as 'newsworthy,' which had not been considered before. Indeed, Friedan sought the opposite, seeking to separate identity from sexuality, where the media and later women's liberationists linked it explicitly, though consequently rather than a means of action.

Rowbotham, in retrospective, also hypothesised with regards to the failure of women's liberation to interact with or manipulate media to the furtherance of their aims. She noted:

'The problem with entering the media and attempting to turn around the presentation of women was that you could be incorporated within a quite different set of terms and come over as demonstrating what you actually opposed. Also, we were so convinced that the media were the enemy that we supped neurotically with the devil, refusing to explain ourselves.'<sup>176</sup>

This reflection on a decade or more of attitude on the part of one of the most transformative movements is an interesting counterpoint to analysis, and provides an excellent reference point from which to ascertain the 'feminist' nature of the quality press or lack thereof.

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<sup>175</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, *The past is before us: feminism in action since the 1960s* (Boston, 1989), p. 249.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*



## Primary Source Analysis

### Analysis of British Primary Sources

The peaks in coverage obtained through the process outlined in the methodology provide a useful place from which to begin analysis of the discourse within the quality press narratives surrounding feminism. In Britain, these peaks in coverage within the twenty-one-year period were 1960, 1966, 1969, 1970, 1976, and 1979.<sup>177</sup> This does not discount notable coverage in other years, but rather to provide a broad outline and starting point for analysis. For instance, in the case of the British quality press, 1967 proved to be integral to the change in the discursive pattern, yet did not meet the criteria to be considered a peak in coverage, and was thus considered after analysis of the peaks in coverage was completed.

#### Britain – 1960

At the dawn of the 1960s, the term ‘feminism’ or the characterisation ‘feminist’ was firmly entrenched in the concept of the past within the British quality press. To be a ‘feminist’ or a champion of the cause of ‘feminism’ placed one firmly within the sphere of first-wave feminism – that is, wedded to winning the right to vote; put more broadly – political equality without any focus upon social equality.

*The Times* had very little to print on the subject of feminism in 1960. However, it did engage minimally and carefully with the term ‘feminist.’ In a profile of Dr Viola Klein, *The*

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<sup>177</sup> NB: For this frame, peaks are defined as a greater than 15% change in coverage year-over-year overall or a greater than 40% change in coverage in a single newspaper in a single year, the full data for which can be found in APPENDIX I.

*Times* was careful to characterise Dr Klein as scientific and methodical, even quoting her own statement: ‘But you really must not write me down as a militant feminist...an accidental or even, incidental – one would be nearer the mark.’<sup>178</sup> Throughout the remainder of the article the author was careful to engage subjects of sexualisation and psychology in a most clinical manner. This distance from the emotion of the term ‘feminist’ as well as the subject matter contained within the article speaks to the mind-set of the quality press in general at this point in time, placing it within a locus of the past, and to play up the rationality and logic with which Dr Klein engaged with the world. This creates a distance between the passion of past feminism and the logic or rationality of women in the present. Additionally, most discussion of feminism was couched within the institution of marriage – a notable distinction.

Even in *The Guardian* and *The Observer*, feminism was considered to be old-fashioned. Shirley Williams, daughter of notable first-wave feminist Vera Brittain, did not consider herself to be a feminist: ‘Her mother is Vera Brittain, whose views she admires without sharing. “I’m not a feminist..., but that’s a matter of generations, I think, don’t you?”’<sup>179</sup> This point of view was reinforced repeatedly throughout the left-wing press. Mary Waddington asked pointed questions in her article a month following Shirley Williams’ profile: ‘Is there any young woman under 30 in Britain to-day who calls herself a feminist? I doubt it.’<sup>180</sup> She punctuated her points throughout the article by using combative and even bellicose imagery. Terms such as ‘virago,’ ‘sex war,’ and ‘sex prejudice,’ dotted the remainder of the article.<sup>181</sup> Despite exploration of the contemporary frustration that Betty Friedan would call the ‘feminine mystique,’ Mary Waddington firmly considered herself to be a feminist in the past sense only, and also discussed the problem of sex equality within the confines of heterosexual marriage. In one of the few instances where there was a direct response to an article on feminism, the

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<sup>178</sup> ‘A Woman’s Woman,’ *The Times*, 11 January 1960, p. 15.

<sup>179</sup> Dilys Rowe, ‘New Fabian woman,’ *The Guardian*, April 18, 1960, p. 2.

<sup>180</sup> Mary Waddington, ‘The neo-feminists,’ *The Guardian*, 18 May 1960, p. 6.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

letter to the editor published on May 30, 1960 demonstrated that there was a faint possibility that feminism was not firmly rooted in the past. Judith Hubback, who described herself as a 'neo-neo-feminist,' contended that: 'Perhaps the neo-neos can find out more about both differences and similarities [between men and women], and learn to live accordingly.'<sup>182</sup> The relationship between men and women as alluded to in all the articles of 1960 was echoed in other articles within *The Guardian*, though still placed the locus of feminism within the past. John Rosselli noted that, 'Surely everyone gave up this high-keyed feminist stuff long ago...' yet also pointed to the dysfunction of the social relationship between men and women, commenting that, '...maybe it will work itself out with the rest of that evolving tangle, the relationship between the sexes.' Although feminism was firmly embedded within a sense of the past, people were conscious of the dysfunction that existed within the social discourse. The articulation of such dysfunction in the quality press provides an interesting starting point from which to examine the full impact of 'sexual revolution' within this frame of inquiry, particularly as it pre-dated publication of *The Feminine Mystique* by three years.

### Britain – 1966

The next peak in coverage within the British quality press occurred in 1966. It marked a significant period of transition in the definition of feminism from mere political to fuller social equality within the quality press. Although seemingly chained to the definition of feminism in the past sense, the article by MP Lena Jeger, entitled 'Not made for woman,' was nevertheless an assault upon the social mores of the day. In addition to remarking upon the installation of the first female deputy speaker of the House of Lords (Lady Barbara Wootton), Mrs Jeger took great pains to stress the unfairness surrounding the Street Offences Act.

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<sup>182</sup> Judith Hubback, 'Letter to the Editor,' *The Guardian*, 30 May 1960, p. 6.

Although against prostitution and so-called 'kerb crawlers,' Lena Jeger and her colleagues were adamant that the bill be applied equally to men as well as to women.<sup>183</sup> However, it was the conclusion of the article that ties the old definition of feminism to one more in line with fuller social equality: 'The Street Offences Act was a bad measure. And it is not a bad thing to be reminded of this on the day we salute what progress there is in seeing one of our ablest women sitting on the Woolsack.'<sup>184</sup> This transition towards a more progressive or socially-liberal and contemporary definition of feminism and women's rights in general was continued within *The Guardian* especially throughout 1966. Margaret Higginson took issue with the lack of administrative jobs open to women candidates in her article 'The anti-feminist schools.' In addition to the title, which was purposefully inflammatory, she brought the full force of her considerable indignation to bear by throwing down the gauntlet for equal opportunity, quoting a letter from Kenneth Barnes 'a remarkably magnanimous headmaster' who wrote, "'My impression of the personal quality of the women heads of comprehensive schools is that they are unusually generous, objective, and well-informed people under whom no one but a small minded man would fail to serve happily.'"<sup>185</sup> This combination of both male and female opinion in a single subject regarding women's rights was no accident; rather it was a carefully conceived challenge to the current social order while fulfilling the need for a balanced argument. In one of the few direct replies to an article where the interaction between readers and newspaper staff can be examined through letters to the editor, *The Guardian* editorial staff chose two letters that demonstrate not only the opinion of the authors of the letters themselves, but also reveal the biases present in society. One author, himself the Principal of City of Leeds College of Education, stated explicitly that there was 'no anti-feminism' at work, but rather there was a lack of applicants: 'posts advertised this year... attracted 370 applications from men

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<sup>183</sup> Lena M. Jeger, 'Not made for woman,' *The Guardian*, 18 February 1966, p. 20.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Margaret Higginson, 'The anti-feminist schools,' *The Guardian*, 26 February 1966, p. 8.

and only 34 from women.’<sup>186</sup> The other letter chosen, from Gwen B. Larwood of Liverpool, stressed that ‘It seems that there are not enough women around of capability and experience.’<sup>187</sup> Both letters stress the lack of female applicants or their lack of experience and seem to miss the point of the original article. It was intended to incite the drive of women to apply in the first place and not to take the lack of available positions without comment.

While one might expect *The Guardian* to be firmly on the side of feminists, the greatest change in discourses of feminism within this peak in coverage came from *The Times*. In an article ran in late July, Rose Kinson took on the label of ‘feminist’ in an interview with Mollie Batten – cited as the ‘first and only woman lecturer at the Oxford University Business Summer School.’<sup>188</sup> Though seemingly chained to feminism in the historic ‘first-wave’ sense, the article acknowledges that times were changing. Rather than be relegated to the status of ‘second-class citizens in business, in the church, and often in law,’ Miss Batten argued instead that ‘we must all use our resources regardless of our sex.’<sup>189</sup> An interview with Stormont Mancroft was, however, the most illuminating and important article regarding ‘feminism’ during this peak in coverage. Although he disagreed with ‘almost everything that Edith Summerskill says,’ and that ‘she will keep behaving as if she were still in the days of suffragettes,’ he believed ‘in having women in every field of public life. The only professions which I think are still closed to them are the Stock Exchange and the Church and I don’t see why they shouldn’t be in those too.’<sup>190</sup> While the article also pointed out Lord Mancroft’s own personal idiosyncrasies – his preference for a male doctor for ‘personal’ issues and ‘a deep and burning loathing and hatred of seeing men ballet dancers prancing around in tights’ – the author, Stella King, was keen to stress the overall substance of Lord Mancroft’s personal beliefs regarding women’s rights; that

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<sup>186</sup> ‘Letters to the Editor,’ *The Guardian*, 3 March 1966, p. 8.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> ‘Endorsed: by a lecturer,’ *The Times*, 28 July 1966, p. 15.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Stella King, ‘Lord Mancroft,’ *The Times*, 2 August 1966, p. 13.

‘women must be judged by ability, not feminine tricks.’<sup>191</sup> This marked evolution in male opinion of feminism and women’s rights in general, moving towards social equality, is particularly important to the concept of sexual revolution; a topic which must be evaluated by changes in both female and male opinion.

### Britain – 1967

Although not considered a peak in coverage, 1967 was nevertheless one of the most important years during the period under study in terms of the changes to the discourses surrounding feminism and women’s rights. It was ‘transitional,’ meaning that while there was an important evolution of rhetoric in discourses of feminism and feminists leading towards a profound shift in sexual norms and mores, a profound shift or revolutionary moment did not occur.

In the article ‘A Woman’s Place: In My View,’ Mary Holland virtually summarised the thesis of Betty Friedan’s ‘*The Feminine Mystique*.’ She purposefully engaged with others from her own age group and found that many women – though not all – were those who ‘found that marriage is not the all fulfilling destiny they expected.’<sup>192</sup> In her further inquiries she learned that responses from men regarding this issue included ‘Surely all that emancipation stuff is rather old hat?’ and the derogatory undertones attached to the phrase ‘a feminist like you.’<sup>193</sup> The connotations of feminism within this portion of the discourse present it as pejorative at worst or outdated at best. Following this somewhat disheartening summary she changed track to include discussion of a report about women in ‘top jobs’ and espoused the view that ‘there is no evidence that anyone wants a dramatic shifting of roles. The prospect of dominating

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Mary Holland, ‘A Woman’s Place: In My View,’ *The Observer*, 18 June 1967, p. 8.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

women and emasculated men is as horrifying to women as to men.’ Such bounding of the limits of the discourse was not exceptional to those views previously expressed within the British quality press. However, at the conclusion of the article, Mary Holland was keen to reclaim the label ‘feminist,’ stating:

‘A “feminist like myself” must feel that at the moment women’s need is greater. Women don’t need to be educated for “marriage” or for “a career” but to be taught that they are individuals with one whole lifetime to live and a whole range of talents to exploit. The parable of the talents does, presumably, apply to both sexes.’<sup>194</sup>

This departure from previous characterisations of ‘feminism’ or ‘feminist’ is extremely important. It joins the concept of social equality with feminism more explicitly than any previous article in the British quality press and sets new limits for the overall discourse.

Another article that was extremely important to both the label ‘feminism’ and the concept of ‘sexual revolution’ was the eponymous article by Margaret Drabble. The article discusses social equality and notes that ‘Education, freedom to work, equal pay and personal and social equality did not mean much when they could be negated by the arrival of one small unintended baby.’<sup>195</sup> Although limiting itself to discussing emancipation within the context of heterosexual relationships, Margaret Drabble states emphatically that ‘Emancipation is now a reality, and we ought to be entering on the golden age of adult sexual equality and companionship that feminists fought for.’<sup>196</sup> But Drabble went further than previous articles and detailed her views on how marriage must evolve as well as questioning the longevity of the institution itself. Although falling short of advocating for full libertinism, Drabble’s assertions demonstrate a distinct definition for the concept of ‘sexual revolution’ yet place ‘feminism’ and ‘feminists’ within a past tense.

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Margaret Drabble, ‘The sexual revolution,’ *The Guardian*, 11 October 1967, p. 8.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid. NB: This quotation was printed in bold, italicised text above the article title to draw attention to it.

In a direct connexion with the women's movement in the United States, the article 'They'll be happy when alimony's abolished,' by Joyce Egginton elucidates the 'new' definition of feminism even further than previous articles. The article clearly argues that American women are 'among the most emancipated in the world' and were 'mounting a new feminist movement, aimed at winning full sexual equality.'<sup>197</sup> Unlike other articles – especially those concerned with British interpretations of feminism – the American feminists had clear aims beyond a vague notion of social equality. To put it another way, American feminists were, in the gaze of the British press, decidedly goal-oriented. The article detailed these goals, including 'the right to virtually any kind of job...the end of...requiring pregnant employees to resign, 'and 'full income-tax deduction of child-care expenses for working mothers.'<sup>198</sup> Egginton identifies these 'new feminists' and their organization 'NOW (National Organisation for Women)' in a largely positive light and was keen to note that while there was a generation gap within the group it was not detrimental to their aims, rather the opposite in fact.<sup>199</sup> The final point of this article is particularly important to note. Rather than concluding with her profile of Betty Friedan or NOW's political agenda for the 1968 election cycle, Egginton acutely points out that the ultimate goal of NOW was the 'abolition of alimony,' which the organisation 'feels...is often discriminatory against men, but that until women have equal earning power, it is necessary.'<sup>200</sup> Such an inclusion of how the social order affected men unfairly was a new concept coming from a feminist standpoint and is a striking example of how newspaper coverage of the American feminist movement impacted the British press and indeed British conception of feminism.

Coverage of feminism in *The Times* also demonstrated a significant shift in how feminism was portrayed and discussed in the quality press throughout 1967. In a short profile

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<sup>197</sup> Joyce Egginton, 'They'll be happy when alimony's abolished,' *The Observer*, 17 December 1967, p. 6.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.



of Baroness Edith Summerskill in April, *The Times* characterised feminism as playfully adversarial. The author of the article described Baroness Summerskill as an ‘ardent feminist’ and noted that she ‘declined to say whether she used her womanly wiles in politics.’<sup>201</sup> This commentary was immediately punctuated by a scenario in which Baroness Summerskill pointed at a ‘prominent Peer’ and a direct quote where called him “...that handsome man over there,” to which the unnamed Peer responded “Now what are you after, Edith?”<sup>202</sup> This levity, coupled with a virtual manifesto of feminism in 1967, constituted a strategy of ‘charm and disarm.’ The author intended to establish feminism (or at least the variety of feminism championed by Baroness Summerskill) as serious political fodder with a charismatic spokesperson. While the article began with ‘rock cakes for tea,’ it ended with Baroness Summerskill stating emphatically that ‘The situation where a man goes to work and his wife stays at home “is just convention...”’ and that “Men must be taught at school that real men give a hand in the house.”<sup>203</sup> Such juxtaposition of serious political campaigning and light-hearted human interest was a new direction for the quality press in Britain when discussing feminism.

Continuing the vein of covering prominent female political figures, *The Times* published a profile of Alma Birk, Baroness Birk, which discussed her ascension to the upper house of Parliament as well as her feminist ideology. The article was diligent in noting that Baroness Birk was associate editor of the magazine *Nova*.<sup>204</sup> She, like other feminists portrayed in the quality press in 1967 considered herself to be a new type of feminist and differentiated herself from what could be called first-wave feminists by stating that “Writing for women

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<sup>201</sup> ‘Merry-go-Round,’ *The Times*, 17 April 1967, p. 7.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> NB: In 2006, *The Times* published an article, which lamented the failure of *Nova* in 1975. The author, Kate Muir, extolled the virtues of its format and feminist content. Kate Muir, ‘The Dark Ages,’ *The Times*, 22 April 2006, p. 9.

only would be preaching to the converted. Anyway I believe that to be an old-fashioned feminist today would be stepping up the sex war and putting us back to segregation.”<sup>205</sup>

*The Times* also covered Dr Shirley Summerskill, daughter of Baroness Summerskill, and an MP in her own right. The article from December 1967 discussed her appointment as Britain’s delegate to the United Nations Status of Women Commission to be held in February 1968. Of particular note was her assertion that “‘It’s very important to remember that women don’t end at Dover...One tends to look at one’s own country, but millions of women all over the world are far worse off.’”<sup>206</sup> While previous articles acknowledged the discriminatory conditions experienced by women, it was rare to see the political establishment address it with such candour. The article also continued the trend of differentiating feminism from its origins. Dr Summerskill’s definition of feminism was slightly different than her mother’s. The article characterised it thus: ‘Dr Summerskill owns to being a feminist, but dislikes the term. “I’d rather say I was ‘conscious of discrimination.’” She also drew attention to the lack of women MPs by stating ‘In Parliament there are rows and rows of trousered [sic]legs, and only the occasional woman. You just can’t miss it.’<sup>207</sup>

Although there were instances where opinion and discourse surrounding feminism and feminists were decidedly old-fashioned, harkening back to the days of winning the vote and the militant and bellicose tactics employed by suffragettes, the balance of coverage during 1967 signalled a significant transition towards a more second-wave definition of feminism. Key are the rhetorical changes that entered the discourse and subsequently shaped it. Letters and articles focused on socio-political-economic equality and employed language that softened the impact upon traditional norms and mores by the advancement of women. The connotations of the word ‘emancipation’ evoke liberation over freedom; an important distinction, and new for quality

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<sup>205</sup> Valerie Knox, 'Latest Ladies of the House,' *The Times*, 7 August 1967, p. 9.

<sup>206</sup> PHS, 'The Times Diary,' *The Times*, 20 December 1967, p. 6.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

press discourses of feminism. The increase in the rhetoric of greater freedoms, as evidenced from the interviews of Stormont Mancroft and Baroness Edith Summerskill points toward an increasing pace of the intersection of these concepts in the context of quality press discourses of feminism.

### Britain – 1968

Where 1967 was a transitional year in the quality press coverage and discussion of feminism, 1968 marked a slight backlash to the progress made the previous year, yet the balance of coverage had decidedly shifted towards discussing feminism in a positive light and firmly within a second-wave characterisation of political and social attitudes.

In February of 1968, *The Guardian* ran articles that seemed to contradict the progressive and ground-breaking articles from the previous year. The first article by *Guardian* Women's Page editor Mary Stott profiled the Six Point Group and some of its members. In a telling juxtaposition, the article dealt with the on-going issue of generation gap within feminist societies and in the social discourse in general. The article began with the quote "Feminist?...What is feminist? I LOVE men."<sup>208</sup> Stott quoted Mrs Hazel Hunkins Hallinan, chairman of the Six Point Group and a veteran of first-wave campaigns for the vote. Mary Stott focused the body of the article on the focus of organisations like the Six Point Group, which Mrs Hunkins Hallinan described as 'mopping up' and 'nibbling.'<sup>209</sup> For first-wave feminists, 'mopping up' was removing 'the vestiges of legal and professional handicaps,' such as equal guardianship of children and medical school admissions.<sup>210</sup> 'Nibbling' was for things like equal pay; she noted that 'If the Bank of England's women clerks drew equal pay, wouldn't the big

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<sup>208</sup> Mary Stott, 'Mary Stott talking about people in February,' *The Guardian*, 6 February 1968, p. 7.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

five (or four) have to follow suit?’<sup>211</sup> Though the article made interesting points regarding still-to-be-addressed social inequalities it did not adequately deal with the younger generation’s conception of feminism as articles from previous years. Additionally, the term ‘feminist’ was not exactly palatable to first-wave feminists or at least those women who would have called themselves such forty years before. Another article from February 1968 criticised the contemporary feminist movement regarding gender role definitions. The author of the article, Gillian Tindall, called out proponents of conclusions drawn by unnamed persons, including general unhappiness and the downside of emancipation in all areas of life. Tindall asserted ‘I think the person who holds this view can never have given serious thought to the real nature of the frustrations and sufferings which women in other eras were expected to face and did.’<sup>212</sup> Deliberately stirring the metaphorical pot, the article concludes with a pointed excoriation: ‘...contemporary heart-searchings about motherhood versus career, all the Captive Wifery, Suburban Neurosis and the other topics of pop psychology, are, in the final analysis, luxury problems. Too excusive a pre-occupation with present discontents suggest not sensitivity but the reverse, an inability perceive life except in terms of one’s theoretical sexual function.’<sup>213</sup> The class-conscious narrative presented to the reader frames feminism in a more practical and personal sense than many of the articles published in the quality press. It is important to consider that such a critique of feminism was largely absent from much of the discourse on either side of the Atlantic at the time.<sup>214</sup>

*The Times* early on in 1968 also seemed to backslide with regards to how it portrayed feminism and feminists. In a rare front-page article that spent column inches on feminism and feminist concerns, the author, Christopher Warman, summarised the golden jubilee celebration

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Gillian Tindall, 'Nineteenth-century blues,' *The Guardian*, 26 February 1968, p. 7.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> NB: The themes of this article would later be taken up by feminists in the United States, particularly by women of colour, such as Angela Davis et al.

of the women's suffrage in a contradictory manner. On the one hand, attendees were described as having a 'triumphant mood;' on the other hand, female speakers were described as having 'harangued and cajoled the audience with demands.'<sup>215</sup> Despite the tone of the commentary, the article could not discount the progress still to be made with regard to women's issues. The author noted with some amusement that 'Mr. Heath, much to his surprise, found himself in agreement with the Prime Minister. Anomalies existing because of sex must be got rid of, he said.'<sup>216</sup> To have both sides of the political aisle in agreement about anything, and to have the press report it so, is significant. Though they might disagree about specific policies or initiatives to address feminist concerns and complaints, agreement in principle was and remains noteworthy.

Although generally more conservative in political and social bias, the most significant article regarding sexual revolution and women's rights appeared in *The Times* in December of 1968. Part of the 'Merry Go Round' column, the profile of Phyllis and Eberhard Kronhausen was a critical indictment of sexual attitudes in Anglophone countries couched in a sales pitch for their new book. The second section of the column, and decidedly the more important of the two, was a profile of Midge Mackenzie and her experiences documenting feminism on both sides of the Atlantic. For Midge, 'the feminists themselves alarm[ed] her.'<sup>217</sup> But perhaps the most telling quote came as a characterisation of feminists and their goals. Ms Mackenzie noted that "I have the feeling that American women are very different from the English. They're going after all the external goals – money, power, status – whereas English women are struggling to discover their own personalities, their own internal existence."<sup>218</sup> The dichotomy presented here is very interesting, as 1968 is widely regarded in the historiography of the period as a defining year for second-wave feminism. This commentary that separates the two

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<sup>215</sup> Christopher Warman, 'Equality not yet won, say women,' *The Times*, March 28, 1968, p. 1.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> 'Merry-go-round,' *The Times*, 30 December 1968, p. 13.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

movements in terms of goals, method, and attitude, is extremely interesting. However, at the same time, she agreed with Betty Friedan that ‘most women’s lives are tragic dead ends.’<sup>219</sup> This simultaneous agreement with the founding mother of second-wave feminism in the United States indicates that American influence upon British conceptions of feminism were inextricably linked.

### Britain – 1970

Historians and feminist contemporaries regard 1970 as the dawn of second-wave feminism in Britain.<sup>220</sup> As is clear from the above evidence, this is not strictly correct. It may be more correct to say that 1970 was the year in which second-wave feminists found their collective voice and left first-wave feminism behind. Quality press coverage from 1970 demonstrates this unity of voices more clearly than in previous years.

Jill Tweedie framed the conversation regarding current feminist thought as cyclical, noting the parallels between the nineteenth century women’s movement and the contemporary aims of feminist activists. In her article ‘The Schizophrenic Sex’ she acknowledges the role of Betty Friedan and the American feminist activists in articulating the debate noting ‘attractive, amusing lot they are too – not at all the riddled old hags of so much wishful thinking.’<sup>221</sup> She was also encouraged by the efforts of men who eschewed the ‘irritating Edwardian-type gentlemen who chew your ears and tell you they love you just the way you are, which being translated to “know they place.”’<sup>222</sup> Instead, these men were ‘determined to prove to women

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Anna Coote and Beatrix Campbell, *Sweet freedom : the struggle for women's liberation* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1987), p. 20 and Michelene Wandor, *Once a Feminist: Stories of a Generation* (London, 1990), pp. 58, 72, 109, 113.

<sup>221</sup> Jill Tweedie, 'The schizophrenic sex,' *The Guardian*, 2 February 1970, p. 9.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

that their feminine consciousness is not only valuable but very much to be emulated by men.<sup>223</sup> Tweedie's rhetoric is an evolution of that espoused by earlier commentary by leading British feminists. Rather than wishing for male support or saying it was needed, Tweedie's comments explicitly state that such views were now reality. This is an especially interesting point within the broader study of feminism and sexual revolution as it acknowledges a marked advance in the prevalence of discourses of freedom.

The article "'Hell-bent' on women's liberation" regarding the Ruskin College conference at Oxford portrays the women's movement in Britain in a much more radical light than Jill Tweedie did only one month previously. Regarded as the dawn of the women's movement in Britain, the Ruskin College conference has been enshrined in feminist histories as being of paramount importance. The quality press narrative from *The Observer* paints them as 'young, violent, radical and very attractive...'<sup>224</sup> The author, Mary Holland, draws concrete parallels between feminist organisations in the United States as well as highlighting the history of feminist organisations in Britain. This explicit link between both movements highlights similarities as well as differences – particularly the militancy of the conference attendees. The conference was summarised as '...these apparently liberated girls are...advocating what looks like a new ghetto for women, albeit one of radical feminist activity, and why they do not see their path in more generalised political action.'<sup>225</sup> This summary by a traditional or establishment media journalist is quite telling, as the picture it paints is in direct conflict with feminist remembrance of the same events. In spite of this, Holland ended the article on a high note by quoting Audrey Wise (interviewed by Michelene Wandor) "'I don't want to be an equal economic unit any more than I want to be a decoration or a drudge. I want women's liberation to be a movement for people as people whether they are women or men.'<sup>226</sup> A characterisation

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Mary Holland, 'Hell-bent on women's liberation,' *The Observer*, 1 March 1970, p. 3.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

of the dawn of women's liberation as 'radical' and as 'feminist' clearly defines the author's viewpoint as well as the newspaper's viewpoint regarding rhetoric and action that fell outside the acceptable norm for women as a group. Neither felt that this advance was acceptable, falling into discourses of liberation rather than freedom, though rhetoric promoting equality, or freedom was praised.

The British quality press reported on American feminist triumphs in 1970, from the approval of the Equal Rights Amendment or ERA in the United States Congress to the feminist march that shut down the streets of New York City. Both *The Guardian* and *The Times* portrayed the event as being at the forefront of the 'sexual revolution.' Adam Raphael, correspondent for *The Guardian*, wrote under the title 'Bold as bras,' noting that many men supported the demonstration. An exception was Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia who was quoted describing the leaders of the women's liberation movement as "'a small band of bra-less bubble-heads.'"<sup>227</sup> Additionally, Raphael characterized the events as 'the day's sexual revolution.'<sup>228</sup>

Writing in *The Times*, Michael Knipe titled his article 'The day mother went on strike.'<sup>229</sup> Whereas *The Guardian*'s coverage was condensed, *The Times* uncharacteristically devoted several more column inches to the national day of strikes and protests. The author began his article with a quote from Emmeline Pankhurst, one of the best known British suffragettes: "'Trust in God. She will provide.'"<sup>230</sup> The tone evoked by this quote was at odds with the rest of the article, which exhibited thinly veiled contempt for the women's liberation movement while simultaneously agreeing that many of its demands were entirely reasonable. Unlike *The Guardian*, Knipe's article outlined the three main demands of the women's liberation movement: 'free abortions, free 24-hour child care centres, and equal opportunities

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<sup>227</sup> Adam Raphael, 'Bold as bras,' *The Guardian*, 28 August 1970, p. 3.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Michael Knipe, 'The day mother went on strike,' *The Times*, 26 August 1970, p. 8.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.



in jobs and education.<sup>231</sup> Despite this frank and open airing, the article disparaged many of the ‘militants’ attitudes and actions. This lack of respect was demonstrated most clearly in this comment by the author: ‘With a delicious lack of logic, other fervent feminists have given up their married surnames and replaced them by their mother’s or grandmother’s last names.’<sup>232</sup> Such a comparison between these two newspapers for the same event is extremely interesting. The coverage displays characteristic political and social bias, yet the lack of coverage by *The Guardian* indicates a level of normalcy, or at least greater acceptance of the women’s liberation movement, using fewer column inches where *The Times* was keen to highlight every oddity or extreme comment no matter the source. This dichotomy based purely on political biases illustrates the ongoing conflict between discourses of freedom versus liberation; there was at this point, a more equal balance in prevalence of discourses rather than mere dismissal of liberation in favour of freedom. Further, the journalists responsible for the British coverage of the American women’s march were male, and in the case of Michael Knipe’s work, gender bias can be easily observed. The demands or goals of the women’s liberation movement seemed reasonable to Knipe, yet his own conception of women’s liberation as a movement or of the members of that movement, led him to employ a tone that was pejorative – an interesting contradiction.

Other articles appearing in 1970 in the British quality press highlighted extreme positions taken by feminists and rather than dismissing them outright, engaged with them in a scholarly manner. Jill Tweedie took on radical American feminist Ti-Grace Atkinson’s assertion that “‘Love has to be destroyed. It’s an illusion that people care for each other. Friendship is reciprocal, love isn’t.’”<sup>233</sup> In a half-page article underneath a Madonna-like portrait of Germaine Greer, Tweedie interrogated this statement by cross-examining the writing

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Jill Tweedie, 'Good-bye love: WOMAN'S GUARDIAN,' *The Guardian*, 28 September 1970, p. 9.

of Henry de Montherlant, whom she characterised as a ‘misogynist.’<sup>234</sup> Montherlant was quoted: ‘*Je connais bien l’amour. C’est un sentiment pour lequel je n’ai pas d’estime. D’ailleurs il n’existe pas dans la nature: il est une invention des femmes.*’<sup>235</sup> Loosely translated, the text reads ‘I know love. It is a feeling for which I have no esteem. Besides it does not exist in nature: it is an invention of women.’ Rather than apologise for feminists, Tweedie sought justification and positioned *The Guardian* to act as a moderate influence for ‘second-wave’ feminism and women’s liberation by charting a middle ground palatable to its own readers as well as the public at large. She ended the article by disagreeing with Atkinson using the poetry of James Shirley:

‘James Shirley, writing of the glories of blood and state, says sceptre and crown must tumble down and in the dust be equal made with the poor crooked scythe and spade. Mr Shirley was referring to death but love, too, is a great equaliser – you never know who you’re going to meet. A massive dose of it is like a near-fatal illness – on recovery you find every last bodily molecule subtly shifted, like ECT it shocks you out of a groove and into a deeper understanding of poetry, painting, and people.’<sup>236</sup>

This type of assertion was typical of *The Guardian*’s approach to engagement with feminist issues throughout the early 1970s. This type of article helped to position *The Guardian* as a voice of liberation within the broader discourse on the subject, however, one that moderated more radical impulses through softer rhetoric.

Mary Stott also used her influence at *The Guardian* to chart a middle ground for feminism in the early 1970s. Stott examined the more radical feminist viewpoints, including those of Eva Figes, Germaine Greer and Brigid Brophy, advocating for the abolition of the institution of marriage in late 1970. She acknowledged that some points of their arguments had merit, stating ‘I agree with the feminists that “dependent wifehood” is an out-of-date

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

conception. But dependent motherhood is another story.<sup>237</sup> She was particularly critical of Greer regarding childcare; ‘She [Greer] is, of course talking off the top of her head. Children are not items of furniture to be allocated as seems most convenient and equitable.’<sup>238</sup> At the same time she praises Eva Figes noting that ‘...to achieve emotional security, human beings, including children, need financial security.’<sup>239</sup> Stott concluded her article by stating that ‘I rather think that what I mean by being “liberated” is being emotionally secure, and it has been my experience at least that to achieve this two heads and hearts are better than one.’<sup>240</sup> Although out of context this motherly or even grandmotherly tone might seem to be patronising, Mary Stott used the power of her age and experience to influence readers. Her long tenure of fifteen years as editor of the Women’s page of *The Guardian* speaks to her ability to navigate the currents of social, political, and administrative changes to provide a consistent voice by and for women and especially by and for feminism.<sup>241</sup> In this example, the actions of Mary Stott were analogous to Robespierre, dispatching the *indulgents* and the *enragés* of traditional values and the most radical of women’s liberationists respectively.

*The Times*, despite the negative reaction to the day of feminist action in New York, was uncharacteristically sympathetic to feminist voices throughout the year. In January, the newspaper published a letter that while concise, offered a full-throated defence of feminism as well as a subtle castigation of *The Times*’ own editorial choices. Victoria Green wrote that Julian Critchley’s commentary in an article published on 28 January 1970 were ‘a melodramatic and insulting reaction to feminism rather than a review of the programme A Woman’s Place.’<sup>242</sup> She went further, stating ‘Feminists want economic and social equality, they do not want to “rob the male of his aggression”; they are, however, sick and tired of being

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<sup>237</sup> Mary Stott, 'Is marriage worth saving?,' *The Guardian*, 17 December 1970, p. 9.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> NB: Mary Stott was also the first editor in this position.

<sup>242</sup> V. Green, 'Quest for equality,' *The Times*, 30 January 1970, p. 11.

forced to subsidize it.<sup>243</sup> While *The Times* had certainly published rebukes of its journalists and its editorial choices previously, this particular incident is curious as the other letter published that day on the same issue criticised Mr Critchley's assertions from the right side of the socio-political spectrum. Mrs Elaine Beale said of Critchley's article 'I was appalled – which is an understatement.'<sup>244</sup> She expounded the virtues of being a wife and mother and was keen to assert that 'Marriage and parenthood is in itself a career... Longing to get away from a responsibility that one has taken on is a form of escapism – and surely one enters marriage and parenthood with one's eyes open.'<sup>245</sup> Unity from both sides of the socio-political spectrum, though admittedly not from both genders, is still quite rare; that *The Times* chose to publish these letters, and not to include any defence of Mr Critchley's remarks is also noteworthy. Here too, *The Times* took on a role that was in effect, if not intention, one where the most traditional values are dismissed from the discourse by women who acknowledged their political differences and argued for a needed transformative effect upon social norms and mores; each woman arguing for liberation in a context of freedom.

