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“Society” to “Style”: A Critical Analysis of the Evolution of Women’s News Sections in *The Washington Post* throughout the Twentieth Century

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ABSTRACT

The Washington Post's women's section took different forms throughout the twentieth century, including "Society", "for and about Women", and "Style". "Society" was largely for a female audience, "for and about Women" shifted to discussing and publishing men more prominently, and "Style" represented women through advertisements and in syndicated or regularly appearing columns. On the whole, men would appear more in terms of the writing in "Style." The content, reporters, and advertisements were distinct parts of each section that shifted with each iteration in these ways. The research explored in this thesis shows as the twentieth century progressed, the representation of women in *The Washington Post's* women's sections generally shifted from an audience that demanded gender-specific content to an advertising demographic.

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Introduction

There is no other period of time when change happened more quickly than the twentieth century. Unsurprisingly, the institution of daily life that was consistently part of American society from the beginning to the end of the century—the newspaper—saw a drastic change in the way women were represented. Specifically, the way the average American reader saw women incorporated and represented in the women’s section of *The Washington Post* saw significant change by the close of the century.¹

The idea of a women’s section wholly encapsulates these changes that occurred in the twentieth century. This thesis explores seventeen different issues of the *Washington Post* spanning from 1920-1999, without any issues discussed in the 1900s, 1910s, and 1970s in an effort for conciseness. The reason to start in 1920 is because that is the year women’s suffrage was ratified, which gave women the right to vote, like any other American citizen. Therefore, beginning with 1920 means beginning with an important year in women’s rights. The issues used of the *Washington Post* are mainly from beginning months, January and February; middle month June; and final month of the year, December. These months offer a well-rounded view of the

¹ Dustin Harp's investigation of women's pages draws somewhat similar conclusions as does this thesis. The primary differences between his analysis and my own are that, in the section of his book I consulted, he does not only use *The Washington Post* as a case-study, he mainly discusses the people in the women’s section industry to explain his thoughts, whereas I largely use the issues of the *Post*, and his discussion on why the *Washington Post* had women’s section news in “Style” is different from my own.

Dustin Harp, “Food, Fashion, Family ... and Feminism?” in *Desperately Seeking Women Readers: U.S Newspapers and the Construction of a Female Readership*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 24-28.

years discussed. The issues discussed are almost exclusively Sunday editions, with the exception of January 6, 1969, the first issue with the “Style” section. While there are examples of these sections running on weekdays, they are shorter, and not specifically sections but rather individual pages or groups of pages, in terms of “Society” and “for and about Women”.

“Society,” when it was included in the heading of a section, began on November 19, 1911. The first section of “for and about Women,” appeared on May 26, 1952, and the “Style” section began on January 6, 1969. In “Society” there would be an emphasis in the section for a female audience. In “for and about Women,” there were a quantity of articles and published reporters that were not female displayed prominently in the section. “Society” had men reporting in the section but they were not as prominent as the articles written for a female audience. Articles that would discuss men’s manners, and men’s homemaking skills could both be seen in the section. When the content of a section is antithetical to its title, the reader begins to feel the purpose of the section is to appear to acknowledge the female reader without having to do that in practice. The change in “for and about Women” from what was the “Society” section, shows another shift in the culture of the twentieth century.

“Style,” in practice, changed from the “for and about Women” section that chronologically preceded it. By the end of the century, women were seen more as a selling point to advertisers, rather than readers to be catered to. On the whole, regularly appearing columns would be written by men and women, but women’s syndicated and regularly appearing columns were more akin to “soft” news than their male reporter counterparts and appeared comparatively less often in the section in the last two decades of the twentieth century. It is of note, examples of male and female reporters in regular columns, would be employed by the *Washington Post*.

Syndicated columns included advice columns such as “Miss Manners,” and “Ann Landers.” These advice columns, to be completely fair, could be read by men at the time as well. This investigation into the change from the *Washington Post’s* “Society” section to “Style,” shows a modern audience how the newspaper, as an institution in American homes, represents women, their interests, and thus the arc of women’s representation in the century in an effort to better understand the century itself. “Society” would be directed mainly toward women, “for and about women” would still hold this emphasis, but there would be articles included that were not for a female audience and written by men. “Style,” by the end of the century, generally ignored female writers in the section simply through the quantity of columns and articles women would write compared to men. Women in “Style” would overwhelmingly be found in advertisements.

Chapter 1 – How the Washington Post’s Women’s Section has Changed: “Society” to “for and about Women.”

The *Washington Post*’s “Society” section went through changes in how it was represented in the newspaper. The kind of topics that would be associated with the section, and the content itself saw changes in the time the women’s section was “Society” to “for and about Women.”

1920-1946

Women who were associated with politicians would be shown in “Society” differently than other women in the section. Other women could be written about for their weddings, marriages, children; but women associated with politicians would be written about with more of the attitude that they were accessories to the men they were associated with. While this observation was not always the case, and there were examples of marriages to politicians, it is prevalent enough in the section throughout the early twentieth century to note.

The early twentieth century sees the beginnings of the first wave of feminism in the form of the nineteenth amendment. Starting with 1920 and moving forward, a sense of women’s representation during a time in America where women were beginning to be seen as more than domestic beings in society will be gained, even though that domestic narrative was still very much pushed by the *Washington Post* when the women’s section was known as “Society.”