In the article 'The feminine feminist' by Harriet Chare, a profile of Eva Figes paints her as an independent, brilliant, single woman – and all the happier for it. Though Mary Stott took issue with some of her views in *The Guardian* later in 1970, *The Times* published this commentary, which stressed the reasonable nature of her arguments. In possibly the most explicit critique of modern social norms and mores, Figes was quoted as stating "My own battles have made me realize just how hypocritical the system is. The modern climate seems to say that if you've satisfied your woman sexually you don't have to give her equal pay or social equality." It sounds a reasonable criticism.<sup>246</sup> Her views on marriage, later criticised by Mary Stott, were summarized thus: "I can contemplate living with someone, especially as the

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Elaine N. Beale, 'A Woman's Place,' *The Times*, 30 January 1970, p. 11.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Harriet Chare, 'The feminine feminist,' *The Times*, 22 June 1970, p. 13.

children grow up, because otherwise I could become very isolated. But legal marriage? I just don't see the point.”<sup>247</sup> Such opinion, published in the centre-right *Times*, was certainly very different from the pro-marriage articles published in the centre-left *Guardian* only ten years previously. This, more than many other metrics demonstrates the unique discussion of social norms and mores within British society and the narrative presented by the quality press as well as the role of the quality press in providing the space for such debate to occur.

The Miss World pageant competition was a focus of feminist ire in the latter part of 1970. *The Times* ran an editorial that fully engaged with feminist priorities, yet much like *The Guardian*, carved out a middle ground for feminist aims amongst the rhetoric. The editorial began by using inflammatory language “a degrading and debasing spectacle” (not Mrs. Whitehouse speaking, but the Young Liberal leader of the anti-Miss World demonstration)...<sup>248</sup> It continued, ‘Once again an activity traditionally regarded as quite harmless by most people has been denounced as an offensive exploitation of a wronged community. Then it was race: now it is sex.’<sup>249</sup> By placing the discussion of sexual norms and mores within a rhetorical paradigm that includes discussion of evolution on racial matters, *The Times* elevated the discourse surrounding feminism and ‘sexual revolution’ to a similar level of discussion prompted by racial issues.<sup>250</sup> The editorial devoted one third of its allocated space to outline the views of Kate Millet – a first. Of great importance were the principles of ‘patriarchy – “the most pervasive ideology of our culture,”’ as well as ‘inequality in job-opportunities, the prevalence of female sexual inhibition, and the commercial exploitation of feminine sex-appeal.’<sup>251</sup> Although the editorial engaged with Millet and her vision for women’s liberation and feminism, it was firm in its denial of ‘profound cultural revolution, shattering

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> ‘Miss World And Women's Liberation,’ *The Times*, 21 November 1970, p. 13.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> NB: This taking place only two years after Enoch Powell’s infamous ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech is all the more reason to consider how seriously the newspaper and editorial staff took this issue.

<sup>251</sup> ‘Miss World And Women's Liberation,’ p. 13.

the traditional family...<sup>252</sup> While it recognized the ‘potential attractiveness of the neo-feminist ideology...’ the editorial staff advocated it was ‘...hard to support the view of women as an oppressed majority moving towards a revolutionary deliverance.’<sup>253</sup> Rather, the editorial, shut down the radical feminism of the women’s liberation movement asserting the abolition of ‘conventions and traditions which reduce opportunities for women,’ while stating unequivocally that ‘the real criticism of the Miss World competition should also be applied to the Women’s Liberation movement: that they both exalt an essentially functionless feminism.’<sup>254</sup> This harsh admonition served as the reverse side of the coin of more moderate editorial positions by *The Guardian*. Nevertheless, it served to place the newspaper as committed to and constructing a version of feminism that moderated elements of feminist discourse as well as providing an ideological space for sexual revolution to occur.

### Britain – 1975

International Women’s Year was an oddity in many ways during this period of ‘sexual revolution.’ On the one hand, the fact there was an international consensus to devote an entire year towards women and women’s issues, supports a thesis in favour of ‘sexual revolution.’ On the other hand, the lack of momentum sustained in subsequent years towards women’s issues and particularly the fracturing of second-wave feminism tends to support the opposite. The discourses in the British quality press continued to exhibit themes and rhetoric developed in previous years, one of moderation with regard to feminism and women’s issues. The year also marked the ascendancy of Margaret Thatcher and the quality press narrative though initially optimistic, turned sour.

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

The rise of Margaret Thatcher as leader of the opposition in Parliament provided an interesting element to coverage of International Women's Year 1975. It was the first time a woman had the realistic opportunity to become leader of a major political party. However, perhaps even more interesting than the mere political implications of her rise to power were the social consequences. Opinions flooded letters to the editor and op-eds speculated on the future with a woman holding major political power. The first of these to address the consequences to feminism was published by *The Guardian* in February. Pat Barr, Sandra Brown, and Carolyn Faulder from Blackheath in southeast London wrote that they felt '...though Mrs Thatcher herself has yet to acknowledge it, that her election would have been most unlikely had it not been for the development of an active and broadly based women's movement during the last five years.'<sup>255</sup> This is an interesting thesis, but unfortunately difficult to prove either way. It is very interesting that these women rejected the claim that '...liberation can only be achieved under socialism...' and used Thatcher's election to argue strongly for a middle ground for feminism.<sup>256</sup> These writers were keen to assert that 'many of its [women's movement] members...hail Mrs Thatcher's appointment as a victory for feminism in the true sense of that word.'<sup>257</sup> Mary Stott, too, called her election to the Conservative Party's leadership 'revolutionary,' and admired her femininity, crediting her appearance and especially her '...pretty, very photogenic, and practically indelible smile...' as one of the driving forces of her political success.<sup>258</sup> Stott tempered her enthusiasm by noting Thatcher's lack of commentary on feminism or antidiscrimination. Although Mary Stott would have liked to see more activism for women, she acknowledged the self-sufficiency Thatcher built her reputation on and rather than disparage her, instead used her as a model stating '...the job of unmeritorious females who, unlike Mrs Thatcher have too often taken no for an answer...fight to see that our

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<sup>255</sup> 'Letters to the Editor: Aspects of Lib: voices in the wilderness,' *The Guardian*, 19 February 1975, p. 12.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Mary Stott, 'Maggie may,' *The Guardian*, 6 March 1975, p. 11.

daughters won't do the same.'<sup>259</sup> Such optimism was tempered by an opinion piece by journalist Marjorie Proops, best known as an 'agony aunt' of the popular press, published in *The Times* later in March. Proops contended the opposite of the women cited above, stating forcefully that 'Those who saw Margaret Thatcher's dramatic elevation to the top of the Tory pile as a great leap forward for women in this International Women's Year...are misguided in their applause for that they regard as a triumph for feminism.'<sup>260</sup> Proops went further, wondering of Thatcher's place on the front bench of the Commons and its impact upon women:

'Will it change their lifestyle in a flash – or in a year? Will it make their husbands kinder, their children less demanding, their chores easier, their sex-lives more fulfilling? Will they dream of glory on the front bench, musing, as they fantasize with the duster in their hands, that Margaret's achievement could be theirs too – especially if they live above the corner grocer shop?'<sup>261</sup>

Aside from these pointed questions, appearing in a newspaper generally considered friendly to the Conservative Party and its approach to governance and its policies, this article used Thatcher to consider larger implications for women, yet lacked the optimism her election had fostered in *The Guardian*. The voices of women, too, were divided, at the poles of optimism and realism – though absent from coverage of Thatcher framed with feminism and women's rights, were voices of men. Such absence, even from the Women's Page of *The Guardian* is indicative of evolutions in the discursive formation of the newspaper. If 'sexual revolution' can be understood as a debate between the opposing concepts of freedom and liberation, then the British quality press used Margaret Thatcher as a prop in an ongoing sexual revolution.

*The Guardian* outpaced *The Times* in its coverage of International Women's year, at least in terms of the coverage dedicated early on to the United Nations' conference. The

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Marjorie Proops, 'A year of propaganda that will do nothing for 'mere' women,' *The Times*, 19 March 1975, p. 9.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.



newspaper's opinion was more cognizant of the schism between Western nations (particularly Anglophone nations) and the rest of the world. The article 'Women gather together to look at their role' examined this cultural dissonance briefly. The author quoted Betty Friedan and other Western feminists who argued passionately for the autonomy of women as individuals. However, it noted that 'an African woman pointed out that the Western style nuclear family is hardly the only version that exists in the world.'<sup>262</sup> It was here that *The Guardian* pointed out the dangers of unrestrained feminist fervour and sought to pave the road of a middle ground by using editorial power to distance itself from the opinions of more radical feminists. Elizabeth Reed, advisor to the Prime Minister of Australia on women's affairs was quoted: 'If we're not careful...we'll find that IWY suddenly becomes one huge Mother's Day.'<sup>263</sup> This quotation, which Germaine Greer later quipped in her own op-ed for *The Times* was followed by a negative portrayal of Greer herself, the article noting she 'registered her total disgust over the tendency to associate women with their children.'<sup>264</sup> The early narrative of International Women's Year in the British quality press put the Western feminist movement on notice for being out of touch with the rest of the world. Radical ideas, or at least radical by the standards of women outside the Western mould, were less important than pragmatism, or doing the most for all women rather than distinctly first-world problems.

Margaret Forster echoed these same concerns in her article later in the summer of 1975, inaugurating the IWY conference in Mexico City. She was careful to note that she sympathized with the '...vast cohorts of women still living in the Stone Age...', while at the same time concentrating on the plight of the 'Educated Woman, sure of her rights and mostly getting them...'<sup>265</sup> Forster argued that delegates to the Mexico City conference should focus on the

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<sup>262</sup> Jane Rosen, 'Women gather together to look at their role,' *The Guardian*, 10 March 1975, p. 3.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Margaret Forster, 'Women of the world, you might,' *The Guardian*, 19 June 1975, p. 13.

...‘second species, in the hopes that...the others will eventually catch up.’<sup>266</sup> This clear line demarks the limits to the discourse that Forster, and by extension *The Guardian*, were willing to accept or indeed promote.

*The Guardian* also engaged with others in the feminist elite during 1975. Carol Dix interviewed Gloria Steinem, and bolstered the middle of the road approach so familiar to the British quality press. Dix noted that Steinem was unlike other feminists in that her appearance was unlike the stereotypes that had made their way across the Atlantic. Where many considered ‘New York-style feminists’ to be ‘frighteningly butch and terrifyingly liberated, Gloria is remarkably unusual. She still wears her hair long...blue-tinted glasses...wears pan-stick and pale pink lipstick. Whoever would have thought of the spokeswoman for feminism wearing pale pink lipstick?’<sup>267</sup> This juxtaposition of stereotype and reality, or at least reality in the eyes of the journalist, was a common rhetorical strategy employed throughout the period to advance moderate feminism. Dix also noted the Steinem’s professionalism and bona fides, the founding of *Ms. Magazine* and Steinem’s own feminist awakening. Like *The Guardian*, and *The Times*, Steinem advocated idealism tempered with pragmatism. Steinem noted of *Ms.*: ‘A magazine is easy. It’s passive and friendly. It drops through your door every month, so it’s no hard commitment.’<sup>268</sup> Concluding the article was a quote that echoed the quality press approach to feminism: ‘You don’t have to be an ogre to be a feminist and a success.’<sup>269</sup> This article clearly illustrated the direction *The Guardian* took on an ideological path that eschewed radical liberation in favour of greater freedom, while subtly advocating the ideal personal mien a woman should adopt to advance feminist opinions.

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Carol Dix, ‘She has been through the gamut of radical chic New York experience...’ *The Guardian*, 5 July 1975, p. 9.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

Also of particular note in the coverage of International Women's Year was an article by Dr Ann Oakley in *The Times*. Entitled 'Exploding the myths surrounding today's feminist woman,' the article argued unequivocally in favour of feminism and feminists. Like other regular columnists and editorial opinions, she sought to provide a middle ground, eschewing the chauvinist and the radical. Dr Oakley noted 'The feminist stereotype consists of a set of assumptions about the personality and life-style of people who call themselves feminists...not married...anti-children...' <sup>270</sup> She continued '...I've discovered that the image in the eye of the beholder has enormous power.' <sup>271</sup> It was this very image, the pejorative stereotype, that Dr Oakley as well as the editorial staff of *The Times* sought to combat through discourses surrounding and containing feminism, which continued throughout the year. The article 'Women's Movement' by Caroline Moorehead, spanning three columns and at a count of almost three thousand words reinforces the narrative of progress through the middle ground. Despite a quote calling women's liberation a 'revolutionary movement,' she was careful to emphasise that the movement '...progresses at the pace of the people who need change.' <sup>272</sup> The article also sought to reinforce the narrative that the feminist movement in Britain began at the Ruskin College conference in February 1970 and noted the four demands, present in every Women's Liberation Workshop newsletter: equal pay, equal opportunities in jobs and education, free contraception and abortion, and twenty-four hour nurseries for children under five. <sup>273</sup> Unlike many other articles Moorehead was careful to present a critique of news media, noting 'The media have traditionally, and rightly, been blamed for the poor image of the movement.' <sup>274</sup> This short statement, situated at the bottom of the second column is revolutionary itself. Like several other articles it remained self-conscious of the role the media

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<sup>270</sup> Dr Ann Oakley, 'Exploding the myths surrounding today's feminist woman,' *The Times*, 16 April 1975, p. 12.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Carline Moorehead, 'Women's movement,' *The Times*, 16 June 1975, p. 8.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Moorehead, 'Women's movement,' p. 8.

played in the social discourse surrounding the women's movement, yet placed the onus upon the media for its role in perpetuating the negative aspects of the movement, noting especially the 'proverbial bra burning.'<sup>275</sup> However, rather than blaming the popular press, Moorehead focused the blame on women's magazines and then segued into promoting women's organizations, including the Women's Institute and the Fawcett Society, contrasting the negative aspects of women's life in media with positive experiences provided by existing social frameworks. She concluded by stating that 'In the past five years, though, the women's movement has survived an ill-informed and ill-mannered campaign by the Press...made its voice heard...a message of some sort is getting across.'<sup>276</sup> The frank engagement with media narratives and the broadly changed social mores within the last few years marked a significant change in how the quality press, and especially *The Times*, framed feminism and the women's movement; it accepted elements of radical ideology favouring liberation by co-opting them into rhetoric and elements that favoured greater freedoms.

Late June and July 1975 proved to be highly influential to the evolution of the discourse surrounding feminism in the British quality press. It was the climax of progressive discourses, fierce optimism tempered by the vagaries of political economies. Germaine Greer took particular issue with International Women's Year. Her op-ed, also published by *The New York Times* on 9 May 1975, was filled with more radical viewpoints and constituted little more than a polemic on the state of feminism and women's liberation worldwide as well as the impotence of the United Nations in resolving the issues important to the movement and especially to Greer herself. Nevertheless, Greer remained resignedly pragmatic stating 'Our only way of controlling the situation is, in the way of United Nations egregiousness itself, to work for women's year and to swallow our gall in appearing to support it.'<sup>277</sup> *The Times*, in a historically

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

uncharacteristic editorial, yet much in line with the editorial trend of the year, echoed Greer's anger '...Greer, in her article on Wednesday, inveighed harshly and not altogether unfairly against the hypocrisy of a body where delegates are so often seen to endorse lofty principles of conduct that their countries are universally known to ignore.'<sup>278</sup> Despite such righteous indignation, *The Times* was careful to note that the situation of Western women was much better than women in developing nations: 'Whatever injustices the unliberated western housewife may feel she suffers, from the point of view of hungry peasants of either sex her felicity may appear almost indistinguishable from that enjoyed by her husband.'<sup>279</sup> This acknowledgement demonstrated a shift towards a backlash to feminism, justified by a comparison between Western nations and the rest of the world. Such dichotomy illustrates perfectly the role of the British quality press in participating in sexual revolution during the period. As a space for the ideological battle between discourses of freedom and liberation, *The Times* and *The Guardian/Observer* took clear ideological stances and moderated the opposing viewpoints.

While most articles in the remaining portion of the year remained pro-feminist, they lacked the passion found in the promise of International Women's Year. Susan Kedgley, writing in *The Times*, entitled her op-ed 'Rebellion is not enough to achieve the real aims of feminism.' Part introspection, part personal narrative, her article detailed the real obstacles she faced as a feminist in previous years and although she remained committed to feminism, she felt that '...the transformation and humanization of the individual and society – lay ultimately in the painful process of self-search, discovery, and transformation.'<sup>280</sup> This sort of introspective reflection and tempered activism came to dominate the coverage well throughout

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<sup>278</sup> 'The Un Conference On Women,' *The Times*, 20 June 1975, p. 19.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Susan Kedgley, 'Rebellion is not enough to achieve the real aims of feminism,' *The Times*, 5 November 1975, p. 9.

the remainder of the 1970s and signals the beginning of the next stage of sexual revolution: backlash.

The final article in *The Times* for International Women's Year was quietly triumphant, in contrast to the polemics against the public campaign after the summer of 1975. Caroline Moorehead ended the coverage of the year on a high note, dubbing 1975 'The year women were heard with dignity.'<sup>281</sup> Unlike Germaine Greer's mid-year polemic against the United Nations, Moorehead marked the progress of feminism and women's liberation worldwide in the context of progress made and still necessary reforms, noting that 'Western delegates returned home feeling that the main conference...was nothing other than United Nations waffle.'<sup>282</sup> Regardless of the pessimism, Moorehead ended her article, and the conversation for the year, by echoing the middle ground feminism so shrewdly argued for in the quality press narrative. She was careful to note that '...one thing is certain: as a topic of discussion, women and their rights have arrived, never to go away again...The need to eradicate sexism is a primary objective...'<sup>283</sup>

### Britain – 1976

Quality press coverage of feminism and feminists in the latter half of the 1970s in Britain was characterised by a re-emphasis of the revolutionary nature of the movement and examined the international nature of the movement with attention drawn to the Anglo-American connexions therein.

Two articles ran in *The Guardian* in July of 1976 were somewhat retrospective, but at the same time are brilliantly illuminative in that they lent authority to events of the previous

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<sup>281</sup> Carline Moorehead, 'The year women were heard with dignity,' *The Times*, 31 December 1975, p. 10.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

decade. Particularly important to consider is that the journalist in the first of these articles was careful to frame his words so that the entirety of the article is written as though he is only reporting events as opposed to advocating an editorial position. The article notes the ‘feminist movement, which began in 1965, can be regarded as a time when American women....started to realise just what powers they had to bring about the change so many of them claimed to need.’<sup>284</sup> The author, Simon Winchester, contended that ‘As far as achievements are concerned, the first would be the fact that women are, at last, reckoned by men to be a group worthy of equivalent, if not equal, treatment.’<sup>285</sup> This fine distinction is particularly significant. It acknowledges the full impact of sexual revolution implicitly, while explicitly acknowledging the role of feminism within the context of sexual revolution. The author also cited other ways in which women (in this case, American women) became ‘liberated.’ He noted that ‘The way one can tell is that she so clearly makes a more immediate contribution to the progress of her society – either by her words (Betty Ford) or her achievement (Carla Hills) or her persuasion (Gloria Steinem) or her legislative abilities (Bella Abzug, Shirley Chislm, Barbara Jordan).’<sup>286</sup> This is interesting as it considers both the nature of the movement as well as the actors within it. Further, it defines the way in which women were advanced by feminism or women’s liberation and a reciprocal nature of social equivalence – women benefited by liberation and also contributed to it.

The second article in *The Guardian* in July of 1976, authored by Mary Stott, examined the direct parallels between the women’s movements and feminism in the United States and Britain. Entitled ‘Mother of the revolution,’ the article served to highlight Betty Friedan’s contributions as the ‘...founding mother of the second great wave of the Women’s Movement...’<sup>287</sup> It is without doubt that Stott, a key player in both the British quality press and

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<sup>284</sup> Simon Winchester, 'The equivalent Society,' *The Guardian*, 2 July 1976, p. 16.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Mary Stott, 'Mother of the revolution,' *The Guardian*, 16 July 1976, p. 9.

British feminism, considered Friedan to be paramount to second-wave feminism, as demonstrated through the language of this article. In addition to the moniker of ‘founding mother,’ Stott characterised her as ‘a public heroine...,’ ‘Midwife to the birth of the women’s movement...’<sup>288</sup> In addition, the article dispels the bra-burning myths ‘To my knowledge no one in the American women’s movement ever really burned a bra.’<sup>289</sup> Most of the article was devoted to Friedan’s experiences as leader of the National Organization for Women or NOW, and the decline of the women’s movement in the United States. However, Stott was careful to draw parallels between the British and American movements. She clearly noted that the lack of leadership in the style of Friedan in the British movement was not necessarily a problem, stating ‘Is the women’s movement in this country under the same threat of doom as the American? Probably not.’<sup>290</sup> Stott noted that ‘...the lack of “organisation” in the conventional sense does not prevent their [women’s liberation workshops] from organising twice-yearly conferences attended by anything from a thousand to 1,800 women...’<sup>291</sup> Further, Stott was careful to include that ‘Members of the traditional organisations are not unfriendly; not even altogether put off by preoccupation with Lesbianism, by manhating, “scruffiness,” or “bad language.”’<sup>292</sup> This last inclusion could be interpreted as wishful thinking as some sources assign blame to the radicalisation of feminism, including Lesbian feminists.<sup>293</sup> However, along with the prognostications on behalf of British feminism, the more important aspect of the article cemented the links between the women’s liberation movement in the United States and Britain. The return to a known bias and coverage on the parts of both the two major quality newspapers in consideration of the discourses of feminism signals and end to a period of sexual revolution.

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Coote and Campbell, *Sweet freedom : the struggle for women's liberation* , p. 242.



Both acknowledge the profound changes that occurred within the preceding decade, but the profound shifts in discourses of freedom versus liberation had subsided.

### Britain – 1979

The end of the decade – 1979 – proved to be one of the most interesting years in the British quality press. Perhaps more accurate is the qualification that it was one of the most interesting years for *The Guardian* as *The Times* only returned results that employed feminism or women’s liberation as cliché or as a synonym for frivolity.

Treated almost as an afterthought, men’s liberation was the reverse side of the obverse of women’s liberation. With no coverage in *The Times*, *The Guardian* barely touched upon the concept, despite the tremendous burden imposed upon men by patriarchy. Jill Tweedie noted in an article from March 1979, that ‘There is a rundown of experiences within men’s groups that reaches, at times, a painful honesty and an article on men and feminism that has some fascinating things to say about the confusion and self-hatred some men feel at having to acknowledge that they are the oppressive sex while knowing just how much they oppress each other.’<sup>294</sup> Although long acknowledged by feminists, this sort of sentiment was rarely acknowledged publically, much less with the social clout of a major media outlet. Tweedie ended her article with the sentiment ‘Welcome, brothers.’<sup>295</sup> This inclusive language is important to the overall trend within the British quality press of constructing a middle ground between second-wave feminism and women’s liberation.

With the Conservative Party victorious in the 1979 general election, Margaret Thatcher once again entered the social discourse regarding women’s liberation and second-wave

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<sup>294</sup> Jill Tweedie, 'How can we turn our sons into men instead of machines?,' *The Guardian*, 15 March 1979, p.

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

feminism. However, unlike the mixed narrative of 1975, *The Guardian* did not pull any punches with its coverage. In the lead-up to the election the newspaper decided rather than attacking her personally (as the article alludes other publications had done) it questioned her policies with regards to women. Authors Angela Phillips and Jill Nichols impressed upon readers that Thatcher ‘...believes in incentives, healthy competition and standing on one’s own two feet.’<sup>296</sup> They then undercut her by stating her policies would amount to ‘...cutting back jobs in the public sector and it is women who depend most on those services.’<sup>297</sup> They conclude by noting ‘So to those who ask whether a victory for Thatcher would be a victory for women’s liberation we would say: she may be a woman, but that doesn’t make her a sister.’<sup>298</sup> Later articles doubled down on that sentiment. In a series of letters entitled ‘Nineteen Ways of Looking At MRS,’ one writer noted ‘It is a triumph for women, but a terrible dilemma for all non-Conservative feminists.’<sup>299</sup> Jill Tweedie echoed her colleagues on the ‘woman but not a sister’ epithet and went further stating Thatcher ‘...not a woman in any feminist sense,’ and asking the pointed and loaded question ‘...if Hitler had been Frau Hitler would you have voted for her? Could you have shelved anti-Semitism and looming militarism on the grounds that der Fuhrer had breasts?’<sup>300</sup> Characteristically, it was Thatcher who had the final word on the subject. Michael White quoted her in one of the last profiles of the future Prime Minister before the election; she stated ‘I like people who have ability, who do not run the feminist ticket too hard...People got on by virtue of their ability, not their sex...’<sup>301</sup> Thatcher’s victory can be interpreted as a blow to feminism, if not to women. Certainly, that was the impression advocated by the British quality press. The fact that Margaret Thatcher benefited from

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<sup>296</sup> Jill and Phillips Nicholls, Angela, 'Mrs Thatcher may be a woman, but that doesn't make her a sister,' *The Guardian*, 10 April 1979, p. 9.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> 'Nineteen Ways of Looking at MRS,' *The Observer*, 15 April 1979, p. 39.

<sup>300</sup> Jill Tweedie, 'Her policies will be forgotten, her sex remembered forever,' *The Guardian*, 26 April 1979, p.

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<sup>301</sup> Michael White, 'Thatcher deals with the libbers,' *The Guardian*, 27 April 1979, p. 32.

feminism and feminists is difficult to argue against. What is less difficult to argue against is that Thatcher benefited from a 'sexual revolution' that favoured discourses dedicated to preserving existing social order, only with greater freedoms and abjuring discourses that favoured liberation.

The final theme that emerged within the pages of *The Guardian* in direct connexion with feminism was its waning popularity or influence. Angela Phillips and Jill Nicholls acknowledged a distinct issue or overarching narrative within second-wave feminism in her column in March 1979. The article began "I'M NOT women's lib but..." is the preface to a million articles, speeches, and remarks about women.<sup>302</sup> This was illustrated in numerous articles throughout the period of study; however, it was not until this point that it was actively acknowledged. What remains fascinating though, is how Phillips and Nicholls responded to this issue, thereby lending it credence in a section of the newspaper, which was firmly positioned in favour of women's lib. They noted '...we are in the women's liberation movement and not ashamed to say so. We are writing not for the movement...but from it – from our own involvement and participation. We will be picking up also on the discontent which underlies that evasive "but."'<sup>303</sup> Important to note in this train of thought is the 'discontent,' because it became more common throughout 1979, as seen previously with the success of Margaret Thatcher. In a moment of self-awareness, *The Guardian* acknowledged that there was still resistance to feminism. A letter written by one John Warren accused Peter Cole of 'cheap flippancy,' arguing that he and by extension the quality press were parties to an agenda where '...homosexuals and feminists are the last minorities left that the Press feels free to ridicule.'<sup>304</sup> A final article that alluded to the disparagement of feminism was run in regards to abortion in November 1979. An unattributed author in *The Observer* commented that

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<sup>302</sup> Jill and Phillips Nicholls, Angela, 'Omen,' *The Guardian*, 27 March 1979, p. 7.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

<sup>304</sup> John Warren, 'Letters to the Editor,' *The Guardian*, 4 July 1979, p. 14.

‘...feminist groups, inclined to over-react, are not always popular...As an old hand who saw it on TV remarked sadly, “With friends like that, who needs enemies?”’<sup>305</sup> These examples are only the tip of a much larger print iceberg that allude to a larger backlash to feminism within society in general, despite the favourable coverage within *The Guardian* and *The Observer* overall since the beginning of the 1960s.

### Summary of British Coverage of Feminism

Changes concerning feminism in the discourse of the British quality press during the period from 1960 to 1979 were profound. The caution regarding employing the term feminist or feminism at the beginning of the period eventually gave way to its uninhibited use; this did not happen overnight, or without great reluctance on the part of the quality press. Throughout the early 1960s, discourse found within the quality press revealed a dysfunction in the fundamental social relations between men and women. The quality press carefully nurtured commentary on this dysfunction through article content and editorial policy and used it to transition from feminism as mere political equality towards fuller social equality. Careful and considered action on the part of the quality press aided in advancing the social discourse towards a ‘second-wave’ definition of feminism. A transformational year in Britain’s case was 1967, where discourses of both freedom and liberation began to appear together as opposed to discourses of freedom alone. The quality press also drew clear distinctions between the British and American experiences of feminism and were careful to tie the advance of feminism and women’s liberation to the concept of sexual revolution. Most importantly, the British quality press acted as a space for sexual revolution to play out and influenced it by charting a middle ground for feminism throughout the 1970s rather than advocating for a single body of discourse

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<sup>305</sup> ‘Trying to put the clock back,’ *The Observer*, 4 November 1979, p. 34.

on the issue. Even with International Women's Year and the rise of Margaret Thatcher to leadership of a major political party, the quality press on both sides of the political spectrum maintained the voices of the middle ground. Though acknowledging the importance of native British feminist work, the quality press clearly assigned ideological genesis to American feminists of the 'second wave' and Betty Friedan especially.

### Analysis of United States Primary Sources

Peaks in coverage also reveal discursive patterns within the quality press narratives surrounding discourses of feminism in the United States during this period. As with the coverage within the British quality press, this is not to discount elements within the discourse outside of the peaks chosen for analysis, but rather to provide a broad outline from which to analyse trends that appear within the text of the articles selected for inclusion within the chapter. For the United States, these peaks within the period of analysis occurred in 1960, 1962, 1966, 1968, 1970, and 1975. Just as in Britain, 1967 proved to be critical to the understanding of feminism in the American quality press, yet did not conform to a peak in coverage. In contrast, 1979 was considered a peak in coverage, but content did not offer any changes in the overall understanding of feminism in the American quality press.

#### United States – 1960

Unlike the British quality press, the American feminist narrative within the pages of the elite newspapers tended to eschew reliance upon past definitions of the term, except in establishing historical precedent. Instead, rhetoric surrounding feminism and women's rights trended towards an emphasis on modernity. There was a clear separation of current usage of

the terms in connexion with ‘first-wave’ feminism of the earlier part of the twentieth century and how people experienced how these terms and their related events concurrently. *The New York Times* did so with considerable lucidity with a humorous article by author Morton M. Hunt in July of 1960. The article was included in a supplement to the daily edition and employed caricatures of historical eras emphasizing the stereotypes of men and women within it. Included among these were the following: pre-history with the caption ‘The caveman found a wife a useful creature who did what she was told,’ classic antiquity ‘The wife was put upon and denied the company of men,’ the middle ages ‘She had no rights; her spouse was employed to rule ruthlessly,’ only yesterday (suffragettes and ‘first-wave’ feminists) ‘Wives (and women) battled for rights. They got them,’ and three others depicting ‘modern times.’<sup>306</sup> It is especially interesting to note the clear differentiation between the past and present made clear by these images. In the incarnations of the past the woman in each cartoon was frowning (with the notable exception of the chivalric couple of knight and lady) and the male appearing happy or authoritative. The characterisation of the suffragette was one of deception, the woman holding an equal rights placard while sneaking up behind the gentleman in his bowler hat. Those devoted to modern times all showed the woman in the more dominant position, expressing either happiness or authority while the man appeared hen-pecked or worried. These images were carefully selected to underscore the impact of the article entitled ‘And Now – It’s the Femininity’ with a subtitle of ‘Through the ages the wife’s role has changed until today, in law, she’s a person!’<sup>307</sup> The purpose of the article was to both inform the reader about the recent Supreme Court decision, in which the majority decision ruled a woman could be tried and convicted of conspiracy to commit a criminal act with her husband, as well as to draw the reader’s attention to the author’s other work, including ‘The Natural History of Love’ in which

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<sup>306</sup> Morton M Hunt, ‘And Now -- It’s the Femininity: Through the ages the wife’s role has...’ *The New York Times*, 31 July 1960, p. SM26.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

Morton M. Hunt 'examined 2,500 years of marriage.'<sup>308</sup> The author blended historicity with benign paternalism, using cherry-picked quotations and witticism to emphasize the favourable position of the modern woman while simultaneously belittling any who might claim inequality. Nowhere is this clearer than the final paragraphs. The author noted that while the modern woman '...is today a complete "person" in the eyes of the law... A number of laws still remain on the books which discriminate between her and man, but they are minor limitations on where and how long she can work, and all are presumably for her own good... In all important ways, however, she is now man's equal.'<sup>309</sup> The rank paternalism is not uncommon for the period, but it provides an excellent point from which to analyse how women's rights and feminism were dealt with by the press throughout the period.

Also of particular note within *The New York Times* in 1960 was the inclusion of discussion surrounding a proposed Constitutional amendment (commonly referred to hereafter as the Equal Rights Amendment or ERA) that guaranteed equal rights regardless of sex. The short article summarised a speech by then Vice President Richard Nixon to the National Woman's party. He said that '...the task of achieving Constitutional equality between the sexes was not yet completed.'<sup>310</sup> At first glance, this seems an unusual statement from the same man who famously told President Dwight D. Eisenhower to '...shit or get off the pot...'<sup>311</sup> However, it does fit the overall pattern of feminism and women's rights in the period – one of moving towards social equality, rather than mere political equality. While this might seem to be an early iteration of opposing discourses of freedom versus liberation, it should rather be interpreted as freedom versus paternalism. More interesting still is that the newspaper included language favoured by the National Woman's party for the proposed amendment: "Equality of

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> 'Backs Women's Rights: Nixon Favors Amendment to Guarantee Sex Equality,' *The New York Times*, 3 September 1960, p. 18.

<sup>311</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: soldier and president* (New York, 1990), p. 279.

rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.’”<sup>312</sup> The Library of Congress includes in the text of the Constitution of the United States a list of those amendments passed by the United States Congress, but not yet ratified into law, including the Equal Rights Amendment. The full text includes the three sections of the amendment, the first of which reads: ‘Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.’<sup>313</sup> That this entered the public discourse via mass media and remained a topic of discussion throughout the period is particularly important to remember in the broader discussion of feminism and women’s rights especially in the context of the political characteristics attached to freedom.

Where *The New York Times* was firmly entrenched on the centre-left of the socio-political spectrum, the *Los Angeles Times* was its polar opposite. Where *The New York Times* fostered discussion about women’s rights in a context of progress (however limited) the *Los Angeles Times* did so in a somewhat paradoxical way. Rather than focus on the accomplishments of women in a purely political context, it did so as though discussing social events of the season. The article ‘Women of ’60 Pen Chapter in History’ highlighted the personal and professional accomplishments of newsworthy women of the year. What makes this article remarkable is that it was a front-page story. The language of the article acknowledged the profound historical impact of women, while at the same time minimising the importance of their accomplishments. Marriage was the highest accomplishment a woman could aspire to, or at least that is the impression the article gave the reader, leading with the royal nuptials of Princess Margaret. Interestingly, the newspaper framed the discussion of the 1960 Presidential election by placing Pat Nixon and Jacqueline Kennedy in the role of candidates. It noted ‘In politics, Pat Nixon launched a campaign of her own for First Lady, but

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Kenneth R. Thomas. ‘The Constitution of the United States of America.’ ed. Library of Congress, (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 2014), p. 51.



lost out to 31-year-old Jacqueline Kennedy.<sup>314</sup> This is interesting in that it gives agency to women in political life while at the same time misrepresenting their role in the political process. A lone mention of women's rights was ascribed to Sylvia Pankhurst '...British crusader for women's rights, 79,' who died earlier that year.<sup>315</sup> However, the most important and striking aspect of the article was its conclusion. It stated, 'But probably the death that stunned the world most, and the world of women particularly, was that of movieland's [sic] king, Clark Gable, who died of a heart attack at the age of 59.'<sup>316</sup> The final aspect of the article only defined women in relation to a man, albeit a famous and influential one. This conclusion demonstrates not only the biases of the newspaper in an entertainment or media context, but also the manner in which it related to its audience. For this newspaper, women were barely political actors, defined by their relationships to men rather than by their own agency. Such characterisation provides a useful point for comparison to coverage in later years and establishes the baseline from which discourses of freedom versus liberation may be analysed.

### United States – 1962

The next peak in coverage occurred in 1962. This year was particularly important in that it there was a marked shift in the way women's rights were discussed in the American quality press. Though the narrative remained one of progress, and firmly wedded to more modern 'second-wave' definitions of women's rights and feminism, there was a distinct increase in discussion of social equality beyond simple political equality.

At the beginning of 1962, *The New York Times* remained in the same discursive pattern as found in 1960: clear separation between feminism and women's rights in the 'first-wave'

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<sup>314</sup> 'Women of '60 Pen Chapter in History,' *Los Angeles Times*, 28 December 1960, p. A5.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

context from those in a contemporary one while emphasizing a progressive nature of women's rights in the United States. This was made very clear in two articles published in February and April 1962, respectively. The first, entitled 'Advertising: Living in a "Female Economy"' stressed the importance of the power of the purse. The article highlighted the overwhelming economic data supporting women as the economic power in the United States, noting that 'Women...buy 75 percent of all the goods and services sold in this country. More than two-thirds of the nation's wealth is in female hands...as wage-earners take in a formidable \$50 billion a year.'<sup>317</sup> The article quoted Miss Jo Foxworth, a vice president of an advertising agency, as stating "'The militant feminists" are out of date...Now that women wield the power of the dollar, they no longer need their militancy....'<sup>318</sup> This commentary reinforces the clear separation between past and present definition of feminism and once again supports a progressive narrative; it also places 'militancy' with the past, and with agitation for political freedoms. The second article highlighted the work of the United Nations, specifically the Commission on the Status of Women. It too reinforced a progressive narrative, paying special attention to 'Notable examples...the international conventions on the political rights of women (1952) and on the nationality of married women (1956)....'<sup>319</sup> The article concluded by noting the automatic enfranchisement of women in former British Colonial possessions and the advancement of women's rights in Portugal. While this may seem somewhat tangential to feminism and women's rights in the United States, it plays directly to the tone and bias of the newspaper in question as well as cementing the focus on discourses of purely political freedoms.

An important change occurred between April and September 1962. Suddenly, in the pages of *The New York Times* at least, argument for the full social equality of women was the

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<sup>317</sup> Peter Bart, 'Advertising: Living in a 'Female Economy', *The New York Times*, 13 February 1964, p. 40.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> 'The Advance of Women's Rights,' *The New York Times*, 14 April 1962, p. 24.

new normal. The article ‘Who’s In Charge Here? Not Women!’ was a polemic against mass media and their portrayal of the modern American woman as well as an omnibus portrait of social conventions and their corresponding levels of absurdity. The author, Lee Graham, stated pointedly that ‘There has been a tendency in recent years to picture the American woman – at home and abroad – as a domineering Mom who exploits the male, destroys his masculinity and reduces him to a quivering Milquetoast. This image is a serious distortion of reality.’<sup>320</sup> Taking full advantage of the column inches available in a Sunday edition of the newspaper, Graham systematically enumerated the social, economic, political and legal injustices still encountered by women and efforts currently underway to combat them. Among these remedies were Executive Orders issued by President John F. Kennedy to bar discrimination in Federal agencies on the basis of sex, the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, and equal pay legislation in congress. Of particular importance are observations from men regarding barriers to social equality for women in the workplace. Commenting that women are their own worst enemies, one insurance executive noted that women are either ‘Too feminine or not feminine enough. I don’t know which is worse, but we have no room for either type. The ironic part of it is that they claim they can’t compete with us. That’s nonsense. It’s *we* who can’t compete with *them*.’<sup>321</sup> In a direct rebuttal to the unnamed male executive, Graham quotes Bernice Fitz-Gibbon, an advertising executive as stating ‘Just another one of the fictions that men have created to rationalize their jealousy. If you’ll notice, they don’t worry that the typists and salesgirls will lose their femininity. Their concern doesn’t begin to show up until a woman is on the way up.’<sup>322</sup> Graham steered the article through equal rights legislation and Constitutional amendments along with observations of influential women, including Eleanor Roosevelt. The article concluded by appealing to the

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<sup>320</sup> Lee Graham, ‘Who’s In Charge Here? Not Women!’ *The New York Times*, 2 September 1962, p. 127

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*

national imagination, bringing in questions about the Space Race and the probably fitness of female astronauts, ending 'Women, it seems, must continue to fight bias even in the space age.'<sup>323</sup> Although incredibly dense, and often flying off on tangents, this article is nevertheless crucial to the understanding of sexual revolution. For the first time, *The New York Times* printed a defence of full social equality for women, albeit in discourses of freedoms. Nevertheless, a marked shift from the paternalistic repression to political freedom is noteworthy.

Further articles in *The New York Times* reinforced this position, making 1962 the year in which women's rights and a 'second-wave' definition of feminism mainstream in the quality press. A letter in response to Graham's article was printed later in September of 1962. Far from repudiating Graham's thesis, it goes further, and lambasts the practice of arresting female prostitutes and publically shaming them, but releasing their male clients in anonymity. The author of the letter, Samuel H. Hofstadter, insists that:

'This is perhaps, the only instance in the whole history of the law where a corrupt bargain, involving mutuality of design and accomplishment, is rendered unilateral by cruel fiat. If selling a certain commodity is a vice, can its purchase be blameless? Since prostitution is a crime, the burden belongs, at least equally, on the broad shoulders of its male constituency.'<sup>324</sup>

Prostitution, outside the context of discussion of criminal sweeps and vice arrests was rare. That the newspaper would print a defence of equal burden on both male and female parties at this point in time is unique and important. Social equality, at least in the view of Mr Hofstadter, was vital enough to be extended to all echelons of society and he was extremely clever to include it as a response to such a ground-breaking article.

*The New York Times* also provided a forum for discussion of full social equality for women in the context of the space race, beyond Graham's brief remarks in the earlier article.

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Samuel H. Hofstadter, 'Letter: Woman's Right,' *The New York Times*, 23 September 1962, p. 266.

Louis Lasagna, M.D. wrote a multi-page article entitled ‘Why Not “Astronauttes” Also?’ for the 21 October 1962 edition of the newspaper. Using humour and a singular wit he asked pointed questions about the viability of a space program that excluded the ‘second sex’ from participation and noted that ‘Unless the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has in mind some drastic sociological innovations, the story of outer space cannot disregard the traditional boy-meets-girl plot.’<sup>325</sup> Dr Lasagna dismissed cultural reservations early on and instead focused a great deal on scientific and medical details that might inhibit women from thriving in space exploration. He concluded that requirements for astronauts included ‘...a healthy body, a good mind, and special skills for piloting and observing. It also seems that there are no compelling reasons for automatically ruling out females in the search for such candidates.’<sup>326</sup> Lasagna’s article also reinforced a progressive narrative moving towards increased social equality employed by the newspaper with regards to feminism and women’s rights. He noted that ‘One does not have to be a fierce feminist or a phony apostle of the “women-are-biologically-superior-to-men” school to advocate a policy of greater use of the talents of women. It is not only unjust but shortsighted for Adam to view Eve through the astigmatic spectacles of cultural lag.’<sup>327</sup> He then advanced the position of himself and through editorial control, that of the newspaper itself even further by stating ‘Women are more than vehicles for the propagation of the race, and civilization deserves more from them than this.’<sup>328</sup> In an effort to provide a sense of balance, the editorial staff included what they termed ‘Another View.’ It was included in the middle of Dr Lasagna’s remarks and quoted Lt Col John H. Glenn Jr. It is interesting that Col Glenn, too, publically advocated for the inclusion of women in the space program. His testimony to a Congressional panel was quoted as stating ‘If we can find

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<sup>325</sup> Louis Lasagna M.D., ‘Why Not ‘Astronauttes’ Also?: Comparing the sexes in all relevant...’ *The New York Times* 1962, p. 268.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*

any women that demonstrate they have better qualifications for going into a program than we have, we would welcome them with open arms, so to speak.’<sup>329</sup> However, when confronted with evidence that thirteen applicants had passed the requirements to enter astronaut training he stated that these tests were ““minimum” and added: “As an analogy, my mother could probably pass the preseason physical examination given the Washington Redskins, but I don’t think she could play many games.”’<sup>330</sup> These dual positions demonstrate well the conflict within society with regards to feminism, women’s rights and gender norms and mores. *The New York Times* clearly advocated a move towards full social equality for women, yet acknowledged the pervading societal reluctance towards doing so. By actively engaging through Dr Lasagna’s article and viewpoints the newspaper made a clear statement, cementing their position of full commitment to political freedoms; that is, women existing on equal footing with men in all areas of society, but not liberated from the constraints of society.

The *Los Angeles Times* too heralded change in social norms and mores regarding feminism and women’s rights, though with more reluctance than its East-Coast counterpart. The 16 March 1962 column ‘BY THE WAY: Ah---the Power of Women Reporters’ was simultaneously condescending and yet reflective of growing social equality in journalism and society in general. Though frequently referring to female colleagues or potential female colleagues as ‘girl reporters,’ infantilising them, it nevertheless acknowledged ‘By their persistent protests, the gal reporters have gradually gained admission to a lot of places from which they were either barred or had only second-class status.’<sup>331</sup> While devoting several column inches to logistics minutiae, the author again shows his contempt for inclusive policies by stating ‘...the White House everybody-is-equal ukase is to achieve its purpose,’ while

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<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>331</sup> Bill Henry, 'BY THE WAY: Ah---the Power of Women Reporters,' *Los Angeles Times*, 16 March 1962, p. A1.

noting that ‘...it does look as if the girls have won their long battle for recognition.’<sup>332</sup> Such reluctance on the part of the author is a clear proof of bias but also affirms the progressive narrative of the American quality press and the growth of discourses of socio-political freedoms.

Other articles in the *Los Angeles Times* affirmed progressive narratives. One article from the news agency United Press International (UPI) ran in the 26 July edition of the newspaper acknowledges the extremes and limitations of the social norms and mores regarding sex and gender. An equal pay bill before consideration in the US House of Representatives mandated equal pay for men and women and allowed for pay cuts to men to achieve that end. The article noted that ‘The bill went to the Senate where the appalled House sponsors hoped their original legislation to outlaw wage discrimination against women would be restored.’<sup>333</sup> Although it was not explicitly stated, the article implied that cutting men’s salary to achieve pay parity was not a provision of the bill as originally submitted. However, this exclusion is rather telling. It creates for the reader a radicalised notion of the advancement of women’s rights, while at the same time acknowledging the reasonable nature of equality in terms of salary. This is in line with the previous article for 1962, demonstrating disagreement with radicalisation, while acknowledging that some advancement is inevitable. Another article reaffirmed the ERA as a pro-business initiative, reinforcing a progressive modern tone in the quality press. The *Los Angeles Times* quoted Patty Burbridge with the Federation of Business and Professional Women in an article on 2 September 1962. She noted ‘The 19<sup>th</sup> amendment gave women the right to vote, but did not give them legal equality.’<sup>334</sup> Previous articles in the quality press had advanced the aims and language of the ERA concerning national organisations, but by putting the article in a regional or even state context, the newspaper

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> ‘Equal Pay for Women Even if Men Suffer,’ *Los Angeles Times*, 26 July 1962, p. 2.

<sup>334</sup> ‘VALLEY Women: Federation's Goal: Rights for Women,’ *Los Angeles Times*, 2 September 1962, p. SF6.

broadened its appeal and the grassroots nature of its applicability to the everyday American. While there was certainly resistance to the idea of social change about feminism and women's rights, 1962 proved to be an important year for the quality press in its approach to addressing such resistance.

### United States – 1966

The next peak in coverage occurred in 1966 and proved a milestone by virtue of the continued changing nature towards feminism and women's rights, while the quality press maintained its progressive narrative towards full social equality for women, though there were exceptions on both sides of the political spectrum. *The New York Times*, as the centre-left newspaper best exemplified this changing nature while maintaining the common narrative through two articles in the latter half of the year. The first of these articles entitled 'Quo Vadis, Women? Toward a Better World, Experts Say' was unique in that invoked futurist thought. Where most articles regarding feminism and women's rights, with the exception of coverage of the space race, invoked the past in order to emphasise the present, this article hypothesised about the future. In addition to using a rhetorical device appealing to authority, the article also included dissent between two women experts. One might expect disagreement between a male and a female source in an article, but until now, open disagreement had been avoided within the female cohort in the discussion of women's rights and feminism. While the male experts focused exclusively on the future and the adaptability of women to future economic and broad social conditions, the female experts cited spoke about personal relationships. Dr Mary Calderone asserted that 'The husband and wife of the future will have to be more flexible. There will have to be an "interpenetration of roles," she said, with the wife dealing with "broken-down cars and leaking roofs" and the husband offering the kind of emotional support



that traditionally has flowed only in the other direction.”<sup>335</sup> She also noted that ‘What young women have “for a long time been taught – to think and feel in terms of relationships and the needs of other people...young men need crucially to be taught at this time.”<sup>336</sup> This focus on the interpersonal nature of relationships and particularly the needs of both young men and women indicate a significant shift in social norms and mores. It’s true that this came from an intellectual exercise in thought at a conference, however, that it was thought necessary is profoundly important. Dr Calderone also stressed the advantage women had in their ‘ability to adapt.’<sup>337</sup> This was the point of contention that another conference speaker took issue with. In true ‘second-wave’ feminist form, Mrs Harriet Pilpel was quoted as stating ““there are as many strong, flexible men as strong flexible women.”<sup>338</sup> This emphasis on the equal nature of both women and men is vitally important to the consideration of women’s rights and ‘second-wave’ feminism in this period; it reinforces the principles of full socio-political equality important to the movement.

The second article was perhaps the more important to the national conversation than the first. It concerned the founding of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Although mostly informative, the article carefully balanced the aims of women’s rights with the pervasive progressive narrative found in the American quality press. Though employing political revolutionary rhetoric, ““Women of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains,”” and ““...true equality for all women in America...as part of the world-wide revolution of human rights now taking place...”” the article was careful to temper such enthusiasm with the emphasis on full social equality sought by the organisation.<sup>339</sup> Mrs Betty

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<sup>335</sup> Lisa Hamel, 'Quo Vadis, Women? Toward a Better World, Experts Say,' *The New York Times*, 7 October 1966, p. 47.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> Lisa Hamel, 'They Meet in Victorian Parlor to Demand 'True Equality' NOW,' *The New York Times*, 22 November 1966, p. 44.

Friedan was liberally quoted, stating “Our culture...does not permit women to accept or gratify their basic need to grow and fulfil their potentialities as human beings, a need which is not solely defined by their sexual role.”<sup>340</sup> Additionally, author Lisa Hammel was sure to emphasise another quote from Mrs. Friedan, ensuring that women were able to “enjoy the equality of opportunity and freedom of choice which is their right...in truly equal partnership with men.”<sup>341</sup> The author was also careful to point out the inclusion of men in the organisation. She quoted Rev Dean Lewis, a member of NOW’s board, “Why did I join NOW?...It’s like asking somebody why they joined the N.A.A.C.P. I’m interested in equal rights for anybody who desires them. The structure of both law and custom in our society deprives women of their rights.”<sup>342</sup> In addition to the broad aims of society for women and equal rights for them, the author of the article was quite careful to include the official position of the organisation that ‘it is concerned with discrimination where it exists against men as well as against women.’<sup>343</sup> This is vitally important to the understanding of NOW, ‘second-wave’ feminism and how the quality press captured the spirit of a movement. A notable exception to the overall narrative did occur within the text of the article. Though previously the characterisation of feminism was employed only as a historical signpost, commentary from a Roman Catholic nun serving on NOW’s board managed to exclude her participation as a question of feminism but rather reframed it. She stated, “This is not a feminist movement...it is not a question of getting male privileges. In the past the possibility of realizing one’s humanity was limited to an elite group at the top. Women are not equal in our society. This movement centers around the possibility of being human.”<sup>344</sup> Such a specific characterisation of women’s rights as being separate from feminism was a careful choice employed by the author to define the movement as one of human

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

rights, rather than to link it consciously or not with ‘first-wave’ feminism, or indeed from the ‘radical’ women’s liberation that would later follow. *The New York Times* would rarely print negative articles, op-eds, or letters that disparaged the movement. The editorial decisions employed in this article by the author, in conjunction to editorial staff, as well as the press relations arm of NOW were crucial in shaping further discourse of the movement as one of full socio-political freedom in the quality press narrative.

The *Los Angeles Times* as was their wont specifically framed their coverage of women’s rights within the narrative of a progressive societal shift towards greater social equality of women for the first half of 1966. In the article ‘Women Have Place in Space, Researcher Says,’ the author was careful to frame social equality in the harshest way possible. She stated ‘Women are pampered too much. There’s no reason they shouldn’t be drafted, attend military academies, pay their own way on dates and pay for business luncheons without men feeling embarrassed.’<sup>345</sup> These were the opinions of the subject of the article Dr Jeannette Piccard, a leading researcher in space exploration. Particularly interesting is how Dr Piccard characterised herself: “...an old war horse who fought for women’s voting rights” and is still fighting for women’s rights in all fields.<sup>346</sup> The article’s rhetoric specifically links Dr Piccard with ‘first-wave’ feminism while asserting that progress was still being made. However, the mentality advanced in the article was very much about pulling oneself up by one’s bootstraps and disavowed human rights rhetoric. Dr Piccard also apologised for policies that allowed wage discrimination by asserting that “The trouble is, women usually start at a lower salary than men, so even though they may get little bonuses, they never catch up.”<sup>347</sup> This type of conservative approach to women’s rights was typical of the *Los Angeles Times*’ approach in

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<sup>345</sup> Ellen Shulte, 'Women Have Place in Space, Researcher Says,' *Los Angeles Times*, 24 February 1966, p. C1.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

the period, yet still managed to cling to a progressive narrative within discourses of socio-political equality.

### United States – 1967

Although not considered a peak in coverage, 1967 was nevertheless an important year in the quality press narrative of women's rights. With no coverage in the *Los Angeles Times*, it was *The New York Times*, which led the charge for women in this year. With full coverage of the United Nations Declaration on Women's Rights and the donning of the feminist mantle by the National Organization for Women, 1967 was the year in which coverage transformed, changing significantly.

Under reported in Britain, the United Nations Declaration on Women's Rights was given a full airing in *The New York Times*. On 8 November 1967, the newspaper ran the full text of the document. Without reprinting the declaration in full, it constituted nothing less than a manifesto for full social equality for women across the globe. However, more interesting than the revolutionary nature of the text was the portrait and caption the editorial staff chose to run with the declaration itself. The photograph was of delegate to the United Nations General Assembly and British Peer Lady Gaitskell. The caption read 'Lady Gaitskell said the U.N. declaration in support of women's rights was a statement of aspirations.'<sup>348</sup> This statement had many important implications. However, the most pertinent of these implications is the very fact that even though it might not even become a reality for every woman in the world in the near future, or even in the distant future, the important thing was that the world came together and ascribed to an international record that which was vital to areas in human rights that had not yet been addressed. The second article expanded upon the first and noted that the declaration

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<sup>348</sup> 'U.N. Declaration on Women's Rights,' *The New York Times*, 8 November 1967, p. 24.

passed unanimously.<sup>349</sup> The lack of coverage in the other American newspaper of study and the lack of coverage in the British quality press remains interesting, especially considering the unanimity of its passage. It either means that these principles were thought to be givens, universally understood as being in the best interests of humanity and therefore there was no need to call attention to them. However, more likely is that one or more of the provisions listed by the declaration (including diplomatic phrasing alluding to birth control and abortion) conflicted with the social biases of the other American newspaper and therefore not included by editorial choice.

The other major news event of 1967 with regards to feminism and women's rights was the National Organization for Women's taking up the feminist mantle; or perhaps more accurately, that *The New York Times* reported it as so. While the article engaged with Betty Friedan and the policies of NOW, it also applied the feminist label to NOW. Five photographs of women sat above the body of the article and their captions included: 'I've been heckled,' 'We are not men's property,' 'Women feel frustrated,' 'I'm not so revolutionary,' and bizarrely, 'I want a pencil.'<sup>350</sup> The author of the article, Marylin Bender, seamlessly blended the 'new feminists' Mrs Friedan and NOW with the 'old feminists,' members of the Lucy Stone League.<sup>351</sup> The genius of Ms Bender lay in her combination of the old and new, characterising their relationship as 'cordial and reciprocal.'<sup>352</sup> Where the 'old' feminists had fought for the right of women to use their own names, the 'new' feminists 'cheerfully use[d] their husbands' names.'<sup>353</sup> Where the British quality press hemmed and hawed about the definitions of new and old feminism, one reporter for *The New York Times* created a near-perfect transition in a

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<sup>349</sup> Kathleen Teltsch, 'U.N., 111-0 BACKS RIGHTS OF WOMEN: Assembly Declaration Asks End of Discrimination,' *The New York Times*, 8 November 1967, p. 24.

<sup>350</sup> Marylin Bender, 'The Feminists Are On the March Once More,' *The New York Times*, 14 December 1967, p. 78.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

single article. The importance of the text of this article cannot be emphasized enough. In addition to creating the beginnings of a media narrative for a new definition for the term feminism, it co-opted women's rights and a national and indeed even an international organization to the term. The redefinition of feminism belongs firmly in discourses of socio-political freedom. However, the rate at which *The New York Times* advanced the definitions of feminism is noteworthy in that the American experience of feminism had been decidedly portrayed through quality press coverage as more conservative than that of the British experience of feminism in the quality press during the same period.

### United States – 1968

Where 1967 began to change the conversation, 1968 was akin to a bulldozer, knocking down convention and raising new questions for women and men alike. At least it was so within the pages of *The New York Times*. The narrative of progressive shift to fuller social equality for women could no longer accommodate the sheer breadth and depth of experiences and viewpoints contained in the pages of even a single newspaper, although the *Los Angeles Times* did put up a valiant effort.

Most important to the quality press narrative was an all-inclusive article in *The New York Times* that spanned nine pages entitled 'Second Feminist Wave.' Martha Weinman Lear encompassed the theme of the article by superimposing the question 'What do these women want?' directly above the title of the article.<sup>354</sup> From an analytical standpoint, the article was intended to fulfil many purposes. It sought to shock, to inform, to persuade, to entertain, and perhaps most importantly, to create a sense of understanding on the part of the reader. A side

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<sup>354</sup> Martha Weinman Lear, 'The Second Feminist Wave,' *The New York Times* 1968, p. SM24.

effect of this process was to paint the National Organization for Women as idealists tempered by ruthless pragmatism.

The article sought to shock readers from the outset, describing a NOW protest of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission where women marched with signs that read ‘A Chicken in Every Pot, A Whore in Every Home.’<sup>355</sup> This was of course a black comedy, a farce that never made it past the planning committee, yet its inclusion enticed readers. The article included a polite but firm exchange with *The New York Times* personnel office regarding advertisements for employment, specifically ‘Help Wanted – Male’ and ‘Help-Wanted – Female’. As the article noted:

“We told them,” one feminist said, “that those column heading perpetuate the employment ghetto.” “We told them” said Monroe Green, then The Times vice president in charge of advertising, “that if we discontinued the column headings there might be fewer jobs for women because men would be applying for them. After all men can be just as militant as women.”<sup>356</sup>

This did not set the tone for the remainder of the article, rather it established a structure – adversarial: polite, but utterly resolute. Where the 1967 article by Marilyn Bender constituted the birth of ‘second-wave’ feminism, this article served as christening, coming-out, and though feminists of this stripe would disagree with the characterisation – marriage to a set of values and praxis to carry the analogy to its obvious conclusion. As noted, it termed it the ‘Second Feminist Wave,’ and the author was keen to note, it held enormous entertainment value. It heartily acknowledged its privileged background, Martha Weinman Lear noting that for ‘...the most privileged female population on earth, the insistence on a civil rights movement for women does seem a trifle stubborn. “Oh, come off it; why ruin it for the rest of us?” a New York matron recently commented to a NOW member, and she wasn’t half kidding.’<sup>357</sup> Despite this early levity, the article did not shy away from using metaphors designed to make the reader

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid, p. SM25.

distinctly uncomfortable. It tackled every single issue NOW intended to campaign upon – from educational opportunity, employment opportunity, social convention, and did so by likening women’s position to that of slaves in the antebellum Southern United States. The author drew upon the writings of Gunnar Myrdal, stating “‘As the Negro was awarded his ‘place’ in society, so there was a ‘woman’s place’....The myth of the ‘contented woman,’ who did not want to have suffrage or other civil rights and equal opportunities, had the same social function as the myth of the ‘contented Negro.’”<sup>358</sup> NOW was to its founders, a N.A.A.C.P. for women, though, the author was keen to distinguish between ‘feminist revolutionaries’ and ‘feminist evolutionaries.’<sup>359</sup> The author sought to distinguish Betty Friedan early on as a revolutionary, espousing the most confrontational sort of feminism. She quoted Friedan, stating “‘For years feminism has been an apology...All those ladies’ auxiliaries like the League of Women voters, saying, ‘Don’t get us wrong; we’re not feminists.’ What self-denigration! I call them Aunt Toms. Aunt Toms think there are three kinds of people – men, women, and themselves.”<sup>360</sup> Lear continued to serve as Friedan’s mouthpiece, telling a handful of anecdotes that served as damning testimony for American women and indeed American men. This redefinition of American feminism as militant or radical was unique and absent from the British experience. While the discourse was dominated by content that supported socio-political freedoms, the rhetoric employed here began to steer it towards revolution without necessarily giving equal space to discourses of liberation; in essence, the revolution was not necessarily the same in Britain as it was in America.

Martha Weinman Lear was also careful to distinguish NOW from other groups, such as Radical Women, an offshoot of the Students for a Democratic Society, who took issue with the concept of free love and whom Lear described as ‘cheerfully militant.’<sup>361</sup> Just as important

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid, p. SM50.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid, p. SM51.



to the author was to differentiate between the pragmatists and the militants within NOW. Where Betty Friedan previously appeared radical, she was nothing compared to Ti-Grace Atkinson. Atkinson was atypical, young, a PhD candidate in analytic philosophy, and was once described in *The New York Times* as “...softly sexy.”<sup>362</sup> She was not satisfied with the pragmatic nature of NOW, despite being the president of the New York chapter. Most importantly, she took issue with child rearing, advocating a radical communal model.<sup>363</sup> This peculiarity of framing Betty Friedan and NOW as radical, but framing Ti-Grace Atkinson and the New York Radical Women as even more radical or ‘cheerfully militant’ is the first acknowledgment of discourses of liberation whereby Friedan and NOW were analogous to the old guard of a February Revolution and Atkinson and New York Radical Women became analogous to the Bolsheviks committed to an October Revolution.

Lear concluded her extensive profile of ‘second-wave’ feminism by emphasising once more the ruthless pragmatism of the National Organization for Women and the uphill battle it faced battling social norms and mores. Lear conceded that ‘The feminists are not anxious to alienate anyone, and even mild threats to the abiding institutions do tend to frighten most women to death.’<sup>364</sup> The author recounted an anecdote to emphasise this point, noting ‘I remember the extraordinary response to an article Marya Mannes once wrote for *The Times Magazine*, in which she espoused child day-care centers, hardly a revolutionary idea. What impressed me about the flood of readers’ letters was not their disapproval, but their rage. One called Miss Mannes a prostitute, and another wrote that she was dirty minded and un-American...’<sup>365</sup> Lear did this to set up the final quotations from Betty Friedan as eminently reasonable, quoting Friedan:

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid, pp. SM52-SM55.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid, p. SM55.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

“I do think we have to raise these questions...We work with the realities of American life, and in reality our job now is to make it possible for women to integrate their roles at home and in society...What I do know is this: If you agree that women are human beings who should be realizing their potential, then no girl child born today should responsibly be brought up to be a housewife. Too much has been made of defining human personality and destiny in terms of the sex organs. After all, we share the human brain.”<sup>366</sup>

Beyond the aims of the article, the column inches devoted to it and the time and effort invested in its publication – from the author’s own time to the editorial staff – indicates the newspaper was firmly committed to NOW; certainly, to Mrs Friedan’s interpretation of feminism, if not Miss Atkinson’s. This was essentially the realisation of sexual revolution when defined as the struggle between discourses of freedom and discourses of liberation as portrayed by the quality press.

*The New York Times* was also careful to allow for time before printing responses to such an inflammatory article. After three weeks on 31 March 1968, the newspaper did so and the responses – while varied – were nevertheless positive. The responses affirmed the intention of the author of the ‘Second Feminist Wave,’ – that is, to intentionally portray Betty Friedan and the pragmatists as reasonable, while making Ti-Grace Atkinson and her radical views seem beyond the pale. Responses ranged from indignant defence of wives and mothers, to the progressive modernist narrative advocating freedom of choice and equality of opportunity without the assignment of categories, polemics against the practice of group child-rearing, praise for the hyphenation of a woman’s last name, and others. Though brief, the most strident attack upon feminists and their aims – radical or pragmatic – came from a letter by one Victor H. Blank of Cumberland, Rhode Island. He stated without exception that ‘...with pitifully few exceptions, America’s women have failed to demonstrate the ability either to work or to reason

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

on a level even approaching that of its men. For women to seek professional or business parity with men is as ill-conceived as it is absurd.<sup>367</sup> Though critical of the more radical aspects of feminism in the article, the majority of responses favoured pragmatism at best and a progressive shift to fuller social equality at worst. This speaks to the success of not only Martha Weinman Lear's intentions, but also to the narrative advanced for so long by the American quality press. As indicative of sexual revolution, the responses are such as to play into the analogy of revolution in the Russian experience. Where most responses favoured Friedan and NOW (February Revolution), they excluded Atkinson and the Radical Women (October Revolution) and even had a reminiscence of the traditional norms, mores, and views of women (pro-Czarist).

The *Los Angeles Times* had little to say on the topic of feminism in 1968; however, they did print a few articles that continued to advance a progressive narrative, the most progressive of which was an article about female undergraduates who took a woman's law course at New York University. The content of the article focused on the 'mistakes' young women would make in daily life. This is interesting for several reasons. The tone of the article seems to portray most young women are at best naïve and at worst stupid. The professor interviewed for the article was careful to immediately counter this assertion, noting "These housewives are not stupid...It's a combination of being in a hurry and being too trustworthy."<sup>368</sup> The article detailed common pitfalls young wives might encounter and how to avoid them, while sticking to the progressive modernist narrative. The author was careful to note that 'In these swinging 60s, the woman's lot has improved...'<sup>369</sup> While brief, this article was virtually the sum-total of discussion of women's rights or feminism in the newspaper for the entire year. There was no mention of NOW, Betty Friedan, Ti-Grace Atkinson, or any of the cultural milestones printed

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<sup>367</sup>Victor H. Blank, 'Letter to the Editor,' *The New York Times Magazine*, 31 March 1968, p. 22.

<sup>368</sup>Dee Wedemeyer, 'NYU Lays Down the Law for Housewives,' *Los Angeles Times*, 18 March 1968, p. C20.

<sup>369</sup>Ibid.

in *The New York Times*. An omission of such magnitude does not mean there was no discussion whatsoever of these events, merely that they were not included in the frame, but considering the magnitude of the discussion in the other American newspaper, the omission is even more glaring.

### United States – 1970

1970 was the next peak in coverage in the American quality press regarding feminism and women's rights. For *The New York Times*, the social discourse within the newspaper had totally changed. Based on number of articles alone, 1970 marked the second-highest number of articles returned within the search frame for the entire period of study. By far the most complex year in terms of coverage, articles that dealt with feminism in a substantive way can be considered to fall within three distinct categories: emphasis of mainline or moderate feminism, emphasis on Betty Friedan as the founder of the 'second wave' of feminism, and the impact of the national strike day for women in August 1970. The 'sexual revolution' for feminism was in full swing.

Just as Martha Lear did in her article two years previously, articles discussing women's liberation and 'second-wave' feminism were careful to distinguish between groups considered being moderate and those considered radical. The first of these attempted to conglomerate all the women's organisations under the single banner of 'women's liberation,' explaining: 'Women's liberation is a catch-all label for the second phase of the movement for total equality for slightly more than half of the United States population...an eclectic movement, women's liberation spans both reform and revolution...'<sup>370</sup> The author, Marylin Bender, differentiated

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<sup>370</sup> Marylin Bender, 'The Women Who'd Trade In Their Pedestal for Total Equality,' *The New York Times*, 4 February 1970, p. 30.

the National Organization for Women from the 'radical feminists.'<sup>371</sup> The second article, by self-proclaimed radical feminist Susan Brownmiller, was careful to emphasise heavily the aims of radical feminists including the Redstockings and other radical groups, while embracing the origins of the movement. Key to Brownmiller's argument was that while Betty Friedan was the 'mother of the movement,' the 'generation gap created real barriers to communication.'<sup>372</sup> Brownmiller's article digressed on several points, including rejection of Marxism as a structure to protest the treatment of women, the importance of consciousness-raising, the rise of WITCH or Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell, and the importance of Anne Koedt's essay on the myth of the vaginal orgasm. However, the conclusion of the article was a philosophical appeal from Anne Koedt, who noted that 'I don't know, but I think there's a part of men that really wants a human relationship, and that's going to be the saving grace for all of us;<sup>373</sup> this unifying concept, whether Brownmiller intended it or not, emphasised the moderate views, which were advocated for so long by Betty Friedan and NOW. The final article which insisted on the primacy of mainline or moderate feminism was an interview of Eileen C. Hernandez, the new president of NOW after Betty Friedan stepped down in March of 1970. The author noted that 'Even though she [Hernandez] considers NOW to be "very radical," she said she thought the group could accomplish some of its objectives within the system.'<sup>374</sup> Additionally, Mrs Hernandez was careful to restate the solidarity she and by extension NOW felt with men, noting "'We do not see men as the enemy... We see them as common victims. The liberation of women will be the liberation of men as well.'"<sup>375</sup> It is important to point out that this was an acknowledgement of two key points of feminism belonging entirely to the second-wave and to women's liberation specifically (patriarchy, and that patriarchy affected

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> Susan Brownmiller, "Sisterhood Is Powerful": A member of the Women's Liberation Movement...' *The New York Times* 1970, p. 358.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid, p. 362.

<sup>374</sup> Judy Klemesrud, 'NOW's New President Sees Men Helped, Too,' *The New York Times*, 2 May 1970, p. 36.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

men as well as women) by the leader of the more moderate wing of feminism during the period. Thus, the quality press, or at least *The New York Times*, acting as a space for sexual revolution began to behave as an actor of sexual revolution by shaping the debate between the opposing discourses of socio-political freedom and discourses of women's liberation.

In parallel with the emphasis on mainline or moderate was the campaign to elevate Betty Friedan above other feminists. Although there were a handful of articles that were intended to catapult radical feminist Kate Millett into the spotlight, their style and tone were inconsistent with the rest of the newspaper and its cachet was reserved for reiterating Friedan's contributions to 'second-wave' feminism. Two articles encompassed this trend. The first was entitled 'Feminist Leader: Betty Friedan.' The author was careful to appeal to authority, emphasising her forceful personality, yet genial demeanour. Reminders of her influence on 'second-wave' feminism were subtle, the author noted 'At 49, she finds herself in a predicament common to middle-aged revolutionaries who have pioneered a cause. She is being superseded by followers with ideas far more radical than anything she envisioned....'<sup>376</sup> The author also used the moniker coined by Susan Brownmiller in her article, 'mother of the movement,' and while this was then followed by a repudiation of her bourgeois values, it nevertheless lent Friedan an authority that others in the movement did not and could not have, thus shaping opinion and moderating the discourse. The second article was even more conciliatory to Friedan and her own brand of feminist orthodoxy. Entitled 'Friedanisms "I am speaking for the truly silent majority,"' the article was part informative, part canonisation. Quotations were employed liberally throughout the six-page article and served to lend Friedan the authority of a mother figure, an omnipresent leader. One call-out dubbed her 'Mother superior to women's lib.'<sup>377</sup> However, more important than Friedan's own viewpoints and

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<sup>376</sup> 'Feminist Leader: Betty Friedan,' *The New York Times*, 23 March 1970, p. 32.

<sup>377</sup> 'Friedanisms: "I am speaking for the truly silent majority."', *The New York Times* 1970, p. 381.

history were the testimonials from other prominent feminists. Of note were Gloria Steinem who noted of Friedan ““She has undertaken the immense job of bringing up the status of women so that love can succeed...so that her own emotional needs can be fulfilled”” and Susan Brownmiller who stated unequivocally that ““Many younger people are horrified that Betty can talk to the Establishment, has a black maid and is a celebrity. For me personally, this woman changed my life.””<sup>378</sup> Such characterisations both lend Friedan legitimacy as well as serve to place her own views above her ideological successors. Such action by *The New York Times* was both deliberate and effective in impacting the sexual revolution.

The final major theme in *The New York Times*’ coverage of feminism in 1970 was characterised by the articles surrounding the national strike day in August 1970. It was one of the most interesting events in terms of coverage as there were three separate articles devoted to it in the succeeding day’s edition. The first of these was a sceptical overview of the effect the strike had upon the national consciousness, certainly upon the regional consciousness. Grace Lichtenstein noted that ‘For the vast majority of women, yesterday was a day simply to go about one’s business...However...women’s liberation was the main topic of conversation among men as well as women throughout the city.’<sup>379</sup> The overall implication of the article, even from the outset, was to demonstrate that conversation was the point of the ‘strike’ was to inspire conversation, to spur the discussion of women’s liberation. That said, the author noted that most of the discussion was limited to the professional communities of New York City proper, with professional women and men excited and dismissive of the strike respectively. Important to the author were the opinions of women outside the professional bubble of the city. To that end, she made sure to interview women living in the suburbs. These viewpoints were best distilled in the voices of Mrs Maureen O’Callahan who said ‘...that she was boycotting

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<sup>378</sup> Ibid., p. 382.

<sup>379</sup> Grace Lichtenstein, 'For Most Women, 'Strike' Day Was Just a Topic of Conversation,' *The New York Times*, 27 August 1970, p. 30.

housework because although she felt it was “a fulfilling opportunity” she did not believe “it should be forced upon all women,” and Mrs Barbara Sullivan who the author described as folding laundry stating ““Women’s liberation? ...Never thought much about it, really.””<sup>380</sup> This indicates an important editorial influence. Clearly the editorial staff, if not the author herself were conscious that women’s liberation had limited scope, despite the favourable commentary found within the paper. The other articles took a different track from the first. One employed an appeal to authority and summarised a week of telephone interviews with prominent women. Among those interviewed were Coretta Scott King, Virginia Johnson, Helen Gurley Brown, Katharine Graham, Zsa Zsa Gabor, and Barbara Walters. These women (apart from Zsa Zsa Gabor) believed women’s liberation was positive, with Barbara Walters noting ‘...television “like most areas of big business,” did not offer equal opportunities to women. “I am for many of the things that women’s lib is for – like day care centers and employment opportunities...but I don’t want a total revolution in the state of women. I like the feminine role...”’<sup>381</sup> Once again, the commentary was selective, favouring moderated feminism. The final article, and most important, appeared on the front page of *The New York Times* and indicates by far the editorial policies that favoured moderate feminism. Situated centre-right above the fold, the headline read ‘Women March Down Fifth in Equality Drive.’ Emphasising the importance of this moderate feminism were two columns devoted to quotations of Betty Friedan, stating that the attendance was ““beyond our wildest dreams,”” and that ““This is not a bedroom war, this is a political movement...Man is not the enemy, man is a fellow-victim.””<sup>382</sup> The majority of the article, as the accompanying photo was quite large, continued on page 30 carefully crafted a message designed to minimise the radical elements of the march, particularly the lesbian

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

<sup>381</sup> Judy Klemesrud, 'The Issue of Equality: Some Women in Pubic Eye Speak Out,' *The New York Times*, 27 August 1970, p. 57.

<sup>382</sup> Linda Charlton, 'Women March Down Fifth Avenue in Equality Drive,' *The New York Times*, 27 August 1970, p. 1.



feminists while emphasising the message of Bella Abzug. This message, the article noted prominently, ‘drew the most enthusiastic response from the crowd with her finger-jabbing calls for the implementation of the strike’s three principal demands – 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...’ emphasising the point with a direct quote from Mrs Abzug who exclaimed “‘...and we mean to have it now!’”<sup>383</sup> These demands, it must be pointed out, are identical to those of the Women’s Liberation Workshop in Britain. Thus, while radical elements had influence over women’s liberation in the United States, *The New York Times* was committed to advocating a message of moderation.

Further, the national march proved to be an interesting moment in terms of the discourses of sexual revolution. Elements of women’s liberation, specific rhetoric drawn from Kate Millett and Germaine Greer, the concepts of patriarchy and that patriarchy harmed men as well as women, were co-opted by Betty Friedan and NOW and were reported and written as such in *The New York Times*. This was an event of singular importance to the sexual revolution with regard to feminism, both in the United States as well as in Britain which the American movement influenced.

Where 1970 was marked merely staying the course for *The New York Times* regarding the overall structure of the discourse found within its columns and pages, it was transformational for the *Los Angeles Times*. For the first half of the year, the newspaper stuck to old patterns, stressing the progressive modernist message, consistent with its conservative bias. One article from April 1970 repeatedly invoked bellicose imagery with regards to women’s liberation, noting ‘The new surge of woman power shows in everything from bra burnings to office sit-ins to protest discrimination against the female of the species.’<sup>384</sup> The

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<sup>383</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>384</sup> ‘Sex Battle Seen as a Long Siege,’ *Los Angeles Times*, 23 April 1970, p. E9.

articles tone was pessimistic, quoting its interviewed expert as stating ‘There will be no magical transformation to a state of sexual equality...we are in for a long, hard, cultural, legal, and political battle...it will scarcely be won by...quickie skirmishes....’<sup>385</sup> Another article blatantly favoured the male viewpoint in a poll. The headline read ‘Wife-Mother Called Women’s Major Role,’ while the article deliberately stated that this was the view of ‘60% of the men...Only 43% of the women agreed.’<sup>386</sup> Another article predicted that the ‘current push for reform will burn out in four or five years.’<sup>387</sup> However, in August 1970, just days before the Women’s Strike for Equality was to be staged across the country, the newspaper abruptly changed tack. Leading the first page of the second section of the paper, the article ‘Women’s “Lib” Groups Plan Nationwide Strike’ was the first to sympathise and identify with women’s liberation and the aims of ‘second-wave’ feminism that the newspaper had ever ran. Interestingly, rather than appeal to the reader emotionally, the author chose instead to employ detailed evidence that illustrated the legitimate grievances with a male-dominated society the movement could prove. Among these were pay inequity, lack of employment options in male-dominated fields, and a dearth of opportunity in higher education. Some gains too, particularly in employment practices were heralded by the author and she praised women’s liberation organisations for recognising this. Also of note were the demands of the National Organization for Women for the strike. The author was clear to note that they were ‘four-fold: Free 24-hour child care centres. Free abortion on demand. Passage of the equal rights amendment. Complete equality for women in employment and education.’<sup>388</sup> These four demands were listed in every issue of the Women’s Liberation Workshop newsletter.<sup>389</sup> The inclusion of the four demands was by no small means

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<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> ‘Wife-Mother Called Women’s Major Role,’ *Los Angeles Times*, 14 June 1970, p. I19.

<sup>387</sup> Kenneth J. Fanucchi, ‘Will Women Achieve Equality?: Male Doubts,’ *Los Angeles Times*, 12 July 1970, p. AF A1.

<sup>388</sup> Dorothy Townsend, ‘Women’s ‘Lib’ Groups Plan Nationwide Strike,’ *Los Angeles Times*, 23 August 1970, p. B5.

<sup>389</sup> London, Women’s Library: London School of Economics and Political Science, Records of Women In Media, Women’s Liberation, Information Files, 6WIM/F/14.

a departure for this newspaper. When combined with the pro-feminist evidence and other anecdotal evidence in the article, it clearly signalled a departure from the progressive modern narrative espoused in the editorial bias of the newspaper towards a pro-feminist narrative, or more specifically a distinct shift in discourses of freedom to discourses of liberation. Such a shift was not immediate; one article citing the radicalisation of women's liberation detracted from such a shift, however, the general trend was towards a pro-feminist stance. The article covering the aftermath of the national strike day, 'Nation Gets Eyeful, Earful From Women' was equally conciliatory towards feminist aims. While the author did draw attention to negative commentary, quoting U.S. Senator Jennings Randolph calling leaders of the women's liberation movement a "small band of bra-less bubbleheads," he also drew attention to the Presidential Proclamation in support of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women gaining the right to vote and linked it to the strike itself.<sup>390</sup> This being the influence of discourses of socio-political freedom but not discourses of liberation. The final article supporting a feminist narrative advocated the position of NOW. Aileen Hernandez was quoted as stating 'the Women's Lib movement represents "the revolution of the majority."<sup>391</sup> The remainder of the article was framed as espousing this viewpoint. Thus, the *Los Angeles Times*, long clinging to a more conservative worldview regarding social discourse surrounding feminism, demonstrated a clear shift towards a more liberated stance; itself a hallmark of sexual revolution.

### United States – 1975

The final peak in coverage for American quality press coverage of feminism and women's rights occurred in 1975. Where previous peaks in coverage marked a transition

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<sup>390</sup> Haynes Johnson, 'Nation Gets Eyeful, Earful From Women,' *Los Angeles Times*, 27 August 1970, p. 16

<sup>391</sup> 'NOW PRESIDENT HAILS VICTORIES BY WOMLIB,' *Los Angeles Times*, 14 December 1970, p. E2.

towards greater presence of affirmation of feminist ideals within the media discourse, 1975 instead revealed a backsliding of progressive attitudes in both American newspapers. As 1975 was also International Women's Year, it was doubly embarrassing for American feminists.

Coverage in *The New York Times* could best be categorised by two competing, yet related strands of thought. The first was the embarrassment surrounding the lacklustre response to International Women's Year and the second was the slow fragmentation of women's liberation as a movement. Germaine Greer first articulated the embarrassment surrounding International Women's Year, in her article that ran on 09 May 1975. As it also ran verbatim in the British quality press, it makes little sense to include the same analysis again. However, Greer's pointed dissatisfaction echoed throughout the remainder of the year. In a rare show of bipartisan agreement, a Republican Senator and a Democratic Representative publically denounced the lack of support for International Women's Year. The article noted 'The United Nations, the United States Government, and Congress were called hypocritical today for espousing women's rights but not clearing blockages that prevent those rights being enjoyed.'<sup>392</sup> Additionally, they also said that '...the United Nations risked making a mockery of Women's Year by inadequate funding and by perpetuating lopsided male-female job ratios.'<sup>393</sup> Heidi Sipila, the secretary general for IWY responded by reminding all parties that the United Nations has no enforcement power, but that the conference in Mexico City 'would be the best chance yet for women to push their governments to make changes that would improve the status of women.'<sup>394</sup> This was certainly a far cry from the 'aspirational' declaration passed by the United Nations in 1967. Unfortunately, the pessimism did not leave the tone of articles devoted to coverage of International Women's Year.

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<sup>392</sup> 'U.S. AND U.N. SAID TO HINDER WOMEN: They Are Called Hypocrites by Members of Congress,' *The New York Times*, 15 May 1975, p. 7.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

The article 'The Selling of Women's Year 1975: U.N. Is Finding It No Easy Matter' did little to instil confidence in the article's author and that carried over to the audience. There was confusion regarding promotion of the year and events related to it. However, the greatest blow to the movement came from within the feminist ranks. As author Kathleen Teltsch termed it, the real enemy was 'The Danger of Boring.'<sup>395</sup> Germaine Greer herself was quoted expressing disdain for the conference calling it 'a sop thought up by "some good guys."<sup>396</sup> This lack of enthusiasm from a noted feminist was a by-blow to the conference in Mexico City and to International Women's Year as a whole and served to lower readers' expectations. This narrative was also echoed in Judy Klemsrud's article later that same month. Klemsrud carefully walked back the US and feminist agenda by conceding that perhaps it had not properly been thought through. The author noted that the keynote speaker Daniel Parker had to give up time to share the stage with Patricia Hutar, head of the US delegation, and that a substantial shift in message had taken place because of the mood at the conference. She noted 'Before the conference, the United States stood stiffly against the third-world view that a reordered world economy should precede a concerted fight for female equality,' and that following the shift, the message stated "'We in the United States are committed to pursuit of the combined International Women's Year goal of equality and development although recognizing that achieving this long-run goal implies, for us as no doubt for others, modifications in many existing economic and social structures."<sup>397</sup> This abrupt shift in message signalled not only the embarrassment of American feminists on the international stage, but also the underlying issues within the feminist movement itself – most notably the reliance upon white, heterosexual, middle-class experiences of feminism.

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<sup>395</sup> Kathleen Teltsch, 'The Selling of Women's Year 1975: U.N. Is Finding It No Easy Matter,' *The New York Times*, 4 June 1975, p. 45.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Judy Klemsrud, 'Americans Ease Stand At Women's Conference,' *The New York Times*, 25 June 1975, p. 7.

The collapse of the American feminist movement was also chronicled in *The New York Times*. While the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment proved the focus of the *Los Angeles Times*, in *The New York Times*, coverage centred upon the issues involved when trying to pool so many diverse groups and viewpoints under one label – a so-called ‘big tent’ philosophy for the feminist movement. Barbara Mikulski, then a Baltimore City Council Member and later a United States Senator cautioned feminists to respect the beliefs of those who disagreed with them. Of special note were Mikulski’s comments regarding working class women: ‘Twenty million European ethnic Catholic women in and around eight industrial cities across the country have “mixed feelings about the women’s movement,” Mrs. Mikulski said. “They don’t like to hear about role-changing and changing life styles” that hint at derogation of wifeness and motherhood...but they are all for day-care centers, health benefits, reform of Social Security and improved pensions.’<sup>398</sup> This issue with a ‘big tent’ was spun by the newspaper as a problem with ‘American Diversity.’<sup>399</sup> It was also complicated by age, generation gap becoming an issue. The great shift of discourses of freedom and liberation had happened and intermingled but had also now begun to backslide.

On 8 November 1975, The New York Times printed a range of opinion feminism. Entitled ‘A Feminist? Definition Varies With the Woman,’ the article surveyed twenty women and how each conceptualised feminism. Most agreed that a feminist was a person who respected the fundamental human rights of each gender. Betty Friedan defined a feminist as ‘...one who believes in, and is committed to, the idea of true equality between the sexes, and that means the development of women to their fullest potential and full partnership, and participation by women in all decisions of society.’<sup>400</sup> Actress Marlo Thomas stated ‘A feminist is a man or a woman who already knows for a fact that men and women are equal, and who

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<sup>398</sup> Edith Evans Asbury, 'Feminists Cautioned on Attitude Toward Other Women's Work,' *The New York Times*, 26 June 1975, p. 43.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

<sup>400</sup> 'A Feminist? Definition Varies With the Woman,' *The New York Times*, 8 November 1975, p. 48.

wants society to wake up to that fact, so the world can stop operating at half-strength.<sup>401</sup> While a gender neutral, or gender inclusive stance was the most common, the article did contain a significant minority who were convinced that feminism was strictly for women alone. Lin Farley, a founder of 'Radicalesbians' described a feminist as '...a woman who knows she's oppressed, who responds to that oppression by fighting it, and who realizes that she can change nothing alone; she is a sister.'<sup>402</sup> Ti-Grace Atkinson and Barbara Seaman concurred with a gender exclusive definition. The full range of opinions demonstrated both the strengths and weaknesses of the 'big tent' approach. On the one hand, the diversity of opinion revealed that feminism was widespread and attracted women from many walks of life, but on the other showed just how many points of contention could arise from within the collective voices of the movement. Perhaps most grave to the feminist movement came in the form of an editorial ran in the same edition as the plethora of feminist definitions. Entitled 'Save the Movement,' the editorial staff of *The New York Times* had the last word on the newspaper's support of moderated feminism. After detailing the recent defeats of the Equal Rights Amendment they stated unequivocally:

'Like so many sound and necessary reform drives of the past decade, the women's movement has increasingly allowed itself to be dominated, at least in the publicity that surrounds it, by radical splinter groups and issues which lack support among the majority of women. Strident voices raised, under the banner of women's rights, on behalf of greater sexual freedom, lesbianism and the so-called open family, to cite examples, have tended to drown out the urgent need to guarantee equal protection under the law and non-discrimination in employment, pay and promotion...The cause of equal rights for all Americans is too important to be undermined by linking it with – or letting it be submerged by – extreme or extraneous philosophies that cannot command broad support.'<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> 'Save the Movement,' *The New York Times*, 8 November 1975, p. 22.

The movement was under fire; *The New York Times* had said so. Nevertheless, the newspaper remained committed to a moderate definition of feminism, one that skilfully blended the discourses of freedom and liberation, perhaps not realizing their own role in the downfall of feminism as ‘sexual revolution,’ by giving the radical voices a forum for their concerns and demands to be heard, or even despite it, and still excluding the most radical points of view from the version of feminist discourse it sought to construct.

The *Los Angeles Times*, despite their shift towards a pro-feminist and pro-liberation stance in 1970, backtracked in 1975. Though they too printed articles that were conscious of the disappointment of International Women’s Year, their primary focus was the discord in the feminist ranks revealed primarily through attacks on the Equal Rights Amendment. That is not to say there were no exceptions to this trend, however, the conservative bias the newspaper was known for reasserted itself with renewed vigour in 1975 overall.

Two articles stood out from the rest in advancing the anti-feminist cause. The first article ran on 13 April 1975, was a glowing portrait of Phyllis Schlafly, leader of the campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment; the author portrayed her as nothing less than an all-American hero, calling her ‘a star-spangled battler against the Equal Rights Amendment.’<sup>404</sup> The article argued heavily on her history as a self-made woman and noted that ‘Except for her stand against the Equal Rights Amendment, Phyllis Schlafly would stand as the personification of what the feminist movement points to with pride as a liberated woman.’<sup>405</sup> Throughout the article, Schlafly was heavily quoted denying the legitimacy of feminist aims and agendas. She was keen to tell the author what Betty Friedan thought of her, stating “‘Betty Friedan once said to me. ‘I’d like to burn you at the stake!’ Well I’m not going to be intimidated by Friedan.’”<sup>406</sup> In most ways, Schlafly was the anti-Friedan, the closest the United States came to its own

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<sup>404</sup> Stan Isaacs, 'I Do What I Want to Do', *Los Angeles Times*, 13 April 1975, p. F18

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.



Margaret Thatcher; Schlafly was a woman, but not a sister. The other article that inflamed the passions of the anti-feminist agenda was a detailed look at the Stop ERA organisation in California and its leader Maurine Startup. She was keen to reclaim the majority of women as aligned with her own views, instead of the majority siding with feminists. This competition for ownership of majority characterised much of 1975 and indeed the late 1970s in the American quality press. Particularly important was that this article did not concede the possibility that Mrs Startup might be wrong on the question of whom the majority sided with in the struggle for women's rights. Also important was the conclusion of the article, which stated "I love the idea that women have a freedom of choice. But under ERA we will give it up. I want to fight to rescind ERA so we can have more rather than give up more."<sup>407</sup> The return to a socially progressive, yet by this point non-feminist viewpoint, and championing more conservative principles reveals clearly that not only was the ERA under serious threat (it would never be ratified) but also that the social underpinnings of the feminist movement were not as secure as its leaders and their supporters in the quality press would have liked the public to believe. This was not so much a rejection of feminism as it was a rejection of the overall shift in the discourses of freedom and liberation that constituted sexual revolution. The end of the ERA was a bizarre paradox; it came about only because of the movements that had worked and fought so persistently for its enacting only to have it be foiled by women and men who wanted the society that feminism had already achieved.

### Summary of United States Coverage of Feminism

In contrast to the narratives of feminism within the British quality press, the American quality press lacked the reliance upon older definitions of the term feminism at the beginning

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<sup>407</sup> 'Equal Rights Foa, a woman, Tells Why,' *Los Angeles Times*, 13 July 1975, p. SG8.

of the 1960s. Despite recognising a fundamental dysfunction in the basic social relations between men and women, the American quality press pursued a progressive, socially equal narrative for women, but ultimately non-functional in the discussion and promotion of women's rights. Although the shift from mere political to fuller socio-political equality quality happened earlier in the quality press narrative, the term feminism remained unpopular, even following the rise of the National Organization for Women. Until the rise of radical feminists and radical organisations, the American quality press tended to emphasise human rights and clung to the socially progressive narrative rather than embrace feminism as a term and concept; tended to favour discourses that promoted freedom rather than discourses that promoted liberation. It was only through the years of 1967, 1968, and 1970 that sexual revolution was realised and shaped within the American quality press.

The final major element of discourse surrounding feminism in the American quality press was the issue of ownership and being a voice for the majority. This was compounded by the decline in broad support for the 'big tent' of feminism. The American quality press placed the blame for this decline on the radical feminist groups, distinct from the National Organization for Women, essentially ending the sexual revolution by reverting to discourses of socio-political freedoms over discourses of liberation. However, through the exercise of the dialectic, a new discursive formation was created, the discourses of socio-political freedoms had been transformed. Above all, the discourses in the American quality press espoused moderation and combination; it is without question that the editorial policies and actions of the newspapers contributed to this reality.

## Chapter Conclusions

Feminism during the period from 1960 to 1979 was as Rosalind Delmar argued a realisation that women suffered discrimination based on their biological sex and that they had specific socio-political needs that were not being met. Feminists during this period came together in recognition of this basic principle but were not guided solely by it. Class, power dynamics, personal worldviews, economic disparities: all were inherent to and affected the identities of the women and men who espoused the basic principle that there were fundamental inequalities for women in Western society. These women and men constructed an identity and political movements to address these inequalities and their stories and experiences contribute the rich and colourful history of this time. However, for the quality press in both Great Britain and in the United States, the feminist was a Caucasian, heterosexual, woman (or man, though far less common) of the middle classes with the traits and inherent qualities of those identities. This was both a function of demographics as well as power structures and economic realities of media ownership and representation. As a result, these quality newspapers constructed a definition of a movement and its actors around these qualities and the version of history that plays out in their columns is necessarily biased in favour of those qualities and identities. This is by no means to say such a narrative is inherently better or worse than others, merely that its inherent bias was accounted for and understood.

Despite such a clear-cut identification of feminism as an ideology and a set of identities, defining them as a movement has caused no end of problems for historians. Feminism during this period was a series of related movements that may have had ideologically different origins or geneses, but eventually and naturally intersected or interacted with each other as part of a series of cultural evolutions and sexual revolutions.

The sexual revolution in the context of feminism was the public realisation, experience and discussion of the myriad issues facing women during the period ranging from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s. More importantly, these realisations, experiences and discussions were played out in the pages of the quality press. Just as in political revolutions, the dialectic of freedom and liberation asserted itself in the discourses of sexual norms and mores in many places, as well as in the ideological space of the newspaper. The exact date of the beginning of a sexual revolution is not as easy to isolate as that of a political revolution, whereby the ideological struggle of the dialectic has already spun itself out into action. Rather, it was necessary to discover the marked shift in the discourses of newspaper articles by examining their content between those discourses that favoured socio-political freedoms for women and those of liberation from the confines of society that by most accounts operated under a biased and broken socio-political system. Most importantly, the sexual revolution was this conflict of discourses that resulted in the construction of a distinct identity for feminism and feminists by the quality press itself. The outcome of that conflict was one which unquestionably favoured socio-political freedoms over pure liberation from societal oppression. It is tempting to call this a rebellion, or insurrection rather than a revolution. However, because society was ultimately transformed through the dialectical struggle between competing discourses, it must therefore be termed a revolution.

More than just an ideological struggle, the sexual revolution in the context of feminism and the women's movement was the realisation and actualisation of new power dynamics at work during this period. There was a distinct shift from post-war status quo to idealism to pragmatism in much the same way as was observed of the first-wave feminist movement. Just as in the feminist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the movement had prominent leaders, idolised and loathed in equal measure by respective strata of society, but unlike Elizabeth Cady Stanton or Susan B. Anthony, or Emmeline Pankhurst or Millicent

Garrett Fawcett, the leaders of this feminist movement understood how to manipulate mass media in a way that was unprecedented. Certainly, Betty Friedan above all understood how to put herself and the interests of women for which she advocated in the best light – brooking and receiving little to no opposition in the quality press during the period itself.

The sexual revolution in the feminist context with regards to class is less important than regarding commodification. Though certainly class impacted commodification, it bears little importance in how the quality press understood and constructed feminism throughout most of the period, only touching upon it after the dialectical struggle between freedom and liberation had run its course and the Western feminist movement came into direct conflict with the needs and concerns of women in less developed economies. Commodification, however, was vitally important and was understood as the implicit method by which feminism was sold to the public.

It is fair to say that in fact there was more than one sexual revolution or that there was a series of emergences of new, related discursive formations. Though the women's movement in both Britain and the United States was born of common ideology, the revolutions it created were siblings but not twins; one older, one younger.

In Great Britain, the sexual revolution in the context of feminism in the quality press was a late starter, growing from the American feminist movement and heavily influenced by it. The quality press reflected a progression from a post-war status quo that recognised first-wave definitions of the term 'feminist' and 'feminism'. The feminist movement began as an outmoded concept of political enfranchisement and slowly evolved into a 'new' movement that espoused and lobbied for fuller socio-political equality; harnessing not only like-minded women, but politically prominent men as well. The press discourses, so rich in content espousing socio-political freedoms only began to be challenged by liberatory discourses in 1968 but the full debate between the competing ideological positions did not occur until 1970, signifying that the revolution began for the quality press at that time; however, a social

revolution must be judged by the affect it has on most of a society and thus 1970 would be a better date for its realisation by society at large. The earlier milestones of 1966 and 1967 might be characterised as evolutionary, but certainly not revolutionary.

It was in 1970 that the British quality press began to directly influence sexual revolution in the feminist context by using editorial control to publish stories that not only painted women's liberation and liberatory discourses in a better light, but also actively sought to curb the most extreme views of those liberatory discourses by employing authors who constructed a more moderate constructed feminist identity through their writing, as well as eliminating those more radical elements of feminist ideology from the press discourse through editorial control. Such direct manipulation of liberatory discourses continued until 1975 and 1976 when socio-political freedoms were reasserted in a majority in the press discourse. The later articles in 1976 and 1979 implicitly argued for a sexual revolution, though not necessarily in the way one might have expected it to have occurred nor with the outcome which so many feminists, journalists and members of the public alike, might have desired.

The United States, for multiple reasons, remained more ideologically heterogeneous than Britain and this was reflected in the quality press discourses of feminism throughout the period. More conservative than Britain during this period, the assertion of greater socio-political freedoms in press discourses did not occur until 1967 when at least in one newspaper the pace of change reached a breakneck pace. Still, these changes to the discourses of greater socio-political freedoms did not constitute revolution. Unlike Britain where the feminist movement was clearly differentiated by the ideological positions of the different aspects of the movement, in the United States the ideological divide was more muddled. Betty Friedan was hailed as a revolutionary, indeed constructed as such by the quality press, but Ti-Grace Atkinson was characterised as even more militant than she, creating a standoff. It was this

standoff that signalled the beginning of sexual revolution in the feminist context in 1968 in the American quality press.

However, it was in 1970 that the American quality press began to actively manipulate the discourse in favour of an ideological position. This was most apparent in the coverage of the National Women's Strike for Equality in August 1970, as the strike prompted both quality newspapers of this study to publish articles that effectively co-opted elements of liberatory discourses into discourses of greater socio-political freedoms. By 1975, however, the manipulation of discourses and indeed the sexual revolution in the feminist context had ended in the United States as there was a clear distinction between socio-political freedoms discourses and liberatory discourses which were virtually non-existent, having either had their ideas co-opted or radical elements excluded by editors.

The sexual revolutions in Britain and the United States, though strikingly similar due to the ideological pedigree of second-wave feminist thought, played themselves out in different ways. The analogy for the sexual revolution in the feminist context in Britain might be most closely related to the French revolution, by which the most extreme ideological elements of competing discourses were purged in favour of a more moderate result – in Britain the post-war status quo of traditional chauvinism and the radical lesbian feminist screeds were excluded from the quality press discourses, with only the latter making token appearances and being subsequently dismissed, and the former missing from the frame of analysis entirely. In the United States, the sexual revolution in the feminist context might most closely be the analogue of the Russian revolution, by which there were successive waves of liberation from the oppressive strictures of patriarchal domination of society. Though, it must be conceded that the analogy falls apart when the socio-political freedoms wing of the movement adopted ideological elements of the more radical liberatory faction and proved victorious where that was not the case in the political situation of the Russian Empire.

As to the question of the role of the press as being 'feminist, the answer is complicated. The quality press was 'feminist' in that they recognised to a certain extent, the fundamental inequalities that affected women, and actively worked in their own fashion to remedy those fundamental inequalities by altering perceptions regarding the role of women in society through articles framing 'feminism' and 'feminists' as advocating for basic human rights and social measures of equality that a majority already favoured. As to the 'radical' nature of various feminists or indeed feminism itself, it must be noted that 'radical' is subject to historical relativism, what is radical in one year, may be 'mainstream' the next. In the context of publications run by the elite for both the elite and the popular, the construction of what was 'radical' has important and relative implications.

The quality press provided a space for the public discussion of the inequalities which women faced, but also and more importantly engaged in a manipulation of the discourses that were consumed by the public at large, leading to a new discursive formation. While this new discursive formation was not necessarily what of women's liberationists or even the less radical members of the 'second-wave' of feminism may have wanted, it does not discount the role the quality press played in a sexual revolution, or that society was fundamentally transformed to some degree.



## CHAPTER 2: OBSCENITY, PORNOGRAPHY, AND PERMISSIVENESS

No study of quality newspaper attitudes towards ‘sexual revolution’ would be complete without an analysis of obscenity and the general trend towards permissiveness throughout the period. The evolution of discourse in both Great Britain and the United States during the period from 1959 to the end of 1979 with regards to this topic was diverse and interaction between author, editor, and reader remains extremely complex. However, as with the topic of feminism, the discourse can be studied in greater detail by employing the use of frame analysis. Doing so allows for the analysis of ‘peaks’ in coverage as well as the exceptions to those peaks, or when the media discourse evolved without a significant increase in overall coverage. Over the course of the chapter, I detail the ‘peaks’ in coverage, the evolution of discourses surrounding obscenity, pornography, and the permissive society, and a broad analysis of the overall tone of the articles, and the socio-political biases demonstrated on the part of quality newspapers.

### Literature Review

#### The Birth of the Permissive Society

Scholarly literature exploring the permissive society is both ample and diverse, with studies that delve into the mass of contradictions and confluences surrounding the late 1950s and 1960s. It was an age of affluence, where the problems of the Second World War were stripped away by a tidal wave of culture and change all in a shadow of nuclear war. Often, it is tempting to dive straight into the excesses of the 1960s, but when assessing the shifts in cultural

and social norms, a brief look at the twilight of the 1950s provides a necessary perspective for how the 1960s and then the 1970s were decades of transformation on a large scale. In terms of understanding a ‘sexual revolution’ from the perspective of permissiveness, a grounding in the literature is necessary.

Although there are several scholars who have examined the contradictions of the 1950s versus the 1960s, three stand out. Elaine Tyler May wrote extensively on the cultural idiosyncrasies of the 1950s, noting that the impetus for later change came from a significant shift within the 1950s themselves. Of great concern were parents of the post-war generation, the progenitors of the so-called ‘baby boomers.’ May asserted that it was their attitudes that implicitly guided their children to new experiences than the ones they themselves had endured, noting “‘These postwar parents wanted to leave a different legacy to their children than the one provided by the model of their own lives.’<sup>408</sup> She also drew heavily from a thesis regarding sexual ‘containment,’ arguing that while parents of baby boomers were themselves more in favour of marriage before sexual intercourse, they did not advocate the same for their children to a degree that might seem puritanical, noting ‘Baby boomers did not abandon the quest for intimacy and sexual fulfilment; they simply abandoned the marital imperative.’<sup>409</sup> For May, the 1960s were an afterthought of permissiveness in regards to sexual norms and mores, a realisation of the more subtle changes that occurred in the 1950s.

Alan Petigny too, favoured a thesis that the 1950s were far more important than the 1960s in terms of a sexual revolution, both in his book that examines the permissive mediated society of the 1950s, as well as in his articles reviewing sexual cultures in the United States.<sup>410</sup> The problem with this article however is that it focuses on behaviour and not on attitudes toward behavior. Most scholars would argue it is the latter which is important - for it is both a

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<sup>408</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward bound : American families in the Cold War era* (New York, 1988), p. 213.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid*, p. 222.

<sup>410</sup> See Alan Petigny, *The permissive society : America, 1941-1965* (New York, 2009)

change in sexual norms and mores that would account for a transformation of culture, thereby fulfilling a sexual 'revolution'. Petigny clings to Marwick's thesis that 'revolution' in terms of the period was transformative. Equally as important was the role of media in a transformation of behaviours. Petigny cited two works, first John C. Burnham, who argued for an active media role in changing premarital sexual behaviour: '... "the media invented and promoted as much as it described change." The media's intense focus on "personal fulfilment," he continued, "fuelled increases in premarital sexual activity."' <sup>411</sup> Petigny also cited D'Emillio and Freedman, as well as Ira Reiss, in predicting a sexual revolution in the 1960s. The argument that the prediction for a sexual revolution (absent any definition of the word) would occur in the 1960s, citing a slew of articles in popular American periodicals that seems to indicate his causality was correct, whether a sexual revolution had indeed occurred at all. <sup>412</sup> Thus a permissive society had to exist prior to the emergence of permissive behaviours for Petigny, and it was the attitudes permitting the open acknowledgment of more relaxed social norms and mores regarding sex and sexual practices that are more indicative than the behaviour itself.

Frank Mort took a similar stance to Petigny in the consideration of Great Britain as having experienced a general relaxation of social norms and mores regarding sexual behaviour prior to the invention of 'Swinging London.' Mort's survey of the period spanning 1953 through 1963 focused a great deal on the physical spaces in which the traditional bounds of sexual norms and mores were relaxed. He chronicled the rise of Soho as a sex capital where one could '...frequent sordid all-night cafés...' and the actors who participated in turning London into a permissive metropolis. <sup>413</sup> Mort notes that the term of 'permissive society' and indeed the term 'permissiveness' was '...a slippery term that conceals as much as it reveals

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<sup>411</sup>Petigny, 'Illegitimacy, Postwar Psychology, and the Reperiodization of the Sexual Revolution', , footnote 30, p. 70.

<sup>412</sup>Ibid., pp. 70-71.

<sup>413</sup>Frank Mort, *Capital affairs : London and the making of the permissive society* (New Haven, 2010), p. 236.

about contemporary sexual myths...'<sup>414</sup> The processes, instances, and trajectory he illustrates show that the 1950s and the early 1960s were as full of contradictions regarding sexual norms and mores more than it was in a clear progressive or permissive track. Key, however, was his final observation on the Profumo Affair. The scandal was '...neither the beginning or the end of this story of social change, but it did mark the intensification of a process that had deep-seated origins and long-term consequences.'<sup>415</sup>

Jeffrey Weeks conceptualised permissiveness as a host of concepts and attitudes from legal or political to sociological. These concepts presented themselves in different ways through different means. A history of the period of the 1960s and the 1970s is for all intents and purposes, a history of permissiveness and the so-called 'permissive society.' Though citing the Wolfenden Committee report as the beginning of the separation of law from morality, Weeks argued that instead it is better to examine the '...balance of liberalisation and control the rationale for the changes.'<sup>416</sup> The permissive society can often be understood in the context of the now clichéd phrase of 'sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.' Youth understood, or came to understand the actions and consequences of these practices and experiences far differently than did their parents or grandparents during this period. The permissive society, on balance, was the social and political reaction to these changes and far from being reactionary, accepted them. What is crucial to understanding such a 'permissive society' is how public opinion shifted to allow such acceptance. The permissive society did not just happen overnight. As Weeks remarked on Hobsbawm, illustrating the importance of majority in understandings of social norms, a mass-consumption society relies upon its largest market.<sup>417</sup>

For Jeffrey Escoffier, the permissive society was not synonymous with sexual revolution, rather it was a forerunner. He was intrigued by the unique alliances of diverse

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<sup>414</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>415</sup>Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>416</sup>Weeks, *Sex, politics and society : the regulation of sexuality since 1800* , p. 325.

<sup>417</sup>Ibid., p. 323, NB: See Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, (Penguin, Harmondsworth), 1969, ch. 13.

societal subsets: ‘...an odd coalition between principled First Amendment activists, porn entrepreneurs, sex radicals, feminists, gay activists and other sexual minorities. It was these battles that initiated the broad cultural changes that became identified as "the sexual revolution" of the 1960s and 1970s.’<sup>418</sup> Escoffier’s analysis was more of a snapshot, looking less at the process by which obscenity pervaded culture, rather more at the general trend throughout the period. Obscenity and sex were quite synonymous in the United States until a legal case brought to the United States Supreme Court in 1957. Escoffier, as well as many legal scholars, cite this case as the midwife to the end of broad censorship by government in terms of sex or sexual materials.<sup>419</sup>

### Permissiveness, the Permissive Society, and Obscenity

More broadly, obscenity and its iterations in pornography proved to be excellent markers for the evolution of a permissive society. In Britain, as in the United States, the legal cases brought against many obscene publications were breeding grounds for liberalization. As Jeffrey Weeks noted in the case of Britain that a ‘...sense of fundamental change in the cultural foundations of Britain that fuelled a new mobilization on the moral Right. Just as the new sexual radicals saw sexual change as both a harbinger and focus for wider social transformation, so conservatives saw sexual change as symbolic of a wider breakdown in social order.’<sup>420</sup> The failure of the state to continue to censor as time went on spawned a response from the moral right-wing who felt it was their sacred duty to preserve traditional norms and mores as regarded sex and sexual practices, but as Weeks noted, this was instead the beginning

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<sup>418</sup>Escoffier, 'Pornography, Perversity and the Sexual Revolution', in Hekma and Giami, p. 211.

<sup>419</sup>Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>420</sup>Weeks, *The world we have won : the remaking of erotic and intimate life* , p. 93.

of the end. The National Viewers and Listeners Association headed by Mary Whitehouse and the National Festival of Light were remarkable and successful, however, ‘...in the longer term it proved counter-productive for the conservative cause. It set the terms of the debate and mobilized the lesbian and gay community, and behind it liberal opinion.’<sup>421</sup>

Leon Hunt was careful to distinguish between ‘permissiveness’ and a ‘permissive society,’ noting that permissiveness ‘...had repercussions for diverse sections of the population,’ where a permissive society was ‘...a middle-class, arts-related, metropolitan phenomenon.’<sup>422</sup> Trials such as those for *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, or *Oh! Calcutta!*, or *Oz* magazine, were as Hunt described them ““high permissiveness”,’ an outgrowth of the permissive society and part of a London-dominated understanding of the period.<sup>423</sup> Where Hunt felt that more change occurred was in lower culture, in the commercial successes of the *Carry On...* films and more of their like, in everyday cultural consumption and not in the theatre or the courts. The ‘low culture’ was far more effective, and as Hunt observed:

‘By the 1970s, the sex industries were flourishing while the moral campaigners were making short work of what was left of the “underground”. There were two reasons for this. First, the pornocrats worked with capitalism – they were, as Whitehouse observed, “the unacceptable face of capitalism”...The second reason was that the law was, by and large, on their side.’<sup>424</sup>

Hunt perceived the ‘low culture’ to be against a modernizing narrative, as it was something of a regression to the lowest cultural common denominator, without acknowledging that it too may have a part of an ongoing sexual revolution.

Marcus Collins, writing broadly on the permissive society, lent the movement a unique periodization. Though writing exclusively on the British experience, he broadened the

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<sup>421</sup>Ibid., p. 94. Also see Amy C. Whipple, ‘Speaking for Whom? The 1971 Festival of Light and the Search for the ‘Silent Majority’, *Contemporary British History* 24, no. 3 (2010) for a larger perspective on the Festival of Light as a movement.

<sup>422</sup>Leon Hunt, *British low culture : from safari suits to sexploitation* (London ; New York, 1998), p. 21.

<sup>423</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>424</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

definition of 'permissiveness' and set distinct limits for its emergence and pervasion. He first dated the dawn of the permissive moment to 1963 and noted that '...1968 represented the high noon for their ambitions, a year of exhilaration and confrontation in which "the new world waited to be born."<sup>425</sup> However, it was 1967 that provided the intellectual compartmentalization for 'permissiveness' and it was *IT*, the underground newspaper that articulated the essence of the feelings behind the term. Quoting Editor Tom McGrath, Collins defined 'permissiveness' as a '..."manifestation" of a whole "new attitude": "Permissiveness - the individual should be free from hindrances by external Law or internal guilt in his pursuit of pleasure so long as he does not impinge on others."<sup>426</sup> This sets up a way to analyse 'permissiveness' in the context of a sexual revolution. If as McGrath observed, it was the desire to be free from restriction that would indicate a desire for liberation, rather than freedom in an Aristotelian sense. The failure in whole or in part of such a 'new attitude' would seem to indicate an assertion by the rest of a free society, that the existing norms and mores were fine as they were, exerting the control of the will of society.

This struggle, the dialectic of freedom and liberation, which occurred in this period was complicated by issues of generation. Colin Campbell understood that the core issue of a permissive society was generation gap. As he noted:

'At the heart of this movement was a unique alliance of generational and life-cycle conflict, one in which two separate critiques appeared to overlap - that of teenager against adult and that of generation against generation (the baby boomers versus their predecessors)...Although generational conflict was nothing new, what made the crucial difference was the emergence of a distinct and distinctly rebellious teenage subculture, open to all those who could afford to buy into its music and fashions.'<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>425</sup>Collins, *The permissive society and its enemies : sixties British culture* , p. 5.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>427</sup>Colin Campbell, 'Beatniks, Moral Crusaders, Delinquent Teenagers and Hippies: Accounting for the Counterculture', in Marcus Collins (ed) *The permissive society and its enemies : sixties British culture* (London, 2007), p. 110.

This teenage subculture, the result of an affluent society, is revolutionary in and of itself. However, Arthur Marwick disagreed with this interpretation, arguing that because there was a cultural transformation, generation gap was not a valid causal explanation. Permissiveness, understood as a transformative new attitude '...did not affect simply a minority of pop stars, "beautiful people"... They transformed the lives of majorities across all the Western countries, as permissive behaviour was publicised, legitimated and emulated, and moral and physical sanctions against it...faded.'<sup>428</sup> For a transformation to occur, intergenerational squabbles were irrelevant, but it doesn't reveal anything more than evolution, radical evolution, but evolution just the same.

Robert Hewison, writing on the underground movement, explored the underlying philosophy of the permissive society. In his exploration, Hewison noted the effusive praise afforded to Herbert Marcuse, calling him '...the new father-philosopher of the underground...'<sup>429</sup> Marcuse's work drew upon the language of liberation, creating a picture of a personal liberation '...the need for liberation from this affluent but repressive society. Revolution was impossible, since there was no mass basis for one, and anyway, revolutions tend to replace one form of oppression with another. What was needed was an imaginative change that of necessity had to appear extraordinary.'<sup>430</sup> The irony is that in setting up a position of liberation from a free society, Marcuse was inadvertently participating in starting a social revolution, while calling for imaginative change instead of political revolution.

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<sup>428</sup> Arthur Marwick, 'The International Context', in Marcus Collins (ed) *The permissive society and its enemies : sixties British culture* (London, 2007), p. 169.

<sup>429</sup> Hewison, *Too much : art and society in the Sixties, 1960-75* , p. 136.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.



## Conceptualising Pornography

Obscenity is often gauged in the language and understanding of pornography. Pornography, as Walter Kendrick argued and Sarah Leonard concurred, ‘...was not a thing, but an argument.’<sup>431</sup> If this is so, then obscene material or pornography is a political and socio-economic expression about the experiences and realities of sex and its meaning within society. As Sarah Leonard noted ‘...consider the thesis that histories of sexuality are not only rooted in new ideas of expertise, but also in the collective experience of new social realities.’<sup>432</sup> The virtual explosion of pornography in the 1960s and 1970s can be considered in some sense to be a radical shift in the discourses of sexual norms and mores. If as Leonard argued ‘Sex and gender roles were political because they were tied explicitly to an agenda of liberation and depression. Sexual repression, according to the parlance of the 1960s and 70s, was symptomatic of a broader culture of hypocrisy - one that ignored and repressed presumably 'natural' and 'healthy' instincts,’ it is possible to view a sexual revolution as a larger cultural conversation regarding sexual norms and mores being hashed out in the access and limitation thereof to pornography or obscene material.<sup>433</sup> A permissive society was one transitioning towards one where such conversation could occur in the open, and not behind closed door by men wielding blue pencils.

Dagmar Herzog echoed this school of thought, agreeing that pornography set in motion a more permissive society, which itself was a component of sexual revolution. As she noted, In Britain in 1964, the first recognizably modern...porn magazine, *King*, hit the stands. A year later Bob Guccione's *Penthouse* was launched, and a year after that *Mayfair*, followed in 1968

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<sup>431</sup>Sarah Leonard, 'Pornography and Obscenity', in Harry Cocks and Matt Houlbrook (eds), *Palgrave advances in the modern history of sexuality* Palgrave advances, (Basingstoke England ; New York, 2006), p. 181 and Walter Kendrick, *The secret museum : pornography in modern culture* (Berkeley ; London, 1987), p. 31.

<sup>432</sup>Leonard, 'Pornography and Obscenity', in , p. 185.

<sup>433</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

by *Penthouse* spin-offs *Forum* and *Lords*.<sup>434</sup> *Playboy*, the American magazine too was wildly successful in Europe, 'In 1966, it was said of the American magazine *Playboy* that "half a million of the four million copies of the monthly" were sold in Europe...'<sup>435</sup> It was the beginning of a public conversation, though many contemporaries would argue a rude or offensive one that began to change Western society.

Marcus Collins, too, noted the distinct power of pornography and its transformation during this period. Whereas pre-permissive pornographers '...held the un-emancipated view that women were ordinarily uninterested in or downright hostile to sex,' permissive pornographers '...were absolutely fascinated by all things feminine... the new pornography was so curious about women because of its conviction that they were experiencing a momentous sexual emancipation.'<sup>436</sup> There had been a sea change in the fundamental understanding of the most intimate norms and mores in society from what was once private and undiscussed towards a society that had changed to what was public and could be discussed openly – even in and especially within the pages of pornographic magazines.

Such liberalization led to subjects ultimately regarded as taboo, as Mark Jones explored in his work surrounding the period. Jones effectively labelled the underground or counterculture as having a 'liberatory agenda,' one dedicated to removing the restraints placed upon social norms that were widely held as right and proper.<sup>437</sup> These included intergenerational and incestuous sex. As Jones noted in his examination of the manuscript *Playpower* by Richard Neville, one passage involved a man having sexual intercourse with an underage girl; 'The elder participant is transgressing the social norm by participating in an illegal act, while the child is being initiated into the counterculture as well as expressing her

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<sup>434</sup>Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe : a twentieth-century history* , p. 139.

<sup>435</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>436</sup>Marcus Collins, 'The Pornography of Permissiveness: Men's Sexuality and Women's Emancipation in Mid Twentieth-Century Britain', *History Workshop Journal* Spring, no. 47 (1999), p. 102 and p. 109.

<sup>437</sup>Mark Jones, 'Down the Rabbit Hole: Permissiveness and Paedophilia in the 1960s', in Marcus Collins (ed) *The permissive society and its enemies : sixties British culture* (London, 2007), p. 125.

inalienable sexual rights.<sup>438</sup> The ‘liberatory agenda’ of the counterculture came into direct confrontation with the limitations on personal freedoms present in society – a textbook revolutionary moment.

So too did feminism take up arms against pornography for its exploitative nature. Sheila Jeffreys, writing in her retrospective analysis of sexual revolution in a feminist understanding, argued that women were excluded from the decision process. She explained:

‘The pornographic revolution of the early 1960s was democratic where sexual orientation was concerned, democratic in the old Athenian sense, of equal male citizens...In this sense decensorship was a vital ingredient of the sexual revolution. Pornography, whether ‘high’ art or ‘trash’, was going to educate a generation in what sex was. The sex of the sexual revolution was constructed to follow the pornographic scenario described above. The banned books and their progeny provided the propaganda of the sexual revolution, and they provided the plot.’<sup>439</sup>

Jeffreys objected to the lack of agency, the heterosexual bias, and the pervasive commodification and singular narrative. However, this was not the view of all women during the period, nor does it erase the revolutionary nature of the relaxation of censorship.<sup>440</sup>

As Gerry Carlin observed in his work on the obscenity trial of the ‘Schoolkids’ issue of underground newspaper *Oz*, the permissive society often came into direct conflict with socialisation of children. Though the entire issue was objectionable to champions of traditional morals and values, obscenity charges were brought against the newspapers editors for the scatological and sexualised parody of beloved children’s cartoon Rupert Bear. Carlin observed that during this period, sex was used as a symbol, for ‘...permissive freedom,

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<sup>438</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>439</sup>Jeffreys, *Anticlimax : a feminist perspective on the sexual revolution*, p. 90.

<sup>440</sup> While the feminist response to pornography was generally against it for the most part, it cannot be summarised here. See Varda Burstyn, ‘Political precedents and moral crusades: women, sex and the state.’, in Varda Burstyn (ed) *Women against censorship* (Vancouver, 1985), Carolyn Bronstein, *Battling pornography : the American feminist anti-pornography movement, 1976-1986* (Cambridge ; New York, 2011), and Grant, *Sexing the millenium: a political history of the sexual revolution* for an introduction to the feminist perspectives concerning pornography; there is a tendency to object to sadism and cruelty towards women over mere exploitation, though exploitation was enough to do so.

liberation and transgression...’ and that in present day we cannot conceive of how radical this was as ‘Sexual images are omnipresent, and to a great extent “naturalized”...’<sup>441</sup> The foil of the permissive society, of sexual liberation was the argument that boiled down to ‘think of the children,’ or ‘what will we tell the children?’ Carlin argued that ‘Rupert Bare’ was ‘to demonstrate that moments of rebellion rapidly became outmoded in a period of accelerating change and remain bound up with, and prey to, recuperation by the system that they oppose.’<sup>442</sup> Children were then, and have since been used to determine the limits of permissiveness.<sup>443</sup> This was a recurring theme throughout the period, on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

In her brief chapter examining sex and social change in Britain over the course of the twentieth century, Lesley Hall was one of the few historians to engage directly with the permissive society, the protection of morals, and the role of the media. In summarising the work of Adrian Bingham, she managed to wend her way into a thesis that provided a direct link between mass media and its interactions with the permissive society and sexual revolution. Where “consenting adults” of either sex might be free to make their own sexual choices in theory, if not in practice, “the young” remained a target for moral reformers,’ the never-ending machine of mass media had to ‘had to find new ways of writing about the perennially sales-gleaning topic of sex.’<sup>444</sup> The analogous conclusion is that so too did other organs of mass media engage more directly with the consequences of a permissive society, yet Hall makes no mention of such a study, nor did she take on the task herself.

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<sup>441</sup>Gerry Carlin, 'Rupert Bare: Art, Obscenity and the Oz Trial', in Marcus Collins (ed) *The permissive society and its enemies : sixties British culture* (London, 2007), p. 144.

<sup>442</sup>Ibid.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup>Hall, *Sex, gender, and social change in Britain since 1880* , p. 162.

## Primary Source Analysis

A full summary of the data used for analysis and to determine peaks in coverage can be found in Appendix II. It is unusual that the peaks in coverage for obscenity, pornography, and the permissive trend aligned dramatically throughout the period for both countries studied. In Britain these peaks occurred in 1960, 1964, 1967, and 1971.<sup>445</sup> In the United States, these peaks occurred in 1960, 1964, 1970, and 1971. This does not discount coverage in other years, but rather allows the articles to be considered in greater detail and demonstrates the overall changes within the discourse.

### United States – 1960

In both Britain and the United States, quality press coverage of obscenity, pornography, and the permissive trend was dominated by coverage of the trials surrounding the publication of the unexpurgated editions of the novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence. An analysis of coverage of these trials within the discourse of the British and American quality press reveals great insight into how discourse evolved during the period. For the peak in coverage for 1960, it is necessary to consider the coverage of trials in both countries, as the one influenced the other, and both are paramount to the understanding of the evolution of 'sexual revolution' as viewed through this frame.

While historians often differ in their interpretations of the significance of this event, they nevertheless concede that it was significant. For instance, Arthur Marwick regards the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trials as key events in a 'period of first stirrings' of a larger cultural

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<sup>445</sup> NB: For this chapter, peaks in coverage were determined by the overall total number of articles occurring in three year segments.

revolution.<sup>446</sup> While Marwick acknowledges *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the surrounding controversy in the Anglo-American context, his thesis revolves around the literary contribution to the larger Cultural Revolution and does not address how the media might have played a role. Dominic Sandbrook on the other hand, portrayed the furore surrounding the British trial as part of a larger 'myth' surrounding the 1960s and contends that cultural revolution was not of primary concern to most people during the period; he nevertheless felt that it was necessary to include it in the preface to his populist history of the period.<sup>447</sup> Others view the trials of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in similar terms; one called it the 'Trial of the Century'<sup>448</sup>, another characterized the sentiments behind the British trial by the following: '...the authorities could tolerate obscenity, erotica and even pornography – so long as it wasn't in paperback.'<sup>449</sup> Paul Ferris noted that what the trial achieved in the long run was a '...lurch towards sexual freedom.'<sup>450</sup> With the possible exception of Sandbrook, all agree that the trials were not a marked departure from the permissive trend of the period.<sup>451</sup> What the historiographical record lacks is the broader consideration that the trials of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* spurred thoughtful and public debate about sexual norms and mores during the period. The trials provided served as a primer for the broader concerns within the concept of sexual revolution including: censorship and freedom of expression, the protection of children, pornography and the limits of obscenity. The analysis presented below attempts to answer these questions in relation to coverage of the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trials: How did the quality press define obscenity in the early 1960s? How did this definition shape the debate in the quality press during the period? What were the themes of the overall narrative the quality press encouraged regarding the debate

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<sup>446</sup> Marwick, *The sixties : cultural revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974*, p. 145.

<sup>447</sup> Sandbrook, *Never had it so good : a history of Britain from Suez to the Beatles*, p. xvi.

<sup>448</sup> Geoffrey Robertson, 'Trial of the Century', *History Today* 60, no. 11 (2010), p. 41.

<sup>449</sup> John Sutherland, *Offensive literature : decensorship in Britain, 1960-1982* (London, 1982), p. 19.

<sup>450</sup> Ferris, *Sex and the British : a twentieth-century history*, p. 178.

<sup>451</sup> For a larger consideration of the permissive trends of the 1950s, see Davies, *Permissive Britain : social change in the sixties and seventies*, Davies, *The strange death of moral Britain*, and Tim Newburn, *Permission and regulation : law and morals in post-war Britain* (London, 1992).

and sexual norms and mores? Was the debate confined to certain social categories, including: class, gender, age, or religion? Did the overall narrative change or differ between the American and British newspapers? And how did the public respond, or perhaps more importantly, how did the quality press present the public's response to these questions?

The coverage of obscenity in the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial in the American context was as a matter of course less protracted than that found in the British quality press for the obvious reason it was a precursor. However, this does not mean that engagement with the broader themes of sexual norms and mores was any less apparent. The choice of *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* demonstrates a view of many Americans who were most engaged with both legal and media decisions of the day. *The New York Times* is widely regarded as a newspaper of record for the United States, while the *Los Angeles Times* provides the unique perspective of Hollywood as well as one of the most politically engaged states in the country. The American quality press's coverage of the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was complicated by the fact that there had been a film version adapted from the novel that was brought to court before the unexpurgated edition of the novel was published. Additionally the ruling in *Roth v. United States* in 1957 demonstrated that obscenity was not necessarily a constitutionally protected element of freedom of expression.<sup>452</sup> However, what remains apparent from the narrative regarding *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is that the American quality press coverage held with the advancing trend in liberalization of social attitudes towards sex and sexual behaviour. As attorney Charles Rembar, who defended the book before the Supreme Court, noted: '...a normal sexual interest was not prurience.'<sup>453</sup> However, this would not be made apparent until after the book had been taken to court, and been subjected to scrutiny in the press.

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<sup>452</sup> See Strub, *Perversion for profit: the politics of pornography and the rise of the New Right*, pp. 43-79, for a full account on how obscenity was a key exception to the theory of post-war liberal consensus.

<sup>453</sup> Charles Rembar, *The end of obscenity: the trials of Lady Chatterley, Tropic of Cancer and Fanny Hill* (New York ; London, 1986), p. 119.

In 1958 the New York State Court of Appeals upheld a ban on a film version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. *The New York Times* defended the decision, while noting that there was a division in the panel of judges. The newspaper even printed the difference in opinion and noted that one judge '...said the picture was immoral because it presented adultery as proper behaviour.'<sup>454</sup> Almost one year later, following a defeat in the courts on the film's obscenity, Grove Press decided to reissue the book in the unexpurgated edition. While historians have noted the legal problems and copyright entanglements associated with this case, this is not my primary concern.<sup>455</sup> The narrative pursued in the press however, was firmly against censorship. No fewer than six articles were printed in *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* on this topic.<sup>456</sup> All the articles were in favour of the book; some were more pro-Lawrence than others. While one article tied *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to *Ulysses* by James Joyce, another used a quotation by Lawrence himself to advocate a clear opinion about sexual norms and mores: 'You mustn't think I advocate perpetual sex. Far from it...I want, with "Lady C.," to make an adjustment in consciousness to the basic physical realities.'<sup>457</sup> Of these articles, the key themes articulated by the quality press were: a clear link to other works of great literature and most importantly 'that both the language and ideas of Lawrence were now acceptable in American literature.'<sup>458</sup> Another article by *The New York Times* printed on 2 June 1959 grouped *Lady Chatterley's Lover* with some of the greatest names in English literature and invoked Thomas

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<sup>454</sup> 'Censors of Film Upheld in State,' *The New York Times*, 16 May 1958, p. 21.

<sup>455</sup> See Marwick, *The sixties : cultural revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974*, Rembar, *The end of obscenity : the trials of Lady Chatterley, Tropic of Cancer and Fanny Hill* and Sutherland, *Offensive literature : decensorship in Britain, 1960-1982* for a full account of the legal hurdles faced by Grove Press and others.

<sup>456</sup> 'Lawrence Novel To Be Reissued,' *The New York Times*, 19 March 1959, p. 30, and Harry T. Moore, 'Love as a Serious and Sacred Theme,' *The New York Times*, 3 May 1959, p. BR5, and 'Random notes in Washington - Lady Chatterley on Stage,' *The New York Times*, 4 May 1959, p. 24, and 'Lawrence novels seized in test,' *The New York Times*, 7 May 1959, p. 34, and 'Lady Chatterley gets long hearing,' *The New York Times*, 15 May 1959, p. 60, and Robert W. Kirsch, 'The Book Report: Lawrence Work Retains Power,' *The Los Angeles Times*, 21 May 1959, p. B5.

<sup>457</sup> Moore, 'Love as a Serious and Sacred Theme,' p. BR 5.

<sup>458</sup> 'Lady Chatterley gets long hearing,' p. 60.



Paine, famed author of *Common Sense*.<sup>459</sup> Clearly, the established narrative in the American quality press was favourable to not only *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, but also to any work that flouted the rigours of censorship. An additional article in *The New York Times* also clearly linked obscenity to child development. Like almost all articles in this period, the article took a negative position on the proliferation of pornography, but noted that an interest in sex was perfectly acceptable, especially for adolescent children.<sup>460</sup> This article is unique in that neither its content, nor its tone presupposes a gender bias in sexual curiosity in adolescents.<sup>461</sup> Until the Postmaster General commented officially one week after this article's publication, these articles formed the predominant narrative in two of the leading quality newspapers in the country.

The debates surrounding *Lady Chatterley's Lover* took on different tones following the comments made by Arthur J. Summerfield, Postmaster General of the United States. Here is also where a divergent message appears in the overall narrative. Both *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* printed the Postmaster General's comments, calling *Lady Chatterley's Lover* 'smutty' with 'pornographic passages' and that the book 'taken as a whole, is an obscene and filthy work.'<sup>462</sup> These comments clearly show the other end of the cultural spectrum when it came to obscenity. It is perhaps this sort of commentary that drowns out the permissive attitudes that were evolving during the period, contributing to the common preconception that the 1950s was an era of repression in terms of sexual norms and mores.<sup>463</sup> The quality press responded, although in different ways. *The New York Times* responded in a short editorial that questioned the Postmaster General's motivations, especially considering the reputation of D.H.

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<sup>459</sup> 'Topics: Censorship in History,' *The New York Times*, 2 June 1959, p. 34.

<sup>460</sup> Martin Tolchin, 'Dealing with obscenity involves child's privacy,' *The New York Times*, 6 June 1959, p. 15.

<sup>461</sup> NB: Although, it was predicated upon hetero-normative sexual interest and warned parents to look out for anything outside the norm.

<sup>462</sup> 'Chatterley' Ban Affirmed By U.S.,' *The New York Times*, 12 June 1959, p. 29, and 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' Banned in U.S. Mails,' *The Los Angeles Times*, 12 June 1959, p. 16.

<sup>463</sup> For more on this cultural perception as well as its flawed nature, see Petigny, *The permissive society : America, 1941-1965* .

Lawrence as an author.<sup>464</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* merely ran a short article that noted that all ten copies of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* had been checked out of the congressional library, with a short comment that: 'Only Congressmen and their staff members may take out books from the library.'<sup>465</sup> While the government's official position may have been that the novel was obscene, it certainly didn't stop elected officials from reading it.

As the trial opened in Federal court, the quality press further expanded the conversation regarding sexual norms and mores by printing a short summary of the arguments. Most revealing is the contention by the government attorney S. Hazard Gillespie, Jr. that 'the central theme of "Lady Chatterley's Lover" was illicit love outside the bounds of matrimony.'<sup>466</sup> Also around this time the Supreme Court handed down a verdict that lifted the New York State ban on the film version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The quality press was elated. Although a few Senators wanted to institute a new law that would allow states to decide as to the question of censorship, *The New York Times* called the verdict a 'Victory For Ideas' even though some of those ideas might offer different views on moral codes.<sup>467</sup> When the verdict in the case was issued by Judge Frederick vanPelt Bryan, both of the quality papers promoted both his ruling, as well as its ideas. The newspapers printed the opinion: 'I hold that, at this stage in the development of our society, this major English novel does not exceed the outer limits of the tolerance which the community as a whole gives to writing about sex and sex relations.'<sup>468</sup> Along with the decision to 'take the novel as a whole', the decision proves that the 'four-letter words' and other content were not objectionable. While lacking the populist undertones of a jury verdict, it is no less noteworthy.

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<sup>464</sup>The Postman as Censor,' *The New York Times*, 16 June 1959, p. 34.

<sup>465</sup>Lawrence Novel Proves Popular on Capitol Hill,' *The Los Angeles Times*, 19 June 1959, p. 4.

<sup>466</sup>'Chatterley' Book Debated In Court,' *The New York Times*, 1 July 1959, p. 23.

<sup>467</sup>'State Authority To Censor Backed,' *The New York Times*, 3 July 1959, p. 6, and Bosley Crowther, 'Victory For Ideas,' *The New York Times*, 5 July 1959, p. X1.

<sup>468</sup>Judge Rules 'Chatterley' Isn't Obscene,' *Los Angeles Times*, 22 July 1959, p. 14, and 'Excerpts From Court Ruling on 'Lady Chatterley',' *The New York Times*, 22 July 1959, p. 18.

The American case, like the British one, would eventually demonstrate that public opinion remained sharply divided in the wake of the verdict on a variety of issues related to sex and sex relations. It is here too, that religion is brought into the public conversation. Two articles firmly decried the verdict in the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* case. The first, an interview with the editor of a Christian newspaper notes that he felt the novel had 'dirtied my mind.'<sup>469</sup> The second, while less hostile to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, reiterated the prevailing understanding in most Judeo-Christian faiths that pornography was not compatible with religious teaching.<sup>470</sup> This brings up an interesting divergence in the Anglo-American narrative. While debate in media shows that opinion in England was divided on the definition of obscenity, it seems that for the United States, opinion in this area was more one-sided. It is also worth pointing out that sexual revolution was very much a threat to established religion in that it provided an alternative to religious teaching about sex and sexual relationships; this seems clear from the articles published. The public too, weighed in on the case, but briefly. Published letters firmly felt that the Postmaster General had gone too far in condemning *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and yet differed on broader conversation on the topic.<sup>471</sup> One reader was concerned that Summerfield would appoint himself as the high priest of censorship in the wake of the verdict, while another was concerned with the intent of those who wanted to purchase the book.<sup>472</sup>

Editorial opinion before the Supreme Court officially upheld Judge Bryan's verdict was limited in the quality press. *The New York Times* ran a process story, focusing not on the public debate of sex and sexual relationships, but rather on censorship and the role of government as censor.<sup>473</sup> Another editorial by *The New York Times* echoed much of the same, yet portrayed

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<sup>469</sup>Dr. Poling Supports Post Office In Its Ban on 'Lady Chatterley,' *The New York Times*, 26 July 1959, p. 47.

<sup>470</sup>3 FAITHS ATTACK MAILING OF SMUT,' *The New York Times*, 29 August 1959, p. 15.

<sup>471</sup>'The Critical Reader,' *Los Angeles Times*, 2 August 1959, p. E6.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Alvin Shuster, '...Nor Gloom of Censorship,' *The New York Times*, 2 August 1959, p. SM11.

the coming cultural struggle as one of the mind as much as of the body.<sup>474</sup> The *Los Angeles Times*, in a departure from previous opinion, published an article that viewed the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* verdict as deplorable. Written by an unfortunately named Rudolf Flesch, the article waxed historical and wanted a return to a Victorian epoch when extra-marital affairs, while frowned on by polite society, were nevertheless acceptable, if only tacitly.<sup>475</sup> He also took issue with the 'feminization' of sex, and forcefully argued that Lawrence would have abhorred it as well. This says something very interesting about how the media were prepared to approach sexual norms and mores following the Bryan verdict. For those on the eastern coast of the United States, the dominant narrative was that censorship was anathema, yet there was still an unwillingness to engage editorial opinion outside the atmosphere of a trial. For the west coast, the narrative was much more convoluted; censorship was not good for business, and sex was becoming feminized or democratized based on gender. Both of these viewpoints show that while *Lady Chatterley's Lover* served to move the balance towards a larger public conversation about sex and sex relationships, it had not yet reached its tipping point. Although the American quality press did acknowledge the British trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, it did not serve to advance public debate regarding sexual norms and mores in any way that was substantially different than previous coverage.

In the American context, the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was not as effective in advancing public discussion of sexual norms and mores as in Britain. However, that is not to say that it was without any effect whatsoever. The American quality press did define the bounds of obscenity as being generally only related to sex and sexual relationships, as demonstrated through the articles on legal opinions. The quality press demonstrated the progressive trend towards permissiveness by noting that while adultery was considered immoral in 1958, by 1959

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<sup>474</sup>Gerald W. Johnson, 'The Old Puritanism -- And the New,' *The New York Times*, 25 October 1959, p. SM45.

<sup>475</sup>Rudolf Flesch, 'Conversation Piece: D.H. Lawrence Never Planned It This Way,' *Los Angeles Times*, 4 October 1959, p. B5.

it was not beyond the bounds of contemporary community standards. Further, the quality press advanced the sentiment that sexual interest was both normal and healthy for children of both genders, although within the bounds of hetero-normative relationships. As for adults, the press echoed the Lawrentian view that sex was something sacred, and that it could be talked about, though it had not been thoroughly engaged with as of yet. Further complicating these narratives was the role of religion. On the whole, religious attitudes in the United States, or at least those presented by the quality press, were much more conservative than those found in the British quality press. Also important in terms of an Anglo-American comparison is that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* had to be considered as a whole, a key point in the British trial, as well as a prime consideration in the American trial. Above all, it is clear that from the coverage in these newspapers, censorship was regarded as highly suspect – by both newspaper staff and the public alike. While many might not like the idea of speaking about sex openly, they certainly wished to reserve their right to do so. These issues as raised by the quality press, clearly indicate the evolving nature of sexual norms and mores throughout the twilight of the 1950s.

In regarding the overarching paradigm for sexual revolution in the American legal cases of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the quality press framed the discourse as one of censorship and the evils thereof. This position stages an interesting perspective regarding obscenity. Where a dialectic between discourses of socio-political freedoms and discourses of liberation exists, the definition of censorship versus an absence of censorship or de-censorship mirrors that dialectic. Censorship occupied the role of the state in a free society as determining the limits of acceptable content in public discourse where the lack of censorship occupied the role of the absence of restraint or liberation from those limits imposed by the state. This places the balance of the overall discourse of the American quality press as liberatory in a 'sexual revolution.'

## Great Britain – 1960

In the British quality press the narrative of controversy regarding *Lady Chatterley's Lover* began with a summary of the American trials in two articles.<sup>476</sup> This established a key link between the American and British coverage of events, as well as commonality in predominant attitudes towards sexual norms and mores. Both this article from June of 1959 and another from March of 1960 advocated the legal opinion that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was not obscene.<sup>477</sup> Additionally, *The Guardian* printed a further condemnation against censorship of *Lady Chatterley*, using Lawrence's stepdaughter as a mouthpiece. While her remarks were directed towards customs agents and the Director of Public Prosecutions in this particular instance, it is quite easy to connect her statement '...absolutely damnable' to the larger question of censorship in general, even to works where sex and adultery were spoken of and even openly advocated.<sup>478</sup>

As time went on, and it became generally known that the Director of Public Prosecutions intended to make a test case of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, newspaper coverage remained firmly in support of Lawrence, Penguin Books, Sir Allen Lane, and freedom of expression. Two articles and one letter in support of the decision to publish and the out-dated nature of prudery appeared in the quality press in the lead up to the trial.<sup>479</sup> The letter by Robert Lusty (a publisher himself) most adequately voiced the theme of these articles, '...action...against this book...branded as a nation of puritanical ostriches.'<sup>480</sup> The overall opinion was that legal action against 'reputable publishers' was abominable and moral codes

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<sup>476</sup> 'Court Overrules U.S. Film Censors,' *The Times*, 30 June 1959, p. 8.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid. and 'No Mail Ban On 'Lady Chatterley's Lover',' *The Times*, 28 March 1960, p. 9.

<sup>478</sup> 'SETBACK FOR A NOVEL: "Lady Chatterley",' *The Guardian*, 13 April 1960, p. 1.

<sup>479</sup> 'Lawrence has his revenge: Prudery--and critics--outmoded,' *The Guardian*, 18 June 1960, *ibid.*, p. 3, and Robert Lusty, "'Lady Chatterley's Lover'," *The Times*, 18 August 1960, p. 9, and 'Penguins Postpone "Lady Chatterley",' *The Times*, 18 August 1960, p. 8.

<sup>480</sup> Lusty, "'Lady Chatterley's Lover'," p. 9.

had already changed enough that publishing a book, even one littered with four-letter words would not destroy the moral foundations of society.

On 9 September 1960, both *The Times* and *The Guardian* printed articles that summarized the decision to allow the case against Penguin Books to move forward to the Old Bailey for trial. Both articles were reserved in tone, and make the reader aware of the solemnity of the legal issues involved. However, both paint the publisher of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in a very good light. Although both articles clearly indicate that Penguin Books was being prosecuted for publishing an 'obscene publication,' they did not dwell on that fact and were quick to note that the company had been more than cooperative with the prosecution.<sup>481</sup> Additionally, *The Times* article introduced the concept of 'public good' and connected it with the case and thus with the book itself. Over a month later, *The Guardian* expanded on this theme and how it was newly associated with the law.<sup>482</sup> Furthermore, it re-emphasised the United States ruling that the book was not obscene.

The opening statements of the trial are now considered by historians to be almost legendary. The attorney who defended *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in the United States stated: '...the British trial was low parody. Our trial took one day, theirs took five.'<sup>483</sup> Most often remarked upon was the statement by the prosecutor Mervyn Griffith-Jones QC when he said:

'You may think one of the ways you can test this book is to ask yourselves the question, when you have read it: 'Would you approve of your own sons and daughters reading this book?' Is it a book you would have lying round in your own house? Is it a book you would even wish your wife or your servant to read?'<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> 'Case Of "Lady Chatterley" For Trial,' *The Times*, 9 September 1960, p. 3, and "'Lady Chatterley's Lover' case goes to Old Bailey,' *The Guardian*, 9 September 1960, p. 13.

<sup>482</sup> "'Lady Chatterley" Trial Today: The issue of public good,' *The Guardian*, 20 October 1960, p. 12.

<sup>483</sup> Rembar, *The end of obscenity : the trials of Lady Chatterley, Tropic of Cancer and Fanny Hill* , pp. 152-153.

<sup>484</sup> 'Defence: No tendency to corrupt - Adjournment for jury to read book but not at home,' *The Guardian*, 21 October 1960, p. 16, and 'Sensuality Commended Almost As A Virtue-Prosecution,' *The Times*, 21 October 1960, p. 4.

Historians who have worked in this area have noted this now infamous statement as being ‘hilarious’,<sup>485</sup> ‘misjudged’,<sup>486</sup> or ‘a lapse so grotesque it has gone into folklore.’<sup>487</sup> There is no doubt that this statement helped to persuade the jury in favour of the defence. However, also important is what the defence said, particularly about the use of so-called ‘four-letter words’:

‘...whether Lawrence succeeded or not in his attempt to purify these particular words by dragging them out in the light of day does not matter, because there is nothing in the words themselves which can deprave or corrupt.’<sup>488</sup>

This statement, advanced through the press, is somewhat revolutionary while the prevailing trend had been towards a liberalization of sexual attitudes, never had there been such a public debate about that trend in Britain. After the opening statements, the jury was instructed to read the book and to judge for themselves as to its obscenity. What would become important was the mandate from the judge to read the book ‘as a whole,’ and not to cherry-pick passages to determine obscenity.<sup>489</sup>

After the jury had read the book, the trial resumed and the defence called over thirty witnesses to testify as to the book’s literary merit, thereby exempting it from the label ‘obscene.’ This testimony, printed in the press, helps to answer the questions as to how the public defined sexual norms and mores as well as how the quality press helped to shape the debate over these issues. The first witness was Mr Graham G. Hough, a fellow of Christ College, Cambridge. The press printed the statement regarding *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*: ‘The book is in fact concerned with the relations between men and women, with their sexual relations and with the nature of marriage, and these are all matters of great importance and

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<sup>485</sup> Marwick, *The sixties : cultural revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* , p. 146.

<sup>486</sup> Sandbrook, *Never had it so good : a history of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* , p. xvi.

<sup>487</sup> Sutherland, *Offensive literature : decensorship in Britain, 1960-1982* , p. 23.

<sup>488</sup> ‘Sensuality Commended Almost As A Virtue-Prosecution,’ p. 4, and ‘Defence: No tendency to corrupt - Adjournment for jury to read book but not at home,’ p. 16.

<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.* It should be noted that this was a stipulation of both the 1959 Obscene Publications Act, as well as a key component of the *Roth v. United States* decision in 1957.



deep concern to all of us.'<sup>490</sup> This statement begins to encompass the scope of debate on sexual norms and mores, as well as the limits in which sex could be referred to in the press at this time. While the scope of debate was limited to heterosexual sex and a traditional view of the role of marriage, it concedes that the themes and situations of the novel were valid and that discussion of these themes was both necessary and valid.

Also important was the testimony of the Bishop of Woolwich, the Right Rev. John A.T. Robinson. His testimony is important both in the context of a general public view of the themes presented within the novel, but also his views as a leader of the Anglican Church. His statements regarding sex set the tone of how the quality press viewed and presented sex to its audience; both article titles came from his testimony. For Rev. John Robinson:

'Clearly Lawrence did not have a Christian valuation of sex, and the kind of sexual relations depicted in the book are not those that are necessarily of the kind I should regard as ideal. But what Lawrence is trying to do, I think, is to portray the sex relation as something sacred.'<sup>491</sup>

This testimony, combined with his assertion that this was a book that 'Christians ought to read,' was phenomenal. It represented a departure from traditional attitudes towards discussing sex and marriage.<sup>492</sup> Now that a Bishop of the Church of England had aired his opinions not only in open court, but also in the quality press, it was now acceptable for others to do so as well, at least in the context of traditional hetero-normative norms and mores.<sup>493</sup>

During the trial, much ado was made over the 'four-letter Anglo-Saxon words.' One witness stated that 'Lawrence's intention in the book was to make people feel that the sexual act was not shameful and that the word used in its original sense was not shameful either.'<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> 'Bishop calls it a book Christians ought to read: "Not depraving" in effect or intention,' *The Guardian*, 28 October 1960, p. 2, and "'Attempt To Portray Sex As Something Sacred",' *The Times*, 28 October 1960, p. 6.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

<sup>492</sup> It is also important to note that the Archbishop of Canterbury publicly rebuked Rev Robinson. See Newburn, *Permission and regulation : law and morals in post-war Britain*, p. 87, and 'Bishop In Chatterley Case Mistaken, Says Primate,' *The Times*, 7 November 1960, p. 7.

<sup>493</sup> NB: However, many in the Church publicly rebuked Rev. Robinson for his radical views, including the Archbishop of Canterbury.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.

The following day, Richard Hoggart gave testimony in which he used the word ‘fuck’ several times, although neither *The Times* nor *The Guardian* printed it, choosing instead to make use of dashes or ellipses in its place.<sup>495</sup> While it would seem that Lawrence had failed to make his desire to remove the stigma of shame from sex and thus from the words, this omission on the part of the quality press would become quite important only a few days later.

Additionally, important was testimony and discussion within the press that dealt with the question of sex and how to discuss it with children. The defence called a headmaster from a boys’ school and a librarian from a girls’ school both of whom agreed that children would benefit from the view of sex as portrayed in the novel. Mrs Sarah Jones, the librarian, stated that ‘I think it has considerable educational merits, if taken at the proper time, which is normally after the age of 17, because it deals honestly and openly with problems of sex.’<sup>496</sup> An additional article published in *The Guardian* underscores this viewpoint with the view of boys at boarding school, which noted ‘The attitude in relation to sex, one finds, underlines much of the normal boarding school outlook. Sex is a matter of constant curiosity, and there is not a very healthy attitude towards it.’<sup>497</sup> Clearly there were limits as to the time at which sex should be discussed with children, but also a need to discuss sex in a healthy and open manner with both boys and girls. Additionally, Dr Charles Hemming, an educational psychologist testified that ‘“Lady Chatterley’s Lover” presents the relationship of sex as it should be presented – as something chiefly exuberant and tender, playful even, and certainly mutual, and this kind of picture is entirely right.’<sup>498</sup> This was in contrast to the books children usually read giving them ‘...a sense of titillation – of a quite temporary act which does not involve the depth or

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<sup>495</sup> That is, during the trial itself, and not including in particular the editorial by *The Guardian* on November 4, 1960.

<sup>496</sup> ‘Book Called “Virtuous And Puritanical”,’ *The Times*, 29 October 1960, p. 10, and ‘More questions about those four-letter words: Known to schoolgirls at age of 10: teacher,’ *The Guardian*, 29 October 1960, p. 3.

<sup>497</sup> ‘What Boys Say: Simple Anglo-Saxon,’ *The Guardian*, 29 October 1960, p. 3.

<sup>498</sup> ‘More questions about those four-letter words: Known to schoolgirls at age of 10: teacher,’ p. 3.

wholeness of the personality...just a man and a woman coming together in a trivial way.'<sup>499</sup>

Thus, although dealing only with hetero-normative sex, the printed testimony demonstrates that these were deeply important issues facing educators and parents of the period.

Testimony continued for yet another day, and while dutifully printed in the quality press, it did not contain any more ground-shattering interpretations of Lawrence's views on sex or relationships, nor any broader themes that fall outside those already discussed. The papers do note that the defence called thirty-five witnesses and had planned to call thirty-six more, but as the prosecution had done so little cross-examination they felt they had no need to do so.<sup>500</sup> Backlash to the inept nature of the prosecution's handling of the case, and in opposition to the narrative presented in the journalists' reports would come after the trial, but the quality press did not allude to it.<sup>501</sup> The following day, the judge instructed the jury that they must 'take the book as a whole' in regards to the charges of obscenity.<sup>502</sup> This is important for several reasons. First, that it negated many of the arguments made by the prosecution, thus helping the defence. Second, because it echoed the American legal ruling almost verbatim, providing yet another link in this shared Anglo-American experience. Also important were the closing statements from both Gerald Gardiner QC for the defence and from Mervyn Griffith-Jones for the prosecution. Mr Gardiner stated:

'Is not everyone, whether their income is £10 or £20 a week, equally interested in the society in which we live: including the problems of human relationships, including the sexual relationships? And in view of the references made to wives, are not women interested in human relationships, including sexual relationships?'<sup>503</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Ibid. and 'Book Called "Virtuous And Puritanical",' p. 10.

<sup>500</sup> 'Evidence Ends With 35 Witnesses Not Called,' *The Times*, 1 November 1960, p. 6, and 'Defence calls last witness---36 others available: "Great decrease: in amount of cross-examination,' *The Guardian*, 1 November 1960, p. 4.

<sup>501</sup> Sutherland, *Offensive literature : decensorship in Britain, 1960-1982* , pp. 25-28.

<sup>502</sup> 'Verdict expected today - Judge says jury "not censors" : Book must be considered as a whole,' *The Guardian*, 2 November 1960, p. 11, and 'Judge Tells Jury To Take Book As A Whole,' *The Times*, 2 November 1960, p. 8.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

This allusion to class and gender is vitally important to understanding the impact of open discussion regarding sexual norms and mores during this period. The inclusion of women in his statement, most likely directed towards the three female members of the jury, was both brilliantly stated as well as important, particularly as previous obscenity trials had only male juries.<sup>504</sup> The closing statement for the prosecution was more evocative of the more traditional elements of society, and perhaps encompassing the popular conception of the 1950s:

'There must be standards which we are to maintain, some standards of morality, language, conversation and conduct, which are essential to the well being of our society. There must be instilled in all of us, and at the earliest possible age, standards of respect for the conventions of society, for the kind of conduct that society approves, for other people's feeling, for the intimacy and privacy of relations between people. And there must be instilled in all of us standards of restraint.'<sup>505</sup>

This statement, read against the backdrop of the defence's closing statements, as well the printed testimony, seems to be contrary to the prevailing attitudes towards the evolving nature of sexual norms and mores throughout the period.

Both quality newspapers remarked about the verdict being returned after only three hours, as well as the jury makeup.<sup>506</sup> But more interesting were the editorials run by both *The Times* and *The Guardian* in the aftermath of the verdict. *The Guardian* stated 'It remains a matter of astonishment that the prosecution was ever brought. Many books of a more doubtful character are on open sale – books devoted to promiscuity, prostitution, sadism, incest, and sex with violence...They degrade sex where Lawrence elevates it.'<sup>507</sup> This clearly demonstrates that the editorial opinion of *The Guardian* was very much in line with the attitudes expressed in the testimony at trial – that sex was something natural, good, and should be taken seriously

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<sup>504</sup> Loren Glass, 'Modernism and Dirty Words', *Modernism/modernity* 14, no. 2 (2007), p. 212.

<sup>505</sup> 'Verdict expected today - Judge says jury "not censors" : Book must be considered as a whole,' p. 11, and 'Judge Tells Jury To Take Book As A Whole,' p. 8.

<sup>506</sup> 'Unexpurgated Edition Can Now Be Published,' *The Times*, 3 November 1960, p. 5, and "'Lady Chatterley" case acquittal: Verdict after three hours: no order on costs,' *The Guardian*, 3 November 1960, p. 7.

<sup>507</sup> 'Lady Chatterley acquitted,' *The Guardian*, November 3, 1960, p. 10.

and not in a manner that would denigrate it. Further, it deplores, albeit mildly, the amount of matter available that dealt with sex in the opposite way. *The Times*' editorial was slightly more complicated, in that it represented the verdict as being wholly a good thing, but then engaged in a polemic on how society would view the verdict and how society should proceed. It ended with the following: 'Yesterday's verdict is a challenge to society to resist the changes in its manners and conduct that may flow from it. It should not be taken as an invitation to succumb.'<sup>508</sup> While both editorials viewed the verdict as a good one, certainly in light of the testimony, they had differing opinions as to the progression of relating to obscenity, and certainly as to the debate of sexual norms and mores.

Further editorial opinions were not found in *The Times*, but *The Guardian* and *The Observer* made history in the aftermath of the trial with their editorial commentary. On November 4, 1960, Wayland Young wrote a short editorial for *The Guardian* where he praised the verdict, the witnesses, and most importantly the testimony. It was on this day that *The Guardian* printed the exact testimony of Richard Hoggart, without the dashes or ellipses: 'Simply, this is what one does: One fucks.'<sup>509</sup> This was monumental, never before had a quality newspaper printed such a word, certainly not in relation to its actual meaning.<sup>510</sup> The other editorial, printed in *The Observer* while not going so far as to print any of the dreaded 'four-letter' words, was equally as pointed. The author, Kenneth Tynan, firmly advanced the idea of Cultural Revolution. He concluded his article with the following: '...and before long both jury and audience knew that the real battle had at last been joined – between all that Hoggart stood for, and all that Griffith-Jones stood for; between Lawrence's England and Sir Clifford Chatterley's England; between contact and separation; between freedom and control; between

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<sup>508</sup> 'A Decent Reticence,' *The Times*, 3 November 1960, p. 13.

<sup>509</sup> Wayland Young, 'Lawrence Unbound,' *The Guardian*, 4 November 1960, p. 22.

<sup>510</sup> It is worth noting that *The Guardian* was censured by the Press Council for printing the word, however, this does not diminish the fact that they did still print it. For more, see Newburn, *Permission and regulation : law and morals in post-war Britain*, p. 87.

love and death.<sup>511</sup> Aside from the Marcusian overtones, Tynan's editorial clearly frames the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to be archetypal, a clear battle between generation, class, and gender, which was won by the younger, poorer, and more feminine camp. While this may not have been how others saw the conflict (as may be seen in the letters regarding these editorials) it set the tone for further debate.

Letters printed in both newspapers provide a brief, yet pointed snapshot as to both public opinion regarding the debate of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and by extension broader concerns about sexual norms and mores. Readers of *The Times* and *The Guardian* were generally pleased with the verdict in the first round of letters printed on November 7, 1960.<sup>512</sup> However, the media treaded cautiously into printing responses that were too radical from either far-left or far-right perspectives at this stage. Most of *The Times'* letters disagreed with the editorial and pointed out that the editorial position was out of line with contemporary thought; this was expressed most ably by the letter from Richard Davies who wrote: 'Sir – This is to draw your attention to the year in which you are supposed to be living, which is 1960 A.D.'<sup>513</sup> One letter mentioned *The Guardian's* use of a 'four-letter' word. A majority of the letters agreed that heterosexual sex was something that should be discussed openly and frankly, especially with children (of the proper age). A majority also agreed that while *Lady Chatterley's Lover* might not be pornographic, great pains should be taken to prosecute material that was certainly obscene. As time went on, however, both *The Times* and *The Guardian* printed letters that while still presented as a balance of opinion, still tended to favour the verdict.<sup>514</sup> The best summation of the opinions found in the letters came from *The Times*

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<sup>511</sup> Kenneth Tynan, 'Lady Chatterley's Trial,' *The Guardian*, 6 November 1960, p. 21.

<sup>512</sup> 'LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: "Lady Chatterley's Lover",' *The Guardian*, 7 November 1960, p. 8, and 'A selection of Letters about the "Lady Chatterley's Lover" Verdict,' *The Times*, 7 November 1960, p. 17.

<sup>513</sup> 'A selection of Letters about the "Lady Chatterley's Lover" Verdict,' , p. 17.

<sup>514</sup> "'Lady Chatterley's Lover": Further Letters,' *The Times*, 8 November 1960, p. 15, and 'Letters to the Editor: "Lady Chatterley's Lover",' *The Guardian*, 9 November 1960, p. 11, and 'Letters to the Editor: "Lady Chatterley's Lover",' *The Guardian*, 11 November 1960, p. 15, and 'Letters on Lady Chatterley: A Final Selection,' *The Times*, 10 November 1960, p. 16.

on November 10, 1960, from Nicolas Walter: 'What is being demanded is the right to talk about sex or read *Lady Chatterley's Lover* if one *does* want to.'<sup>515</sup>

The end of 1960 brought about further debate on the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* verdict, both in the press and in the House of Lords. The verbal sparring between Lord Teviot and Viscount Hailsham for the government was both amusing and pointed in its message. While certainly not advocating the ideas or expressions employed within the novel, Viscount Hailsham noted that this was not grounds for banning the book. He stated:

'It may well be that we would like to preserve the innocence of our children and society from the disasters which we believe will follow from the adoption of false creeds, false prophets and false Christs. We cannot do so by prohibiting their work by an Act. We have to gird our loins, and fighting the battle must involve a willingness to meet our enemies in the open with like weapons of tongues and pens. We shall not succeed by prohibiting their works merely because we regard their opinions as detestable.'<sup>516</sup>

This statement reflects not only the position of the Conservative government of the time, but also the prevailing consensus that while many may not like the idea of discussing sex openly or using 'four-letter' words to do so, censorship was not the answer. Lord Teviot, according to another article revealed more about how the media viewed both sexual norms and mores as well as how it viewed the deliberations on those norms and more of the upper house of Parliament.<sup>517</sup> Other articles printed throughout the period discussed *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, but many only mentioned it as a cliché, or a mere historical footnote, invoking the verdict only in other cases relating to obscenity, and without any substantive contribution to the broader questions of sexual norms and mores.

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<sup>515</sup> 'Letters on Lady Chatterley: A Final Selection,' p. 16.

<sup>516</sup> 'Concern After Chatterley Verdict,' *The Times*, 15 December 1960, p. 6, and 'Peers Debate "Lady C." Verdict,' *The Guardian*, 15 December 1960, p. 2.

<sup>517</sup> Norman Shrapnel, 'For and against "Lady C." : Lord Hailsham defends legal position,' *The Guardian* 1960, p. 1.

The British quality press fostered a much broader discussion of sexual norms and mores relating to obscenity and the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, than did the quality press in the United States. However, several common themes are present in both narratives. For both the British and the American quality press, obscenity in this period was generally confined to sex and especially pornography, including the dreaded 'four-letter words.' Adultery was still widely considered immoral behaviour and indeed formed a significant part of the legal narrative. And yet, the trials of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* allowed the quality press in both countries to open the discussion of sexual norms and mores to the public at large. In both countries, the censor was thought to be anathema to a free society. The key issue in this area was that the public (or at least the public response the quality press chose to print) wished to reserve the right to discuss sex or read *Lady Chatterley's Lover* without paternalistic interference. Indeed, public response in Britain's quality press showed that many felt that not only could hetero-normative sex be discussed openly, it should be discussed so. Further, this discussion was not limited to just to one gender. Discussion regarding sex and sex relationships was democratized based on gender; women wrote several of the most pointed letters regarding the trial. Both the quality press in Britain and the United States agreed that discussing sex and sex relationships with children (here meaning around age 17) was perfectly acceptable, and necessary. The views of religious communities also appeared in the quality press. While the British and American narratives had competing ideologies regarding theological positions on issues regarding sex and marriage in the context of obscenity and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* especially, they nevertheless agreed that something was fundamentally wrong with the state of sex and sex relationships during the period. While not addressing any specific influence (although lambasting pornography in general), it was the general consensus that sex had degenerated throughout the years following the Second World War and that it was high time that open discussion could foster healthier attitudes. The quality press played a key role in



opening up this discussion, bringing it out of the court of law and into the court of public opinion.

Where in the quality press in the United States the struggle between the opposing discourses of freedom versus liberation was understood to be a known quantity, the same struggle in the British quality press was just beginning to play itself out; that the sexual revolution with regards to permissiveness was just beginning. Where most people portrayed in the British quality press favoured the absence of paternalistic interference with regard to censorship the opinion was still divided and the quality press played a direct role in articulating the opposing discourses directly in line with political bias. *The Guardian* favoured discourses of liberation and de-censorship where *The Times* favoured discourses of socio-political freedoms and the need for some judicious use of censorship in a role for the public good despite the absurdity of the trial.

### United States – 1964

The next peak in coverage in both Britain and the United States occurred in 1964. As in 1960, coverage was dominated by trials surrounding a novel; for 1964 that was *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, more commonly known as *Fanny Hill* the name of the book's protagonist. Discussion surrounding obscenity and pornography in the quality press was not limited only to this novel in the United States, however. The arrest of controversial comedian Lenny Bruce was also a topic of urgent importance as were laws preventing obscene materials from being sent through the postal service, known as the Comstock laws. All proved instrumental in the development of the social discourse.

In *The New York Times*, coverage of Fanny Hill was limited to the British and American court decisions. A key point the newspaper stressed in the coverage of the British trial was

drawing a distinction between literary works that were ‘erotic’, but not ‘obscene.’ Multiple articles quoted Mr Peter Quennell, author and literary critic on this point. One quote noted ‘It is evidently an erotic novel, and so far as it had a moral it was that love was the justification and crown of sexual activity.’<sup>518</sup> Additionally, Quennell stressed that John Cleland the author made it quite clear that “normal sexual intercourse is the height of enjoyment and anything else is a poor and undignified substitute.”<sup>519</sup> This characterisation applies a limit to sexual norms and mores, for all the novel was two hundred years old. In another article H Montgomery Hyde qualified Quennell’s assertion regarding obscenity or pornography as distinct from erotica. The article noted ‘Mr Hyde said that pornography was “dirt for dirt’s sake with no esthetic [sic] feeling at all.”’<sup>520</sup> Although the book was eventually ruled obscene by the British court, the discourse within the quality press generally remained favourable to potential obscene material in print.

In speech, however, *The New York Times* was initially not so permissive. Where the newspaper had printed a clear defence of sex within literature, when confronted with the possibility of obscene speech, its position was unclear. Comedian Lenny Bruce was arrested before he could perform his act at Café au Go Go in the neighbourhood of Greenwich Village on 3 April 1964; the charge was using obscene language. The brief article reported this in a straightforward, almost clinical matter. However, the author also chose to include the notation ‘Mr. Bruce has been arrested several times for obscenity in his nightclub act and twice on charges of narcotics.’<sup>521</sup> The unnecessary inclusion of the narcotics arrests had no bearing on illustrating Bruce’s act; rather they served to paint him as an undesirable drug-user. Though eventually convicted the dissenting judge signalled a progression away from more conservative

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<sup>518</sup> James Feron, ‘CRITIC TESTIFIES FOR ‘FANNY HILL’’: Peter Quennell Tells London Court It’s Literature,’ *The New York Times*, 21 January 1964, p. 27.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid.

<sup>520</sup> ‘‘FANNY HILL’ CALLED USEFUL AS HISTORY,’ *The New York Times*, 28 January 1964, p. 28.

<sup>521</sup> ‘LENNY BRUCE SEIZED ON OBSCENITY ACT,’ *The New York Times*, 4 April 1964, p. 12.

tendencies with regards to obscenity. However, the more telling quotation from Bruce's trial came from the two judges in the majority decision. This article was careful to include that 'Mr. Bruce's performances were "obscene, indecent, immoral and impure within the meaning of the law" and that they were "patently offensive to the average person in the community...."'<sup>522</sup> Where literature could be excused by the newspaper, actual speech was still judged within stricter standards.

The final element of the 1964 'peak' in quality newspaper coverage within *The New York Times* concerned the linked discussion of banning obscene materials in the mail, under the guise of protecting children, and the harm caused by pornography and obscene materials. While recognising the problem of obscene publications arriving at the homes of families with children by mail, government officials in the US Justice Department called efforts to curb them 'patently unconstitutional.'<sup>523</sup> Regarding congressional action on the matter, the same article used quotations that were deliberately selected to appeal to readers' emotions regarding children and their protection. Quoting US Representative Glenn Cunningham, the author invoked parental authority, and individual freedom noting "My home is my castle and my mail box is a part of my home. I have a right to determine whether this kind of trash is coming into it or not. I have a parental right. I have six kids."<sup>524</sup> Though most would agree with this statement at this, or indeed any point in time, the general feeling regarding pornography was slightly more complicated than this article would have the reader believe. In letters to the editor written throughout the course of the year, there was a discernible trend towards permissiveness where pornography and obscenity were concerned. Though utterly dismissing the 'trash' so alluded to by Representative Cunningham, works of art were not so easy to do away with. A letter by Irwin Stark in response to a conservative proposal to curb pornography asserted that

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<sup>522</sup> Jack Roth, 'LENNY BRUCE ACT IS RULED OBSCENE,' *The New York Times*, 5 November 1964, p. 47.

<sup>523</sup> C.P. Trussell, 'U.S. OPPOSES PLAN TO CUT LEWD MAIL,' *The New York Times*, 17 April 1964

<sup>524</sup> Ibid.

‘Because a great work of art may well be a generation or two ahead of its time, the burden of judgment belongs primary, if not exclusively to the future...To permit liberal minds to flower in a liberal culture we should remember that even at its best censorship is a dirty business.’<sup>525</sup> This repudiation of a conservative trend was significant, especially when joined by other permissive opinions. One such opinion related to the scientific proof of psychological damage caused by pornography. The letter read, ‘Certainly there are sufficient grounds for objecting to pornography on a purely moral basis. Here I would concur. However, there is no adequately documented research to confirm that it produces psychological damage.’<sup>526</sup> Though not as permissive as the first opinion, it nevertheless provides a point from which to object to spurious accusations against obscenity and pornography. A final opinion on the subject that year, from one Mulford Colebrook in a letter to the editor, was printed on 22 December 1964. In it, Colebrook voiced his own uncertainty regarding obscenity and pornography but insisted that it was in the eye of the beholder. He remained adamant that ‘Writers and artists must be free to express themselves, otherwise it becomes impossible to portray emotions and situations accurately.’<sup>527</sup> This summarised nicely the trend of opinion that year.

Where *The New York Times* pursued a more permissive policy, the *Los Angeles Times* was decidedly reactionary with regards to pornography and obscenity. Three articles made this viewpoint extremely clear. The first detailed the plans of a Committee for Decent Literature in Burbank, California. The article drew publicity towards public support for changing California’s obscenity law that would remove a ‘social importance’ clause. This type of clause was instrumental in redeeming *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. However, more interesting was how obscenity was currently defined in California. The article printed the legal definition, which read “‘Obscene’ means that to the average person...the predominant appeal of the matter, taken

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<sup>525</sup> Irwin Stark, 'Letter to the Editor,' *The New York Times*, 10 May 1964, p. BR32.

<sup>526</sup> Howard N. Cooper M.D., 'Damage of Pornography?,' *The New York Times*, 5 December 1964, p. 30.

<sup>527</sup> Mulford Colebrook, 'Judging Pornography,' *The New York Times*, 22 December 1964, p. 28.

as a whole, is to prurient interest...a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex or excretion, which goes substantially beyond customary limits of candor in description or representation of such matters and is matter which is utterly without redeeming social importance.’<sup>528</sup> To go even further past this already strict definition and that the newspaper chose to print this illustrates the reactionary viewpoint predominant in California at the time. An article summarising the obscenity ruling in the Supreme Court case *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, served to reinforce this viewpoint. Here the recurring theme of protecting children once again found its way into the media discourse. Justice William Brennan’s decision ‘...recognized the state interest of states and local communities in trying to protect children from material deemed harmful to them.’<sup>529</sup> The final article that dealt with themes surrounding pornography and obscenity in the *Los Angeles Times* for 1964 was a polemic against such themes in recent years. Certainly the most interesting part of the article was how it defined pornography. The author, James J. Clancy noted ‘The sole purpose of pornographic books is to stimulate erotic response. Pornography encourages people to luxuriate in morbid, sexual-sadistic fantasies and tends to arrest their development. Pornography is daydream material, divorced from reality.’<sup>530</sup> This article is a clear exception to the trend found in *The New York Times* and elsewhere. Although the book critic for the *Los Angeles Times* responded to this definition in his own article on the same day, it lacked the passion of Mr Clancy’s own viewpoint.

The year 1964 proved to be quite interesting in illustrating the ongoing sexual revolution in the United States. Here the quality press was divided on lines of political bias corresponding with discourses of socio-political freedoms and discourses of liberation. *The New York Times* clearly favoured discourses of liberation and de-censorship when applied to

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<sup>528</sup> 'Group Urges Tighter Control of Literature,' *Los Angeles Times*, 2 June 1964, p. F8.

<sup>529</sup> Robert Barkdoll, 'HIGH COURT UPSETS OBSCENITY RULING,' *Los Angeles Times*, 23 June 1964, p. 6. NB: Interestingly, the article made no mention of the famous rationalisation of Justice Potter Stewart who was known for defining pornography by stating ‘I know it when I see it.’

<sup>530</sup> James J. Clancy, 'The Fight on Pornography -- Special Deputy D.A.'s View,' *Los Angeles Times*, 13 December 1964, p. F2.

literature, recognising the inherent merit of those works. However, when it came to speech outside of the literary realm, there was more deliberation. *The Los Angeles Times*, by contrast, favoured discourses that espoused the socio-political freedoms of a society to choose what was acceptable to censor for its citizens. The sexual revolution was being played out on ideological lines by both newspapers under study.

### Great Britain – 1964

Obscenity and pornography were discussed in the British quality press almost exclusively with regards to the *Fanny Hill* trial. William S. Burroughs' novel *The Naked Lunch* did spur some discussion in the quality press during this period; however, the most substantive discussion occurred around *Fanny Hill*. Both *The Times* and *The Guardian* covered the trial in almost minute detail, focusing on procedure and specific questions as well as cross-examination of witnesses. Much like one half of the American quality press, *The Times* was careful to include Peter Quennell's assertions regarding the novel. The newspaper also included a question relating to a definition of pornography as "filthy, bawdy muck which is just filth for filth's sake..." asking if that was how *Fanny Hill* fell into this definition, to which Quennell responded, "Certainly not."<sup>531</sup> Another article noted that *Fanny Hill* was one of the first novels where women were portrayed as enjoying sex, and yet another specifically stated that its sexual episodes were not '...degrading, or morbid or excessive.'<sup>532</sup> Following the verdict where the book was ruled obscene, there was a motion on the part of several MPs to stop any further prosecutions of the novel and this was reflected upon with considerable favour by *The Times*. The most important contribution to the overall discourse in *The Times* surrounding

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<sup>531</sup> 'Author Says Novel "Fanny Hill" Not Pornography,' *The Times*, 21 January 1964, p. 7.

<sup>532</sup> "'Fanny Hill" As A Cheerful Corrective,' *The Times*, 3 February 1964

obscurity and pornography came from an editorial ran on 7 May 1964. After criticising the government and the law in question, the editorial digressed on the nature of pornography. It noted that there was an absence of ‘...any serious attempt to demonstrate that pornography actually has that effect [to deprave and corrupt] on ordinary people...’ and suggested that ‘...the real objection...is not an objection to pornography but to its nature – that it is disgusting, shocking, and an affront to decent feelings.’<sup>533</sup> This statement has numerous important implications. Though conceding it did influence people, pornography (at least to the editorial staff of *The Times*) did not deprave and corrupt. This in and of itself is remarkable as it represents a further shift towards a more permissive society.

*The Guardian* too dealt with obscenity and pornography through the lens of *Fanny Hill*. Like *The Times*, they too printed Peter Quennell’s testimony asserting that the novel was ‘erotic but not pornographic.’<sup>534</sup> Another article printed the following question and response from Mr Jeffrey Hutchinson QC and Mr Quennell, it read: ““Do you find in the exuberance and pleasure, the gaiety and the fantasy with which ‘Fanny Hill’ deals with sex, that that detracts from its literary merit? – I think it is a great quality in its favour.””<sup>535</sup> In this *The Guardian* went even further than *The Times* and asserted a sex-positive agenda by printing this question. Another point of view not included in coverage by *The Times* was respectful to the ‘deviant.’ The article’s author included testimony from Dr Anthony Storr who explained that ‘...this book was really a paean in praise of normal sexuality which was by no means always the case with sex today. Cleland’s treatment of deviation in sexual matters was, he thought of very great interest because the book tended to increase the compassion for, and understanding of, the deviant.’<sup>536</sup> This attention to sexual practices outside the norm and the interest in compassion

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<sup>533</sup> 'Trade In Dirt,' *The Times*, 7 May 1964

<sup>534</sup> 'Fanny Hill -erotic but not pornographic,' *The Guardian*, 21 January 1964, p. 3.

<sup>535</sup> 'Q.C. and a witness taken to task,' *The Guardian*, 28 January 1964, p. 7

<sup>536</sup> 'Fanny Hill was the source of 70 new words for OED,' *The Guardian*, 3 February 1964, p. 2.

and understanding occurred nowhere else within the discourse of the quality press on either side of the Atlantic, though such progressive tone and content was expected for *The Guardian*.

The absence of any discourses that favoured limitations on socio-political freedoms in the British quality press in 1964 was remarkable. It indicates that there had been a complete transformation, a complete revolution in favour of liberatory discourses. But this conclusion is hampered by a caveat. The caveat is that pornography did not deprave or corrupt but only when applied to ‘normal’ sexual desires and practices; more specifically to heterosexual relationships, sexual practices and the absence of many fetishes most people would find objectionable or divorced from customary behaviours. Such a revolution however lends credence to a thesis that there were a series of sexual revolutions that occurred throughout the 1960s and 1970s which consisted of public discussions where the limits of censorship or restrictions on sex or sexual behaviour or the concepts of sexual behaviour were given time and space to occur and that quality newspapers played a role in influencing those discussions.

### Great Britain – 1967

Although not a peak in coverage in the in United States, 1967 was an important year for discussion surrounding pornography, obscenity, and permissive trends in society within the British quality press. Most of the coverage during the year within the frame dealt with the trial for obscenity surrounding the novel *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, by Hubert Selby, Jr. Perhaps more important to the overall discussion however, were articles that examined obscenity and pornography in connexion with youth culture, the effect of that culture upon society at large, and the implications for the discourses at work in sexual revolution.

*The Times* and *The Guardian* both devoted several column inches to coverage surrounding the trial for obscenity of the novel *Last Exit to Brooklyn*. Like *Fanny Hill* and *Lady*



*Chatterley's Lover* before it, the trial attracted a great deal of professional and academic support. The differences in this trial have profound implications regarding sexual norms and mores in this period of study. Before the jury had even been selected, publishers Mr John Calder and Mrs Marion Boyars had already been interviewed by *The Times*. They attempted to frame discussion of the novel in terms of morality, specifically “‘It’s like a religious tract”. It consists of a number of short stories, linked by characters and locale, about “‘homosexuals, layabouts, misfits, violence, members of society who cannot cope.”<sup>537</sup> From the outset, the conversation had already shifted dramatically from the coverage found surrounding the *Fanny Hill* trial. Sex itself, or more specifically heterosexual sex (even outside wedlock) was no longer considered to be obscene by the publishers. Instead articles focused on language from the trial which drew attention to the violence and deviance found within the novel. Under a sub-heading of ‘APPALLING DETAIL’ one article in *The Times* noted ‘...passages in the book...described in crude language and appalling detail violence, savagery, corruption, and matters such as drug-taking orgies and abnormal and perverse sexual activities.’<sup>538</sup> *The Guardian* quoted Sir Cyril Black in reference to the trial, saying of its content ‘...sexual perversion, rape, violence and drug addiction...likely to encourage people in these practices.’<sup>539</sup> A further point of the trial was the all-male jury. Both British newspapers remarked upon this fact and it was *The Times* which argued against the decision in an editorial, its author noting ‘There is no longer the same reticence in conversation between the sexes as in 1919, but not all the restraints have been abandoned.’<sup>540</sup> The editorial concluded by considering that ‘In a good many cases...involve judging both the likely feminine and masculine response. It is no criticism of the Judge’s actual exercise of discretion to say that the

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<sup>537</sup> ‘Enter The Experts For ‘Last Exit’,’ *The Times*, 7 February 1964, p. 10.

<sup>538</sup> ‘Jury to role on ‘Last Exit to Brooklyn’,’ *The Times*, 4 April 1967, p. 3.

<sup>539</sup> Cyril Black, ‘The way of pornographers made easier’ says Sir Cyril Black,’ *The Guardian*, 28 April 1967, p.

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<sup>540</sup> ‘A Delicate Decision,’ *The Times*, 14 November 1967, p. 11

balance of advantage is a narrow one.’<sup>541</sup> Aside from the undertones of feminism or female empowerment, the editorial implies that any verdict delivered in the case would thus be one-sided. That the consideration of gender roles had evolved to a point where a politically centre-right newspaper would remark unfavourably upon the exclusion of one gender, even from a case where blushes might not be spared, is incredibly significant. Throughout the remainder of the coverage surrounding the trial, both newspapers were careful to include some discussion of points of contention. The obscenity the jury judged to be present within the novel was vastly different than the obscenity found by a magistrate only three years prior. Specifically, sexual violence and homosexuality proved to be the elements that depraved and corrupted. As *The Guardian* noted in its coverage of the trial ‘...the book did not contain a kind thought or deed and noticing that it referred to such oddments as intercourse with a corpse.’<sup>542</sup> Journalist Geoffrey Moorhouse was also keen to include Mrs Boyars’ testimony that ‘Georgette – the hip queer in the chapter “The Queen is Dead” – he/her was a study in loneliness.’<sup>543</sup> Even the most adamant of witnesses for the prosecution, Mr George Edward Catlin, was clear that ‘...he did not object to pornography so much as he did to violence and sadism.’<sup>544</sup> It is abundantly clear that obscenity and objections to it had changed dramatically in only three years.

Following the verdict, commentators were clear that the trial was a waste of time and public funds. More important however, were articles that examined the current state of society and the tangential relationship to obscenity; two articles stand out. The first ran in *The Times* in late April 1967. The article was an excerpt from a book from Kenneth Harris and was titled ‘How The Young Are Changing Britain’s Character.’ It was a thoughtful narrative of the changes in Britain since the end of the Second World War. Harris pointed out that in several

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<sup>541</sup> Ibid.

<sup>542</sup> Geoffrey Moorhouse, ‘First Sales made ‘Last Exit’ a ‘roaring success’,’ *The Guardian*, 17 November 1967, p. 4.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

<sup>544</sup> ‘Professor on ‘obscene book’,’ *The Times*, 18 November 1967

ways, the youth of Britain were not like their parents, and avoided value judgement on that point. Instead, he noted that ‘On sexual questions it is not that they are licentious or degenerate of selfish or greedy; it is simply that they do not accept the inhibitions and restrictions which their parents’ morality – more so than their conventions – would impose.’<sup>545</sup> Regarding obscene literature he noted that ‘...hundreds of books have been published and sold in perfectly respectable stores which 20 years ago would not have been allowed on the shelves of a lending library. A new vocabulary and range of notions in the field of sexual relationship has been introduced.’<sup>546</sup> It was the young people who changed social conventions, the young people who enforced egalitarianism. This train of thought came full circle in the second article published after the conclusion of the *Last Exit to Brooklyn* trial and put an end to any assertion that sex (at least heterosexual sex) was in any way obscene. John Crosby argued that the young were no longer bothered by public reference to sex. Though taking his argument to extremes throughout the article, Crosby noted that ‘...it’s getting harder and harder to produce lustful thoughts among the young. All that nudity in the films just produces yawns and “Get on with it” among the young crowd.’<sup>547</sup> These articles, well and passionately argued cement the idea that sex was no longer objectionable on the grounds it might have been discussed in public.

The resurgence of discourses of socio-political freedoms while reflecting the transformative nature of previous liberatory discourses on society demonstrate that a new sexual revolution had occurred in the pages of the British quality press in 1967. It is tempting to conclude that the previous sexual revolution that had occurred in 1964 was still playing itself out, however, such a conclusion would lack the acknowledgement that society had already been transformed within the memory of the public and of the press itself. The inclusion of the generation gap and the gendered-conscious observations within the quality press discourse

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<sup>545</sup> 'How The Young Are Changing Britain's Character,' *The Times*, 22 April 1967, p. 8.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid.

<sup>547</sup> John Crosby, 'No nudes is good nudes,' *The Observer*, 10 December 1967, p. 38.

illustrate the effects of the previous sexual revolution upon society. However, the resurgence of the discourses of limitations of socio-political freedoms are also noteworthy in that society still considered homosexuality and sexual violence to be aspects of sexual behaviour that remained beyond the pale, as provided for by the previous sexual revolution. The influence of the quality press can be seen clearly in the pre-trial article against censorship and represent a possible failure on the part of the quality press to influence sexual revolution in this instance.

### United States – 1970

While not a peak in coverage for Britain, 1970 proved to be invaluable to the evolution of obscenity and pornography in American quality newspapers. This year proved to be one of the most contentious in the period of study; for the United States, 1970 was the climax of the permissive trend in society.

*The New York Times* changed its position throughout the course of the year. Early on, articles were filled with harsh and puritanical rhetoric. Regarding congressional hearings on the national problem of pornography, one article used the terms ‘pollution of the mind’ and one man was quoted, stating: “‘There is confusion, lack of confidence and the rising conviction that our criminal justice system...is responsible for the flood of pornographic magazines, books, newspapers, and films, which is seemingly inundating us on every side....’”<sup>548</sup> Despite the pessimistic tones found here, *The New York Times* soon printed articles that seemed a complete reversal, indicating either public confusion on the topic, or purposeful indoctrination in more permissive attitudes, though the former seems much more likely. Within the span of three days, the tone changed. The article ‘Pornography in U.S.: A Big Business’ ran on the

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<sup>548</sup> Arnold H. Lubasch, 'HEARING ASSAILS THE SMUT 'FLOOD'', *The New York Times*, 19 February 1970, p. 44.

front page of the newspaper 22 February 1970. It was a total sea change in the ocean of quality press coverage and vital to the understanding of the social discourse. Author Steven V. Roberts asserted several highly unorthodox views within the body of the article, which spanned two pages. First, he blamed the so-called ‘explosion of erotica’ on two factors: the Supreme Court’s decisions regarding pornography over the past decade and more importantly, ‘...the sexual revolution in America – and around the world – has made people more tolerant.’<sup>549</sup> Second, the language he used to describe sex and sexual proclivities employed no moral judgments; ‘...heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian, bondage and flagellations, bestiality and foot fetishism...’ were all equally valid interests.<sup>550</sup> Admittedly, this was in a section regarding products on offer at adult bookstores; however, he could have pulled his literary punches and employed euphemisms or used blanket terms for sexual deviance from the heterosexual norm but did not. The author made the bold assertion that pornography affected older people much more than the young. Roberts noted ‘Who buys it and why?...there is general agreement within the industry that the bulk of its customers are middle class, middle-aged men and white-collar and blue-collar workers.’<sup>551</sup> This was a metaphorical bombshell; consumers of pornography were every man, the guy next door. Most interesting however was the author’s assertion that pornography, despite the public indecision on its status, was as American as apple pie or baseball. More specifically Roberts appealed to capitalism noting ‘...most pornographers are independent entrepreneurs who started with very little and built up huge businesses. “Some people say we’re part of the Communist conspiracy,” joked one movie maker, “but we’re really classic American capitalists.”’<sup>552</sup> In bringing this to print, *The New York Times* was essentially condoning pornographers and their wares as merely being part of the American way; this was radical at the very least. Later articles supported these rather suspicious, but brilliantly-written

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<sup>549</sup> Steven V. Roberts, 'Pornography in U.S.: A Big Business,' *The New York Times*, 22 February 1970, p. 1.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*

claims. Noted film critic Vincent Canby confirmed that it was older men who were more interested in pornographic films shown in theatres on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in New York in his investigation for the newspaper later that year.<sup>553</sup> Other articles printed before the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography released their final report also had a marked effect upon quality press discourse, displaying a distinct permissive tone. A leaked early draft of the report claimed that pornography had no harmful effects whatsoever and most importantly, it noted that ‘...casts doubt on the general belief that men are more easily aroused by pornography than are women. It finds that tests show women are sometimes aroused without knowing it.’<sup>554</sup> A subsequent article confirmed this finding and detailed an extensive summary of various psychological testing that proved pornography was normal.<sup>555</sup>

After the final report was released, the full recommendations were startling. Despite three dissenters including Charles Keating (President Nixon’s lone appointee to the commission), the majority report was released at the end of September 1970. *The New York Times* ran a full page outlining the recommendations of the commission. Comprehensive sex education was the first item on the list. The article noted that sex education ‘...should be aimed at achieving an acceptance of sex as a normal and natural part of life...be based on facts and encompass not only biological and physiological information but also social, psychological and religious information.’<sup>556</sup> Additional recommendations included ongoing research, full repeal of laws aimed at limiting distribution of sexual material to adults, relaxation of attitudes towards supposed sexual deviancy (including homosexuality), but a limit on sale of sexual material to children. A portion of Charles Keating’s personal dissent was also printed. He contended that ‘To deny the need for control is literally to deny one’s senses, unless such denial

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<sup>553</sup>Vincent Canby, 'The Blue Movie Blues,' *The New York Times*, 10 May 1970, p. 26.

<sup>554</sup>'CONCERN ON SMUT HELD UNFOUNDED,' *The New York Times*, 6 August 1970, p. 22.

<sup>555</sup> Robert Reinhold, 'STUDIES DISCOUNT EFFECTS OF SMUT,' *The New York Times*, 8 September 1970, p. 11.

<sup>556</sup>'Excerpts From Panel's Majority Report, Dissenting Opinions and Other Views,' *The New York Times*, 1 October 1970, p. 20.

is based upon a conclusion that there is nothing evil or dangerous about pornographic material.<sup>557</sup> If not for the politically charged statements written later in his remarks, this would appear to be an example of cognitive dissonance. Response to the report was initially mixed. However, in one of the most important editorials of the period, *The New York Times* embarked fully on a course of moderation. The editorial staff didn't feel that sex education was as important as the commission seemed to think and argued that 'We would readily agree that in moral terms, pornography is an evil. It is the literary equivalent of prostitution because it treats human relationships in a loveless, manipulative and degrading fashion.'<sup>558</sup> The editorial agreed that more research was needed and argued the middle road most persuasively stating 'The best defense against pornography's destructive influence is a family's own moral values and healthy relationships.'<sup>559</sup> Although President Richard Nixon had the opportunity to embrace the report, he chose not to do so, and in the process turned what should have been an impartial report into a political football. A front-page article later that month ran with the headline 'NIXON REPUDIATES OBSCENITY REPORT AS MORALLY VOID.' The article detailed the political manoeuvre quoting Nixon, stating "'So long as I am in the White House, there will be no relaxation of the national effort to control and eliminate smut from our national life....'"<sup>560</sup> The remainder of the articles within the 1970 peak in American quality press coverage discussed the political and social consequences of the failure of the commission, thereby making an implicit judgment regarding the recommendations of the commission; the truth was told, but nobody in the establishment wanted to hear it.

*The Los Angeles Times*, by contrast to its trans-national counterpart was highly sceptical of the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography from the beginning. Though

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<sup>557</sup> Ibid.

<sup>558</sup> 'Which Way on Pornography,' *The New York Times*, 3 October 1970, p. 30.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid.

<sup>560</sup> Warren Weaver, 'NIXON REPUDIATES OBSCENITY REPORT AS MORALLY VOID,' *The New York Times*, 25 October 1970, p. 1.

one article noted positively the prospect of public hearings related to pornography in Los Angeles, the newspaper grew quickly disillusioned with the commission and overall process. Numerous articles were little more than hatchet jobs, lowering expectations and eroding confidence in the commission's process and members. That is, apart from Charles Keating, Nixon's own appointee. The most telling articles were released just before the report came out officially. Where *The New York Times* printed the majority opinion, the *Los Angeles Times* chose instead to print minority reports. The article 'U.S. Study: Experts See Smut Link to Deviation' quoted the opinion of only two psychologists noting, '...psychologists have told the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography that boys exposed to heavy doses of erotic material before the age of 14 may develop deviant sexual behavior as adults.'<sup>561</sup> The article was careful to delineate the exact nature of said deviancy noting "We found that the relations between exposure to pornography and sexual deviance include a broad spectrum from mildly deviant, high frequencies of heterosexual behavior, to group sex, to sex without love, to homosexuality, rape and male prostitution for those subjects exposed to greater amounts of pornography...."<sup>562</sup> When contrasted with how *The New York Times* handled the leaked version of the report, it was a complete reversal. While there was always a moderate amount of bias present in articles that addressed similar issues related to obscenity and pornography in earlier years, there was never outright reversal. This speaks plainly to the contentious nature of obscenity and pornography within the American social discourse.

Again, the political biases of the newspapers played a role in the promotion of the discourses of sexual revolution. Where the liberal tendencies of *The New York Times* favoured discourses of liberation, the far more conservative *Los Angeles Times* favoured discourses of increased limitations on socio-political freedoms. Most interesting in this peak of coverage was

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<sup>561</sup> 'U.S. Study: Experts See Smut Link to Deviation,' *Los Angeles Times*, 3 September 1970, p. 10.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.



the equivocation shown by *The New York Times* in the discourse surrounding the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. Long an advocate of free speech, the key objection prohibiting the full defence of the commission's report was seemingly the overwhelming quantity of pornography that was inundating the United States. Times Square in New York City was infamous as a porn capital during this period, after all. The discourses present in the *Los Angeles Times* were not surprising, especially since President Richard Nixon, a California native had campaigned on ending the overwhelming flow of 'smut' into the homes of Americans. A new sexual revolution played out in society and in the pages of the quality press, but this time the effects of the press in influencing the dialectic of revolution are less clear. Where they may have guided debate in favour of liberatory discourses in 1964, albeit reluctantly in the case of the *Los Angeles Times*, in 1970 the problems of quantity overruled the impulse to hold back the censor. Nevertheless, the byplay of competing discourses within the dialectic of revolution is significant in the argument for yet another sexual revolution.

### Great Britain – 1971

The next peak in coverage brought the British and American narratives back into sync. 1971 was a thematically homogenous year, where censorship and the protection of children proved to be the greatest concern on both sides of the Atlantic. However, this issue was complicated by the oscillations of the social pendulum between permissive and reactionary. In Britain, the quality press narrative was dominated by coverage of two important cases *The Little Red Schoolbook* and *Oz 28*.

*The Little Red Schoolbook*, originally published in Denmark, was loosely based on the *Quotations of Chairman Mao*, commonly referred to in the western world as *The Little Red Book*. It advocated a left-wing political philosophy, advocated 'kid's rights', and offered

practical advice on drugs and more importantly, sex.<sup>563</sup> *The Little Red Schoolbook* provoked not only a successful prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act of 1959, but also an intense debate in the press – in featured articles, editorials, opinion pieces, and letters – that explores the limits of the permissive society. An analysis of quality newspapers from this period shows how the themes and rhetoric employed by the press shaped the debate regarding ‘sexual permissiveness’ including: censorship, education, police power, pornography, privacy, and freedom of expression, homosexuality, and the protection of children. Was talking about sex openly to children acceptable? Was printing it in a book really necessary?

The first item to appear regarding the Little Red Schoolbook was a letter from the Humanist Teachers’ Association. Far from quoting passages that extolled the virtues of sex, drugs or rock & roll, it sought to frame the debate regarding sex as one of censorship and the over-exercise of police power. The author asked, ‘Is he [a policeman] legally entitled to exercise total censorship before the book is tried, let alone condemned?’<sup>564</sup> The article had noted that this book was something, which ought to be seriously discussed and considered in the interest of education. For a world that had changed rapidly during the previous decade, this viewpoint seems reasonable. However, other news items presented a more reactionary viewpoint. Articles from both *The Times* and *The Observer* noted a negative opinion towards the book from the outset, the former outright declaring that the Little Red Schoolbook (LRSB) offered ‘sex and drugs advice to children,’ and the latter noting that respected bookseller WH Smith had recalled a publication that had quoted from its pages.<sup>565</sup> The first month of the case was dominated by these issues of civil liberties.

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<sup>563</sup> See Sutherland, *Offensive literature : decensorship in Britain, 1960-1982*, p. 19., and Ferris, *Sex and the British : a twentieth-century history*, p. 228.

<sup>564</sup> M. Hill, 'Letters: A Humanist schoolbook,' *The Observer*, 4 April 1971, p. 12.

<sup>565</sup> 'Summons over 'Little Red Schoolbook',' *The Times*, 14 April 1971, p. 1 and Laurence Marks, 'WH Smith ban on Time Out,' *The Observer*, 18 April 1971, p. 2.

Throughout the 1960's, publishers were generally vindicated when brought up on charges brought under the Obscene Publications Act of 1959; and yet they still were nervous, at least according to the quality press, of a conviction. Three articles in as many days portrayed the LRSB as a struggle against censorship, against the freedom to express thought in the case of *The Guardian* and against the restriction of business and the closing of reputable publishers in the case of *The Times*.<sup>566</sup> While the articles did not agree in terms of tone and ideology at this stage, they did agree that a restriction on the freedom to publish was of great concern.

*The Times* continued to advocate in favour of the LRSB throughout the following months. A featured article by Alexander Cockburn painted the case of the LRSB as one of a struggle of people against totalitarianism.<sup>567</sup> While the authors and the publisher of this two hundred-page practical advice manual may not have set out to champion new advances in civil rights, the newspapers did just that. Sex, and the discussion thereof, was equated in terms of rights to privacy, the rights of children and the power of the state. Also published was a letter from the LRSB's publisher, Mr. Richard Handyside, which provided a full-throated defence of both himself and *The Little Red Schoolbook*.<sup>568</sup> This letter was unusual in that it argued a pro-child position from a liberal point of view (i.e. pro-engagement in terms of sex) during an age when the opposite viewpoint was more the rule.

As time went on, however, and the case was decided, a more conservative, traditional viewpoint made itself known. Ronald Butt wrote a scathing indictment of the previous newspaper narrative after the guilty verdict was handed down. He wrote 'The idea that this book leaves children any scope to find out anything for themselves would be laughable if the social implications of its sophistry were not so tragic. The issue has nothing to do with whether

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<sup>566</sup> 'Publishers consult on Little Red Book case,' *The Times*, 5 May 1971, p. 1 and 'Support for the ' Little Red Book ', *The Guardian*, 8 May 1971, p. 6 and Christopher Walker, 'Leading publishers form group for defence of Little Red Schoolbook,' *The Times*, 8 May 1971, p. 2.

<sup>567</sup> Alexander Cockburn, 'Who cares about civil rights?,' *The Times*, 29 May 1971, p. 17.

<sup>568</sup> Richard Handyside, 'Little Red Schoolbook,' *The Times*, 7 July 1971, p. 15.

children should be told facts but what they should be told *about* them and how.<sup>569</sup> He went on to criticize those who defended the LRSB on anti-censorship grounds and concludes by stating that, ‘What is at stake is not a child’s freedom, but the freedom to be a child.’<sup>570</sup> With this one article, Butt redefined the issue. While conservative opinions had been outshouted throughout much of the late 1960’s, Butt managed to redefine obscenity for ‘ordinary’ parents, doctors and teachers. A permissive society was limited by the age of some of its people.

That is not to say that Butt had the final say on the subject. Paul Ferris, writing for *The Observer*, responded (although not directly) to Butt’s ideological objections by addressing the need for practical engagement based on the LRSB’s approach of honesty without overly moral guidelines. His first article brought home the debates surrounding *Oz* and *The Little Red Schoolbook* by acknowledging that ‘For many people the endless debate about sex and morals concerns somebody else.’<sup>571</sup> His second article noted that ‘...like everything else to do with sex...affected by the climate of the times. The recent court verdict against “The Little Red Schoolbook”... [is] evidence of change. Opposition to licence has crystallised.’<sup>572</sup> Other items including letters and a column from an educational therapist, underscore that while not everyone may have liked the idea of a permissive society in terms of open engagement with children on the issues of sex, the reality must be addressed.<sup>573</sup>

Before the appeal of the decision in *The Little Red Schoolbook* case, a series of articles seemed to broaden the debate about sexual norms and mores in terms of the level of engagement with children. In one article, *The Times* defended the Advisory Centre for Education from the accusations of David Holbrook. Holbrook stated that the ‘ACE has,

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<sup>569</sup> Ronald Butt, 'The little read schoolbook,' *The Times*, 8 July 1971, p. 14.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid.

<sup>571</sup> Paul Ferris, 'MY DAUGHTER'S ON THE PILL', *The Observer*, 11 July 1971, p. 21.

<sup>572</sup> Paul Ferris, 'TEENAGE SEX / THE NEW DILEMMA: Paul Ferris concludes his investigation of an increasingly disturb...' *The Observer*, 18 July 1971, p. 21.

<sup>573</sup> 'Sex under sixteen,' *The Observer*, 18 July 1971, p. 7 and Mary Miles, 'Oz' and the 'School Book,' *The Observer*, August 1, 1971, p. 23.

indirectly, thrown itself behind the whole movement to thrust pornography on children,' after they refused to print a letter he wrote in response to a favourable review of the LRSB.<sup>574</sup> While it seems that *The Times* generally favoured a more conservative approach to engagement with children regarding sex, they seem to have disavowed his remarks noting that letters submitted to the ACE's publication 'Where?' on the issue would be covering '...a very wide range of opinions.'<sup>575</sup> Another article focused on constructive criticism of the LRSB, with Archbishop George Beck's objections regarding the book's section on sex: 'The section on sex education is weakened by its decision not to discuss human feelings.'<sup>576</sup> It is notable in that perhaps the Archbishop and by connection the church felt that this was a common problem in the evolution of sexual norms and mores.

Following the appeal, the broader discussion of sex and marriage dominated the narrative in the quality press. *The Guardian* published a summary of the appeals verdict that was unusual in that it was a very negative piece against the publisher, but not without merit as it discussed marriage. Prior to this, marriage had not been an element of the broader conversation regarding talking to children about sex. The court felt that 'In the book, marriage was very largely ignored and ... felt on the whole that the book was inimical to good teacher-children relations...'<sup>577</sup> Another article noted that 'Many pieces in the book were good but they were intermixed and offset by other passages. The book dealt with homosexuality and it was done in a compassionate way, but it was a tragedy that the only stable relationship referred to was between homosexuals.'<sup>578</sup> These observations clearly show that marriage was still the most appropriate avenue for sex, but also signify that a 'stable relationship' was also (if only implicitly) acceptable when discussing sex with children. Later articles detailing the appeal to

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<sup>574</sup> 'The Times Diary,' *The Times*, 19 August 1971, p. 10.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.

<sup>576</sup> 'The Little Red Schoolbook backed by educationists,' *The Times*, 3 September 1971, p. 2.

<sup>577</sup> 'Little Red Schoolbook' appeal fails,' *The Guardian*, 30 October 1971, p. 7.

<sup>578</sup> 'Publisher of Little Red Schoolbook loses appeal,' *The Times*, 30 October 1971, p. 3.

the European Court of Human Rights were concerned mainly with the politics of European versus British court decisions and the rights of self-determination, rather than the broader realities concerning the open discussion of sex.

*The Little Red Schoolbook* provided quality newspapers with an excellent platform from which to engage public opinion regarding sex and its relation to children. This discussion, which spanned several months reveals the limits of the 'permissive' society as well as demonstrates the nature of the ongoing sexual revolution. By discussing privacy, pornography, sex, the protection of children, homosexuality, education, police power, and censorship, invaluable insight is gained into both media attitudes as well as the public at large as to the exact nature of sexual norms and mores of the period. While underscored by a more conservative ideology than in the late 1960's, in Britain, the approach of practical engagement, or openly addressing the realities of sex, became the dominant narrative. The purely 'permissive' streak was now tempered by a position whereby the children must be protected. The question of what children must be protected from remained a source of contention ever since. In terms of public consensus within quality newspapers, talking about sex was okay, provided it was done in a way that preserved the 'freedom to be a child' rather than 'children's freedom.'

Concurrent to the debate surrounding *The Little Red Schoolbook* was another trial that dealt with the extent to which the public was willing to engage with obscenity and children's consumption of mass media. *Oz* was a magazine that channelled the spirit of the underground culture, and advocated Cultural Revolution.<sup>579</sup> As the longest obscenity trial in British history, *Oz* 28 or 'Schoolkids OZ' provided multiple opportunities for public debate in the quality press. These included short news items, expanded feature articles, editorials – scathing as well as

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<sup>579</sup> See, Marwick, *The sixties : cultural revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974*, p. 145., Sutherland, *Offensive literature : decensorship in Britain, 1960-1982*, p. 19., and Ferris, *Sex and the British : a twentieth-century history*, pp. 225-226.

laudatory, and many letters to the editor from both sides of the conflicting viewpoints, all which serve to illustrate the profound issues related to sexual revolution including: freedom of expression, censorship, obscenity, sexual license, and generation gap. How were children dealing with the plethora of sexual imagery around them? Was it acceptable for children to be thinking about sex at all? Was the generational gap a problem? What constitutes pornography? How did the quality press view the underground press? And by extension, how did the underground press present arguments regarding sexual revolution?

In May 1971, *The Observer* published an article by Roy Perrott, which effectively framed the upcoming *Oz* trial as one of the underground press in its entirety, with Richard Neville as its standard bearer. While often seeming paternal in its tone, the article cleverly entitled 'A Trip on the Underground' was quick to note that the mainstream Fleet Street publishers often thought publications like *Oz* and other underground papers to be 'sloppy.'<sup>580</sup> However, Perrott also considered that a combined readership of about 500,000 was something to be taken into consideration when evaluating the overall impact of the underground press as a whole; most important are Perrott's characterisations regarding how the underground press approached the topic of sexual revolution. For Perrott, the underground press '...use the word "revolution" often; but, as with romantic love, there is no crisp manifesto of what is really desired.'<sup>581</sup> Additionally, 'sexual revolution (whatever that means)' remains amorphous in his brief analysis of the underground press.<sup>582</sup> Such uncertainty on the part of this veteran journalist, indicates that even mainstream quality newspapers, their underground cousins, and by extension society were still in the process of defining sexual revolution or indeed defining another iteration of sexual revolution.

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<sup>580</sup> Roy Perrott, 'A TRIP ON THE UNDERGROUND,' *The Observer*, 9 May 1971, p. 9.

<sup>581</sup> Ibid.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid.

After the trial opened, the quality press seemed to quickly divide into pro and con camps, with *The Guardian* firmly ensconced to defend Richard Neville and *The Times* ready to tear him down. The opening summary of the prosecution led by Mr Brian Leary in *The Times*, effectively characterized ‘Schoolkids OZ’ as ‘Obscene, lewd, indecent and sexually perverted...with intent to debauch and corrupt the morals of children...[to] arouse and implant in their minds lustful and perverted desires...’ and included a particularly scandalized comment regarding a pastiche cartoon of a sexually active Rupert Bear.<sup>583</sup> However, this would prove to be almost the entirety of vitriol reported in news items throughout the trial as opposed to feature articles, save for a boilerplate listing of the charges. *The Guardian* by contrast printed a short summary of the testimony of Vivian Berger, one of the ‘Schoolkids’ that edited the issue at question.<sup>584</sup> Both *The Times* and *The Guardian* printed the testimony of Mr George Melly aged 45, a television and film critic, which captures a portrait of how a parent during this period felt about how his children might be affected by this alleged obscenity. Mr Melly ‘...found the magazine invaluable in discussions with his son and he read it in the same way he would read the *Listener*, *The Guardian* or *The Telegraph*.’<sup>585</sup> *The Times* reported Mr Melly as stating ‘It seems to me that young people are less uncertain, less miserable, and less tormented about sex than they were in my generation.’<sup>586</sup> This printing conveys a deliberate attempt on the part of both quality newspapers to present an honest indication about public attitudes toward sexual norms and mores. *The Times* also conveyed Richard Neville’s direct testimony that ‘One of the chief aims was to abolish undercover puritanism about sex. The more relaxed people were about sex the healthier the community. I don’t think there is any great danger of there being a common outbreak of sex in the streets in the near future.’<sup>587</sup> Nicholas de Jongh agreed, and

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<sup>583</sup> ‘Carnival atmosphere outside court for start of Oz trial,’ *The Times*, 23 June 1971, p. 4.

<sup>584</sup> Nicholas de Jongh, ‘Boy tells how he helped to edit ‘Oz’,’ *The Guardian*, 25 June 1971, p. 5.

<sup>585</sup> ‘Film critic says he would allow son to help ‘Oz’,’ *The Guardian*, 29 June 1971, p. 6.

<sup>586</sup> ‘Dirty jokes useful, Oz trial court told.,’ *The Times*, 29 June 1971, p. 4.

<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.*



gave his opinion in *The Guardian* regarding the *Oz* trial the following day, noting especially what the prosecution regarded as appropriate content: ‘...the magazine might well have come into the hands of a child between the age of 10 (an age of the sexually unstirred) and the age of 16 (an age which such reading matter might be suitable.’<sup>588</sup> Clearly the prosecution led by Mr Brian Leary had firm positions upon what was suitable for children but the fact that he considered 16 a more appropriate age for the material found in the ‘Schoolkids OZ’ proves that sexual norms and mores had evolved over the past decade.

Over the next couple of weeks, the trial continued and the quality press published updates, noting t-shirts were being sold to help pay for the defence, as well as pieces underlining the idea that sex under sixteen was unacceptable as well as evidence from a social psychologist that firmly dismissed the prosecution’s concerns about sexual fantasies and even the infamous Rupert Bear aberration.<sup>589</sup> As the trial began to wind down, however the quality press used testimony and vehement headlines to capture the readers’ interest. *The Times* even managed to achieve a literary form of bait and switch with its article ‘Former head says ‘OZ’ case destructive to young’. Initially this seems to be a firm indictment against Neville and *Oz*, but in actuality it reaffirmed the concerns about the generation gap, that if a conviction were given as the verdict it would damage relations between children and parents; Mr Michael Duane the former headmaster stated ‘They have seen from press reports that sex and drugs are the things that alarm the adults...It is not drawing attention to drugs and sex but drawing attention to their need for dialogue with the older generation.’<sup>590</sup>

The closing summaries given in the *Oz* trial, and readily printed by the quality press, clearly spelled out the core issues of sexual revolution at stake, particularly generation gap, age

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<sup>588</sup> Nicholas de Jongh, ‘Specific gravity: Nicholas de Jongh at the *OZ* trial,’ *The Guardian*, 30 June 1971, p. 13.

<sup>589</sup> ‘Oz trial’ shirts sold to raise cash, defendant says,’ *The Times*, 2 July 1971, p. 4, and Ferris, ‘MY DAUGHTER’S ON THE PILL’, p. 21, and ‘Young people would regard ‘Oz’ as a giggle, witness says,’ *The Times*, 6 July 1971, p. 4.

<sup>590</sup> ‘Former head says ‘OZ’ case destructive to young,’ *The Times*, 17 July 1971, p. 3.

appropriateness, pornography, sexual imagery, and in part, the foundations of counter revolution. Just as Roy Perrott had indicated in his article, the trial would ultimately deliver a verdict on the alternative society, which the prosecution defined as ‘The alternative society...putting forward sex as something to be worshipped for itself.’<sup>591</sup> Mr Brian Leary even went further, positing a hypothetical scenario for the jury (and indeed for the readers) in which a child might ask the following of a parent: ‘What are those two [people] doing, mummy? What is a homosexual? Why do they want teenage models to model for them? Is there any money in teenage modelling?’<sup>592</sup> To his mind, these were the limits of a permissive society, the point at which a line must be drawn in the sand. Mr John Mortimer QC put forward an alternative to Mr Leary’s rather bleak depiction of the state of society for the defence. He noted that ‘A young person was bombarded on all sides by invitations to free love. “Sex, sex, sex leers at him from every advertisement and murmurs at him from every television commercial on the assumption that sex is something attractive and desirable.” Obscenity is in the mind and the eye of the beholder.’<sup>593</sup> These two competing viewpoints engaged fundamentally with the issues underpinning sexual revolution.

Ultimately, the jury returned with a guilty verdict on four of five charges. It is worth noting that Richard Neville, James Anderson and Felix Dennis were acquitted of the charge of conspiracy to corrupt morals of young persons. The verdict was also a majority and not unanimous, further lending credence to the fluidic nature of obscenity asserted by the defence. The quality press covered these points as well as noting that this was the longest obscenity trial in British history and that the jury asked the judge for a definition of obscenity.<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>591</sup> 'Oz' trial jury asked to set standard,' *The Times*, 21 July 1971, p. 4, and 'Warning to 'Oz' trial jury,' *The Guardian*, 21 July 1971, p. 6.

<sup>592</sup> 'Warning to 'Oz' trial jury,' p. 6.

<sup>593</sup> 'Comedian's court 'act' criticised at 'Oz' trial,' *The Guardian*, 23 July 1971, p. 7, and 'Obscenity in mind of the beholder, Q C says,' *The Times*, 23 July 1971, p. 3.

<sup>594</sup> 'Sentences postponed after jury, by majority, find 'Oz' editors guilty on four obscenity counts,' *The Times*, 29 July 1971, p. 3, and Nicholas de Jongh, 'Oz' editors held for reports and sentence,' *The Guardian*, 29 July 1971, p. 1.

Following the verdict and sentencing (considered overall particularly harsh as the sentences were custodial rather than financial) the quality press let the public have their say, as well as running editorials on the subject. In an unusual tone, *The Observer* ran an editorial by Mary Miles which discussed both the *Oz* trial and *The Little Red Schoolbook*, though seemingly addressed to the wrong audience.<sup>595</sup> One editorial on the subject entitled ‘The Third Generation’ proved to be the most scathing indictment of Neville et al. Of its many points, this following underlines the true ideological difference behind the sexual revolution in terms of obscenity: ‘Only if one believes that explicit sexual pornography cannot produce a damaging trauma in the emotional development of children should one regard the sentences in this case as unreasonable or unfair.’<sup>596</sup> Others found little objectionable about the Schoolkids issue, noting that there was little to object to in terms of content, that tastes had changed since the Obscene Publications Act was published in 1959, that the case was primarily about free speech and freedom of expression, and that obscenity had evolved from the realm of the purely sexual.<sup>597</sup> Of particular note were two editorials run in *The Times* in the days following the sentencing. The first was by Mr John Mortimer QC, the defence counsel who supported his arguments in the courtroom by advocating that ‘Parents had to realize that children were surrounded by sexual material, which they could accept or reject as they wished...we could never guide them by totally insulating them.’<sup>598</sup> Also in *The Times* was a rebuttal to the ‘Third Generation’ editorial by Bernard Levin. Entitled, ‘New martyrs for the world of No’ it offered a much more liberal or permissive viewpoint on the *Oz* trial, as well as articulating a key element of generation gap, first espoused by George Melly and Richard Neville himself during the trial: sexual guilt. After describing the potentially offensive material found in the

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<sup>595</sup> Miles, ‘Oz’ and the ‘School Book,’ p. 23.

<sup>596</sup> ‘The Third Generation,’ *The Times*, 6 August 1971, p. 13.

<sup>597</sup> ‘Prison for editors of ‘Oz’,’ *The Guardian*, 6 August 1971, p. 6, and ‘Society versus obscenity,’ *The Observer*, 8 August 1971, p. 6, ‘THE TRIALS OF OZ,’ *The Observer*, 8 August 1971, p. 7, and ‘Obscenity ‘not only sexual’,’ *The Times*, 9 August 1971, p. 4.

<sup>598</sup> ‘Oz counsel puts case for dropping censorship,’ *The Times*, 9 August 1971, p. 4.

‘Schoolkids OZ’: ‘Those who think such stuff pornographic quite literally do not know what pornography is...Equally harmless, and even more beneficial, are some aspects of the sexual self-expression they use. They have freed themselves, in large measure, from the stifling embrace of guilt about their sexual feelings (would that Mr Muggeridge do the same)...’<sup>599</sup>

The response to the editorial arguments was quite marked. Letters to the editor ranged in opinion from far-right, to far-left in social values. Common themes found throughout included the disbelief that the ‘Schoolkids OZ’ had been on trial – and that there were instances of more ‘hard-core pornography’ that should be the focus of prosecutors time and energy.<sup>600</sup> *The Guardian* generally printed responses that favoured the defendants, whereas *The Times* attempted to present balanced responses. Overall, the responses printed in *The Times* were more thoughtful, though both papers printed letters that worried that ‘common sense’ was outweighing ‘scientific investigation’ in establishing the alleged harm done by pornography, and one particularly erudite letter even cited that the United States Commission on Pornography and Obscenity had not found any evidence to support the ‘harm’ done by pornography.<sup>601</sup> While the view of Bernard Levin was by no means the first choice, most respondents favoured engagement with children, attempting to bridge the generation gap was considered of paramount importance. No longer could adults bury their heads in the sand regarding discussing sex, sexual education and the myriad of sexual imagery available for consumption.

The *Oz* 28 trial was a landmark in the history of the sexual revolution. It forced discussion both within the media and without on sensitive issues related to children and

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<sup>599</sup> Bernard Levin, 'New martyrs for the world of No,' *The Times*, 10 August 1971, p. 12.

<sup>600</sup> 'LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Oz and the older generation's fears,' *The Guardian*, 3 August 1971, p. 10, and D. Ross et al. Simpson, 'Young people and pornography: issues raised by Oz case,' *The Times*, 9 August 1971, p. 11, and Michael et al. Sherrard, 'The Oz case: factors that must be considered,' *The Times*, 10 August 1971, p. 13, and Ivor H. et al. Mills, 'Oz case: commercial attitudes to sex,' *The Times*, 11 August 1971, p. 11G.A.L. et al. Gilber, 'Oz case: parents and children,' *The Times*, 12 August 1971, p. 13.

<sup>601</sup> 'LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Oz and the older generation's fears,' p. 10, and Mills, 'Oz case: commercial attitudes to sex,' p. 11.

obscenity. For quality newspapers, the ‘Schoolkids OZ’ provided an opportunity to engage with the public on issues of generation gap, age appropriateness for sex, freedom of expression, obscenity and censorship. While many instances of social conservatism still permeated the quality press of this period, the growing sense was that it was no longer possible to ignore the real and present sexual imagery in everyday life. Permissiveness was not dead, but had merely been tempered by pragmatism. Above all, the conversation about generation gap and what would be considered appropriate for certain age groups had begun in earnest and would continue long after people had forgotten about *Oz* 28.

In consideration of the concept of ‘sexual revolution,’ 1971 again represented an iteration of such a revolution. The quality press provided the ideological space for the discourses of socio-political freedoms and discourses of liberation to hash out a conflict marked by the issues and content delineated above. It was a new iteration of sexual revolution, but instead of one moving toward liberation, it moved towards the limits of freedom. The key element of the discourse in this sexual revolution was undoubtedly age or generation gap. The quality press played a key role in influencing the discourse and Ronald Butt’s article was instrumental in creating that influence. That article reframed the conversation, set new limits on the bounds of competing discourses and was ultimately transformative – a hallmark of social revolution.

### United States – 1971

In the United States, the ‘peak’ of coverage in 1971 resulted in mixed opinions by the two newspapers selected for study. Where in 1970 *The New York Times* had pursued an editorial policy in which it advocated a more permissive response to obscenity and

pornography, in 1971 it reversed course somewhat. This gave a result in the social discourse surrounding obscenity and pornography, which lacked any sense of uniformity.

*The New York Times* seemed to reverse a previous editorial in February 1971. The editorial board argued that while there were problems with the report of the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, this did not detract from its message. The editorial stressed that politicians had not read and thus did not understand the report and noted especially that ‘...it had not asked, as its political detractors charged, that the floodgates be opened to inundate the nation and its children with obscenity.’<sup>602</sup> The editorial also cautioned the dangers of censorship. That a newspaper would argue heavily against censorship is hardly surprising, yet this is a point that must be stressed emphatically; it speaks to an over-arching trend within the press that was absent of other political biases.

Another article illustrated a shift towards a more conservative editorial policy. It’s true that one article in and of itself cannot and does not indicate a wholesale change in a newspaper’s overall biases. However, this article was cited in the *Los Angeles Times* as being worth reading for its take on obscenity and pornography. Considering that endorsement, the article bears close scrutiny. In a truly exhaustive fashion, Irving Kristol laid out the entire case against pornography and obscenity in his article spanning six pages. Essentially his argument can be distilled as pornography, as distinct from obscenity is dehumanising. Regarding obscenity and pornography in a larger context he noted that, ‘It may well be that Western society, in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is experiencing a drastic change in sexual mores and sexual relationships. We have had many such “sexual revolutions” in the past...and we shall doubtless have others in the future.’<sup>603</sup> Despite his liberal outtake on life and society, he argued passionately for censorship as being necessary noting ‘I think the settlement we are living under

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<sup>602</sup> ‘Guardians of Morals,’ *The New York Times*, 10 February 1971, p. 42.

<sup>603</sup> Irving Kristol, ‘Pornography, Obscenity and The Case for Censorship,’ *The New York Times*, 28 March 1971, SM25.

now, in which obscenity and democracy are regarded as equals is wrong.<sup>604</sup> Replies to the article were thoroughly against censorship. One criticised Kristol for neglecting a female perspective with regards to sex and sexual relationships.<sup>605</sup> All but one of the replies in letters to the editor decried Kristol for advocating a position in favour of censorship. Again the editorial policy of the newspaper was instrumental in demonstrating opposition to censorship, even at the expense of obscenity and pornography.

The *Los Angeles Times* too ran articles contrary to its editorial policy in the previous year affecting the media discourse surrounding obscenity and pornography. Like *The New York Times*, the newspaper recommended giving the report of the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography a fair hearing. Mary B. Murphy noted in her article that ‘...there is no evidence to substantiate a link between pornography and sexual crime...’<sup>606</sup> Compared to the exultations run by the newspaper in the previous year that preached fire and brimstone, this article remains significant in demonstrating a shift back towards permissive attitudes. Further the article engaged with the report’s material and advocated specifically for the report’s goal of sex education: ‘...a massive sex education program should be launched which “should be aimed at achieving an acceptance of sex as a normal and natural part of life and of oneself as a sexual being.”’<sup>607</sup> Such candour was a total departure from previous editorial policy and demonstrates the unique vicissitudes seen within the discourse of the American quality press on this issue. The other article which had unique bearing upon the American quality press discourse surrounding obscenity and pornography was written by noted conservative author and commentator William F. Buckley Jr. Buckley gently lampooned the *Oz* 28 trial in Great Britain in the article while praising the English approach to prosecution of obscenity. For Buckley, the British approach towards obscenity involved nuance that was lacking in America.

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<sup>604</sup> Ibid., p. SM115.

<sup>605</sup> James Lincoln Collier, 'Pornography and Censorship,' *The New York Times*, 18 April 1971, p. SM14.

<sup>606</sup> Mary B. Murphy, 'Some Good Questions About Pornography,' *Los Angeles Times*, 3 January 1971, p. O1.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid, p. O2.

He wrote: ‘Our position is: it goes, or it doesn’t go. If Oz-28 is pornographic, then half the pay lode of Manhattan newsstands is pornographic, to say the least.’<sup>608</sup> Buckley admired the pragmatism, but less so the ideology behind it. He was careful to praise intellectual theory surrounding obscenity and pornography in the United States and Irving Kristol’s article in *The New York Times* especially, calling it ‘Worth reading in any language.’<sup>609</sup> That Buckley saw all these issues as interrelated is key to the understanding of how obscenity and pornography continued to be discussed in the American quality press.

The sexual revolution at work in the pages of the American quality press in 1971 was essentially the same iteration as played out the year before. Society had not been transformed, and the discourses in play contained remarkably similar content to the previous year; the report from the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography being chief among them. Where the previous year had seen a resurgence of discourses advocating the limitations of socio-political freedoms, the present year had seen the ideological pendulum swing back towards discourses of liberation. The press’ influence in affecting sexual revolution is less clear, however the institutional forces at work in creating the quality press discourse remain interesting as do the cross-cultural observations regarding obscenity.

## Chapter Conclusions

The evolution of obscenity, pornography, and the limits of the permissive society is key to understanding the history of ‘sexual revolution.’ More than any other theme, the discussion of obscenity within mass media prompted people from different social and economic backgrounds to re-examine closely held beliefs and moral reservations about the nature of sex

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<sup>608</sup> William F. Buckley Jr., ‘British Obscenity Case Holds a Pragmatic Lesson for U.S.,’ *Los Angeles Times*, 6 August 1971, p. B9.

<sup>609</sup> *Ibid.*



and just how far society could or should go in changing talking about sex, thus altering social norms and mores.

From the dawn of the 1960s, there existed a permissive trend within society. Although never without some objection, the evolution of obscenity proceeded by leaps and bounds. The trials of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* examined the unique trans-Atlantic shared cultural norms regarding sex and sexual norms. They illustrated that sex outside of wedlock might be morally objectionable, but not obscene, particularly if taken out of context. The permissive trend continued; so-called four-letter words became fashionable seemingly appearing everywhere. Sex became something that could be discussed, indeed should be discussed openly. *Fanny Hill* took the conversation further; sex in the context of normal heterosexual intercourse was perfectly within the limits of respectability. The quality press was careful to assert this point through editorial policy. As time went on, violence and 'deviance' became the outliers in the limits of permissiveness; coverage of *The Naked Lunch* and *Last Exit to Brooklyn* carefully navigated these perilous waters of social discourse. The interaction of youth culture and generation gap with regards to obscenity and pornography were examined closely by the quality press in both Britain and the United States, if in slightly different ways.

Despite the overall permissive trend with regards to obscenity and pornography advocated within the quality press narrative, certain limitations to total permissiveness and utter license stand out. Chief among these were the protection of children, and the abhorrence of censorship to one degree or another. The protection of children came to a head in the cases of the *Little Red Schoolbook* and *Oz 28* in Britain and through the findings of the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography in the United States. Both the British and American quality press agreed that the protection of children was necessary up to a point. The quality press in both countries were keen to stress that protection of children with regards to sex was limited not to if children should be told, but rather when and how children should be

told about sex and the level of detail. Press narratives in both countries agreed that information should be factual and practical in terms of engagement, though political objections would make this difficult. Censorship too was at the heart of quality press narratives surrounding obscenity and pornography. Newspapers were not disinterested parties; they had a clear stake in the social discussion and made it abundantly clear through content and editorial polity that censorship was not something to be suffered.

The central dialectical struggle between discourses of limitations of socio-political freedoms and discourses of liberation played out in both society at large and in the pages of the quality press in both Great Britain and the United States several times within this period. The distinct ideological space afforded to these discourses and the role of the press in influencing that discourse are easy to examine. Throughout the period, the quality press, by and large favoured discourses that abjured censorship; censorship being anathema to a free press and overall placing the quality press within an ideological camp that would often side with discourses of liberation. This is not to say that there were not sexual revolutions whose ideological outcome favoured discourses of limitations on socio-political freedoms or censorship. In 1967 and 1971 in Great Britain and 1970 in the United States, the quality press reflected majorities of discourses favouring censorship with an express purpose of protecting children from being exposed to sex or sexual behaviour at too young an age. The quality press did however, play a role in shaping the discourses of sexual revolutions, at times redefining the limits of individual discourses if not halting their advance. As a function of discursive formation, iterations of sexual revolution transformed culture by ushering in new discursive formations of obscenity and pornography.

## CONCLUSION

The ‘sexual revolution’ was just as much a process as it was an event. More specifically it was a series of revolutionary moments or succession of sexual revolutions that occurred throughout the period of 1959 through 1979. These sexual revolutions had profound impacts upon Western society in an era that was finally emerging from the long shadow of the Second World War.

At the heart of the understanding of sexual revolution as a process, is the fundamental concept of revolution as the public exercise of the dialectic of freedom and liberation. Freedom has been understood since Aristotle as a political institution that serves the function for those who ascribe to its tenets the fundamental right to discuss those issues pertinent to its existence. Put another way, it is a system where people who live in a free society can discuss the issues that affect them, decide on what is acceptable, and then abide by those decisions in a way that is equally distasteful to all concerned. Liberation, by contrast, in the Aristotelian sense is the absence of oppression, even those oppressions mutually consented to within a free society. Revolution, as has been demonstrated, occurs when these two opposing concepts clash: ideologically as well as physically, and always publically. The greatest work in the theory and practise of revolution has been purely in the political realm by which the legal and political structures of society are made, destroyed, and remade – often violently throughout history. However, a social revolution, by which the less overtly political norms and mores of a society are made, destroyed, and remade occurs in an analogous manner. A key hallmark of a social revolution, coupled with the dialectical conflict is the process by which coalitions of interested parties are formed to reconstruct those issues.

Although there are many methods by which coalitions may be formed, a significant method is the participation in public discourses. These public discourses naturally shift with

greater input and when discourses that broadly follow the dialectical pole of freedom come into conflict with discourses that adhere to the dialectical pole of liberation the potential for revolution is high. Social revolution occurs when the public conflict of these discourses, themselves nexuses of power-knowledge in the tradition of Michel Foucault, have observable consequences; ranging from substantial shifts in power relations to complete cultural transformation. A sexual revolution, therefore, may be considered as an ideological conflict of public discourses from two opposing dialectical poles, where there is a significant shift in the power relations present in norms and mores regarding the sexual act, sexual behaviour, or sexual identities and/or a cultural transformation where the fundamental understandings held by most a society are altered by the conflict of the dialectical poles.

Such conflict must be public, it must act upon every member of society for a revolution to occur and be successful. In addition to occupying an ideological space, it must also occupy a physical one. Throughout Western history, there has been an evolution of the nexus of ideological and physical spaces where these public discourses collide. From the agora of ancient Greece to the forum of Rome, to the courts of law or the public house, the salon of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the religious revival tent meeting of the nineteenth century, to the newspaper, radio, television, and most recently the internet and social media. The mass media of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries has played an important and vital role in the exercise of social revolutions, by providing both an ideological and physical space for the exercise of public discourses of most issues. So too did the mass media and especially newspapers play a role in influencing such discourses through editorial and institutional controls, creating their own unique brand of language in each period to curry favour with those audiences who consumed their products. Such language was the product of various forces from individual journalists, to copy editors to editors-in-chief to newspaper owners. The multiplicity of voices ensured a wide range of opinions, tempered by the trends

and values present in the levels of control in a news organisation. Thus, a conflict of dialectical poles can occur, but would do so only after deliberation, sometimes great deliberation. When a conflict between dialectical poles does occur, mass media are able to affect the discourse, and thereby influence said conflict. This can be achieved by manipulation of the discourse – often subtle, sometimes conspicuous – by the deliberate inclusion of content that is acceptable to either ideological pole, the deliberate exclusion content, or by constructing the full range of opinion, and constructing the limits of that range. This is not to say that mass media is always successful in manipulation of that discourse, only that it exists as a possibility despite the inherent power of media itself.

Quality newspapers, including *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times* were selected for this study of a ‘sexual revolution’ occurring in the 1960s and 1970s in Great Britain and the United States for the sheer quantity of information available as well as for analysis of printed sources. Print sources were preferable to either radio or television because of the greater breadth of debate within them afforded by fewer limitations on brevity or legal restrictions on the inclusion of materials deemed too sensitive for consumption over airwaves as well as to contribute to the greater body of literature in this area. Radio and television, though powerful mediums, had far too much of their messages constructed and were prohibited from discussing many of the issues surrounding content regarding ‘sexual revolution’ with the same level of inquiry and lacked the proper time to explore the full implications of those issues. The newspapers chosen for study reflected a range of political bias that approached the limits of mainstream political philosophies, but did not exceed them. The study of quality newspapers instead of popular newspapers was both to fill a gap in the existing literature as well as to explore how publications with journalists at the top of their fields, the elite of their profession reflected upon and reacted to the substantial and often jarring issues of a ‘sexual revolution.’ Further, these newspapers were sober, less

susceptible to sensationalism and rank profiteering, and as such were regarded with esteem by political and social leaders. To gauge the political action or inaction that as Theda Skocpol argued accompanies social changes, there was no better place to look for the influence on leaders than on the publications they themselves were conscious of and read on a regular basis.

Sources were selected by keyword searching of digital newspaper archives thereby creating a frame for analysis. Search returns were tabulated and then grouped through calculation into 'peaks' which served as the starting point for the analysis of their content. Sources from relevant peaks were then analysed regarding tone, genre, grammatical mood, speech function, intertextuality, and modality. Sources outside so-called 'peak' years were also considered in order to provide a more complete analysis of the overall evolution within the two thematic categories.

The two thematic categories examined in this study of a 'sexual revolution' looked closely at feminism/women's rights/women's liberation and obscenity/pornography within the context of a permissive society. Both categories were central to the public debates about sexual norms, mores, and praxis throughout the period and both were characterised by ideologically opposite polar positions in public discourse.

Feminism during this period of study was for the most part a realisation by women – and to a lesser extent men – that women faced discrimination in all areas of their lives based upon their gender and that change was necessary to achieve greater socio-political freedoms. Further, these women and men operating within this realisation created new socio-political identities to achieve these greater freedoms. For the quality press, these created identities were predominantly white, heterosexual, women of the middle classes, though as historians have proved at length, this was the bias inherent of the time; there were many other feminist identities: women of colour, socialist feminists, Marxist feminists, lesbian feminists to name a few. Though generally excluded from quality press narratives for much of the period, these

women (and men, though less predominant in feminist discourses) have been included in the larger historical record. However, because of the most white, heteronormative, middle-class identity of feminists, the quality press constructed their own definition of a feminist movement indeed of feminism itself around this identity.

Historians concur with this characterisation of the media identity, indeed several historians of the period identified directly with it. But the feminist movement was for many feminists and historians not the cut-and-dried images presented in the pages of the quality press. Many historians have examined the underlying ideologies of the women's movement, the personal stories of feminists themselves, as well as the sociological trends affecting the movement outside the pages of the press. It is clear, however, that feminism as a component of sexual revolution is without doubt.

In a feminist context, sexual revolution had and still has multiple meanings. It is first and foremost a series of ideological conflicts between three forces. First between proponents of traditional views of women and their roles in society, governed by late-Victorian sexual and social norms reasserted following the second world war, and proponents that favoured increased social and sexual norms for women because of, among many things, the same world war. Second, between those same proponents of greater socio-political freedoms and proponents of liberation from the oppressive constraints placed upon women by the free society. The dialectical conflicts played out in many spaces, physical and ideological, but within the pages of quality newspapers it was possible to determine when the greatest shifts of power and gender relations within the public discourse occurred. For feminists of the 'second-wave' themselves, the sexual revolution was the creation of a new 'legitimate' gendered power dynamic in society. It was also transformational in many aspects, ideological, commercial, and to a lesser extent, in class.

There was also more than one sexual revolution, or revolutionary moment reflected within the quality press during this period. The women's movements in Great Britain and the United States stemmed from similar if not identical ideological roots. In Britain, the moments of revolution were in 1968 and 1970, where there were significant shifts in the press discourse from ideological proponents of mere socio-political freedoms were challenged by ideological proponents of liberation, with the latter seeming to be victorious to an extent in 1970. However, this victory is tempered by the fact that the quality press engaged and was successful in manipulating the public discourse of sexual revolution in a feminist context to an extent. The quality press, through editorial and journalistic means, mitigated the most extreme views from ideological proponents of liberatory discourses. They favoured a middle-ground between increased socio-political freedoms and liberation; employing rhetorical and editorial processes to advance these aims. Although the women's movement would eventually become stagnant, and mired in the countless problems of identity politics, it does not discount the dialectical conflicts and transformation of culture that came about as a direct result of a sexual revolution in Britain.

In the United States, sexual revolutions occurred in 1968 and 1970 as well. It is interesting that American society progressed at an even greater pace than Britain during this period with regards to political and social bias against feminists. Unlike in Britain, within the public discourse of the women's movement in the United States, ideologically liberatory positions were directly co-opted by proponents of socio-political freedoms. The quality press in the United States directly aided this co-option by actively manipulating discourses surrounding the National Women's Strike for Equality in August 1970. Where Margaret Thatcher remained something of a rallying point for feminism in Great Britain, despite her lack of identification with the movement, by 1975, public discourses had again shifted in another



sexual revolution where the victorious ideology was a transformed camp favouring socio-political freedoms over pure liberation.

Regardless of the position of certain historians, the quality press during the period from 1960 through 1979, was in certain senses feminist. That is, it recognised the inequalities present in society hoisted upon women because of their gender and worked to provide an ideological and physical space for public discourse to take place to change that reality, as well as by actively working to manipulate public discourses of that identity as a movement through editorial and journalistic efforts. Their success was mixed. Clearly the quality press was successful in manipulating discourses both within its own publications as well as in society, achieving transformative effects. However, they were less successful in helping to sustain discourses of liberation, though, as the quality press were only one physical and ideological space, the fault cannot be placed on their efforts alone.

Obscenity and pornography, though present in society from antiquity to the present, took on distinct importance during the period of study through what came to be known as the permissive society. 'Permissiveness' is often made synonymous with 'sexual revolution' in the greater body of scholarly literature on the subject. The permissive society is often characterised by a period of the increase of liberal attitudes and removal of restrictions on personal behaviours in the absence of harm if their purpose for existence was a purely moral code. It has been likened to a distinct cultural milieu, a new social attitude or worldview specific to the time, a result of generation gap and most radically a revolt against the oppressive society of the previous decades. A 'permissive society' is often placed within periodisations to be occurring from the early to late 1960s and into the 1970s. Recently however, historians have begun to rethink such periodisations to include the late 1950s as well, meriting re-examination of the idea of 'permissive.' Though there are many aspects of the permissive society to examine, the

constraints of this project necessitated a choice of one concept to focus upon; obscenity was chosen.

If obscenity is a concept, then as Walter Kendrick argued, pornography is an argument in favour of obscenity. For the permissive society, obscenity and pornography were the touchstone for extreme positions in the public discourse that had like implications, placing it firmly within a context of sexual revolution. In addition to the dialectic freedom and liberation, obscenity and pornography sparked debate in other such dialectics: censorship versus free speech and sexuality versus repression to name but two. But above all, the greatest analogue to the revolutionary dialectic was public versus private. Historians agree that the permissive society in the context of obscenity and pornography was characterised overall by a shift from private to public. That is, that what was once only discussed or done in private now lacked the inhibition to make it public. Further, the forces of repression found that in this transformed culture the insistence upon repression would only stoke the fires of liberation. Pornography and obscenity had power. The lack of restraint on that power proved to be the underlying fault in halting sexual revolution, or at the very least, restraining it or reframing its boundaries; nevertheless, it had been transformed by the exercise of the conflict of the dialectic.

Unlike feminism, obscenity and pornography prompted discussion of identities and the limits of competing discourses of the revolutionary dialectic with a far greater audience and interest. There remained a unique trans-Atlantic connection between Great Britain and the United States and the common themes that appeared throughout the discourses. Though discourses of liberation prevailed overall, the overall public discourse was limited by the concept that children must be protected; as writer Ronald Butt had it, the question wasn't 'children's freedoms' but rather 'the freedom to be a child.' In Britain, there were two distinct moments of sexual revolution, occurring in 1967 and 1971 and in the United States a single moment in 1970. It must be stressed that these moments were the points at which there was a

marked conflict between ideological positions of freedoms versus liberation. However, the trend throughout the period suggests that there may be moments of sexual revolution in the context of obscenity and pornography that lie outside the bounds of this study. The quality press played a role in these moments of just as with feminism, by providing the ideological and physical space for debates over sexual norms and mores to occur, as well as by enriching the debate by reframing the competing discourses of revolution into ones of censorship versus choice, taking on whole new connotations impacting the role of the state in the protection of its citizens' morals. Above all, the press proved a key forum in articulating the dangers of a liberated society and in aiding in the construction of limitations of liberatory discourses, particularly with respect to the protection of children. Further, as the evidence in the chapter suggests, the absence of a revolutionary dialectic within the quality press discourse early in the period in the United States especially, suggests that calls for reperiodisation of 'sexual revolution' in the context of the permissive society are correct; the revolutionary dialectic may have indeed occurred at an earlier date, reflecting the public understanding that a change had occurred in sexual norms and mores before 1960, perhaps before 1958.

This dissertation began with the premise that a 'sexual revolution' had occurred in Western societies during the 1960s and 1970s, and provides a method to examine the cultural and social changes of the period from a new perspective. It drew upon political theories of revolution, discourse analysis, communication theory, structuralism and constructionist approaches to philosophy to create a framework from which the text of quality newspaper articles could be examined to interrogate the concept of 'revolution', specifically a social revolution with regards to sexual norms and mores in the United States and Great Britain during the period from 1958 to 1979. Such a revolution can be defined by the dialectic of freedom and liberation in the public discourse and within quality press discourse as an aspect of the public sphere. Such revolution may also be understood as one that produces an entirely new discursive

formation, thereby transforming society in such a way as to conform to Arthur Marwick's thesis of 'cultural revolution' while at the same time providing a specific process for such transformation to occur. Further, it argues that there was a demonstrable sexual revolution, indeed more than one sexual revolution in the quality press discourse during the period in the thematic categories of obscenity/pornography as well as in feminism and women's liberation. In doing so, analysis suggests that the periodisation of 'sexual revolution' may need to be expanded to include more of the 1950s regarding thematic category of 'permissiveness' or a permissive society. It also suggests that to a certain extent, or in certain senses, the quality press in both Great Britain and the United States can be 'feminist' during this period. The dissertation also illuminates the role of the quality press at multiple levels of institutional control in manipulating the discourses within it to guide the dialectic of freedom and liberation in a manner that conformed to its worldview; it also demonstrated the success or lack thereof of the quality press in doing so.

Although it was not possible to complete the original body of research I intended, gay liberation, and birth control and abortion were planned to fulfil a larger project; these areas deserve to be considered in future work. Particularly interesting would be a consideration of sources from the popular press in the framework created to evaluate revolutionary moments, as well as greater detail in analysis of articles from news magazines and other media from the period. Within Great Britain, the inclusion of newspapers outside the London echo chamber could greatly improve the understanding of 'sexual revolution' in a more considered context, as could newspapers from other major metropolitan areas in the United States. So too, the study of other social and sexual revolutions might be examined in the context of revolutionary dialectics in new media types.

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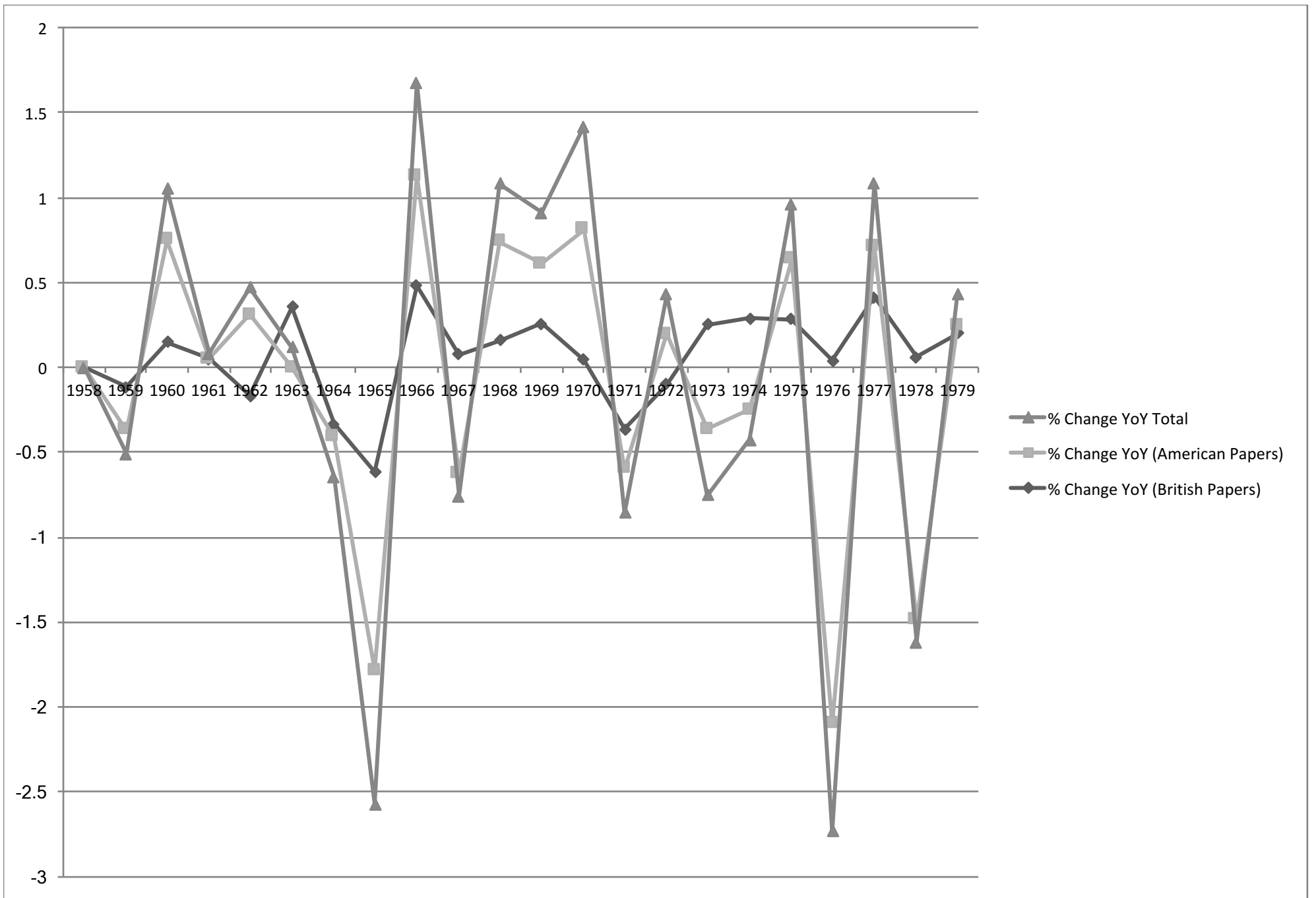
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APPENDIX II  
Obscenity/Pornography

Frame Search Returns

	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>Total Articles</u>
<i>The Times</i>	0	0	22	5	1	8	20	1	8	19	13	11	25	46	7	8	7	3	28	26	21	12	291
<i>The Guardian/The Observer</i>	0	0	26	1	4	14	49	8	14	18	8	7	21	42	44	7	8	2	28	33	26	17	377
<i>The New York Times</i>	13	46	22	17	12	16	20	17	26	12	30	35	63	34	24	54	26	14	17	36	15	7	556
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	6	15	8	7	13	6	13	15	33	12	17	25	32	23	26	31	13	5	8	6	8	3	325
<i>British Total</i>	0	0	48	6	5	22	69	9	22	37	21	18	46	88	51	15	15	5	56	59	47	29	668
<i>American Total</i>	19	61	30	24	25	22	33	32	59	24	47	60	95	57	50	85	39	19	25	42	23	10	881
<i>Combined Total</i>	19	61	78	30	30	44	102	41	81	61	68	78	141	145	101	100	54	24	81	101	70	39	1549
	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	
% Change Yearly ( <i>Times</i> )	-	*	*	-96.2%	300.0%	250.0%	250.0%	-83.7%	75.0%	28.6%	-55.6%	-12.5%	200.0%	100.0%	4.8%	-84.1%	14.3%	-75.0%	1300.0%	17.9%	-21.2%	-34.6%	
% Change Yearly ( <i>Guardian</i> )	-	*	*	-77.3%	-80.0%	700.0%	150.0%	-95.0%	700.0%	137.5%	-31.6%	-15.4%	127.3%	84.0%	-84.8%	14.3%	-12.5%	-57.1%	833.3%	-7.1%	-19.2%	-42.9%	
% Change YoY ( <i>British Papers</i> )	-	*	*	-700.0%	-20.0%	77.3%	68.1%	-666.7%	59.1%	40.5%	-76.2%	-16.7%	60.9%	47.7%	-72.5%	-240.0%	0.0%	-200.0%	91.1%	5.1%	-25.5%	-62.1%	
% Change Yearly ( <i>NY Times</i> )	-	71.7%	-109.1%	-29.4%	-41.7%	25.0%	20.0%	-17.6%	34.6%	-116.7%	60.0%	14.3%	44.4%	-85.3%	-41.7%	55.6%	-107.7%	-85.7%	17.6%	52.8%	-140.0%	-114.3%	
% Change Yearly ( <i>LA Times</i> )	-	150.0%	-46.7%	-12.5%	400.0%	-53.8%	116.7%	15.4%	120.0%	-63.6%	41.7%	47.1%	28.0%	-28.1%	13.0%	19.2%	-58.1%	-61.5%	37.5%	-33.3%	25.0%	-166.7%	
% Change YoY ( <i>American Papers</i> )	-	68.9%	-103.3%	-25.0%	4.0%	-13.6%	33.3%	-3.1%	45.8%	-145.8%	48.9%	21.7%	36.8%	-66.7%	-14.0%	41.2%	-117.9%	-105.3%	24.0%	40.5%	-82.6%	-130.0%	
% Change YoY Total	-	68.9%	21.8%	-160.0%	0.0%	31.8%	56.9%	-148.8%	49.4%	-32.8%	10.3%	12.8%	44.7%	2.8%	-43.6%	-1.0%	-85.2%	-125.0%	70.4%	19.8%	-44.3%	-79.5%	

\* Indicates inability to calculate result.