The shift in women’s representation in the *Washington Post*, happened gradually, and the changes in the section going from “Society” to “for and about Women” to then “Style” all

happened over the course of the twentieth century, and these changes were not always beneficial to the women reading or working the section. The nuances in “Society,” “for and about Women,” (“Society’s” successor) and “Style” (“for and about Women’s” successor) were different, but all connected by the same thread of what editors at *The Washington Post* believed women wanted to read, as evidenced by the kind of stories that would run.²

In a February 1st, 1920 issue of *The Washington Post*, the section dedicated to “Society” was combined with the “Editorials” and both were included in the Sunday issue as the second section of the paper. A leading story for the “Society” section was about a change in leadership relating to, what some could say, social politics as the news was of importance to social standing in the community at the time. The section states, “These changes [in the cabinet circle] have the effect of advancing Mrs. Houston several notches in order of cabinet precedence...”³ The news that is being described is of national political importance with a focus on how it affects the women of the time. This issue is an example of how women could be seen in *The Washington Post*. The coverage on February 1st, shows that society viewed women as supplementary to a man, and as a person whose social status was linked to their identity.

The first page of the “Society” section is written as though one knows the context of the news in general. The writer of the section writes not only with a knowledge that the section will be read by many people, but also with a familiarity with the reader. The article reads as though it

² There was also a section called “In the Capital Spotlight” but the most significant changes in the aesthetics, writing, reporting, and overall feeling of the section is most drastically seen between these three examples, so they are the focus of this thesis.

³ “Society: Cabinet Changes of Much Interest to Society--Mrs. Meredith Only Stranger Among New Hostesses--Gayety Is Crowding Program Before Ash Wednesday--Arrangements for Southern Relief Ball Tomorrow Night--Other Notes,” *The Washington Post* February 1, 1920, Second part, 6.

were simply a conversation recounted by a third party rather than groundbreaking news that turns the author into someone of superiority, informing the reader. For example, reading the word “congress” in the context it was given in the article, it is not immediately realized that the article was referring to the United States Congress until a couple of lines into reading, because it could be referring to a social structure that pertained only to women; a “congress of women” so to speak, until it is seen how the writing was discussing the changes in U.S Congress. While there is context given in the “Society” section, looking from a modern perspective does not allow for such quick familiarity as might have been found at the time of publication.

There were significant changes to the “Society” section’s depiction in the newspaper in 1925. First, the section was not designated in the same way as the first section of the newspaper, and other section headings found in the 1920 example. On about every page of the section (meaning group of pages in this context), there is a new heading, seemingly meant to grab the reader’s attention. Of these headings there are found, “What your Acquaintances are Doing,” “What is Interesting your Neighbors” and, “Progress of the Women’s Organizations.”⁴ In this way, the 1925 example has more specificity than the 1920 example because of the sectioning of these pages. This observation also lends to the idea that the writing was meant to be more conversational in “Society” than in other sections of the newspaper at the time. This kind of structure in the section indicates that the “Society” section was a part of the identity of the female community in Washington at the time.

In a February 2, 1930 issue, the format of the pages take a form in the way of a table of contents. Now, instead of separate headings under one seemingly unified section title, as in the

⁴ *The Washington Post*, February 1, 1925, Second Section, 5, 7, 9, 19.

1925 example, the content is split up by the pages they are on, and as in the former two issues, there are other topics combined with them. For example, the table of contents marks “Women’s Clubs.....2, 13” on one side of the page, “Motoring and Aviation 11, 12” on the other, and multiple pages of “Society”.⁵

In terms of the content of these sections in 1930, the “Society” pages are fairly diverse in their content, but skew toward women’s news in terms of the titles of the articles. It is here, and in the 1925 example, that fashion is seen to show up in the newspaper. Fashion is a part of the women’s section that will become very important by the end of the century. The “Capital Fashions” page in 1930 has more writing than “Lucy Park’s Page” that follows it; this observation is odd because both pages discuss fashion, but “Lucy Park’s Page” is the one with more photos of fashion.⁶

On December 24, 1939, *The Washington Post* wrote and ran an advertisement defending their representation of women in their newspaper. The ad, titled, “What About Women?” asserts, “From the front page to the comics there’s not a single item in The Post which carries a “for men only” sign, even an invisible one.”⁷ This ad, with no listed author, is defending the notion that regardless of whether the newspaper has a section for women specifically, it includes women in general. It is crucial to bear in mind *The Washington Post* eventually changed the title of the section to specifically gender the news years after this ad ran in the newspaper when the section became “for and about Women.” This observation leads to the conclusion that this advertisement was meant to placate women readers about their representation in the content of the newspaper.

⁵ *The Washington Post*, February 2, 1930, S1.

⁶ *The Washington Post*, February 2, 1930, S8, S9.

⁷ “What About Women?” *The Washington Post*, December 24, 1939, 6X.

In 1946, the issue before a specifically designated section for women readers, there is a section titled, “In the Capital Spotlight” which is another name for the variety of pages described that are in previous issues. There is a “Town Talk” article by Eva Hinton which discusses the construction being done in Washington D.C and throughout the article. Hinton is expressive in her opinions, but most interestingly, a part of her article that discusses women’s opinions is emboldened. While there is another part of her article that is bolded when she addresses “yachtmen[‘s]” opinions, it is interesting that when the author calls out women’s opinions specifically there is bold type, as though the women would be especially equipped to fight what the Hinton wants to fight for—the preservation of Washington, or that women would have a specific interest in the article itself. The article does not especially call out women in any other way other than to give an example. While there is more emphasis on marriage than the 1930s example at a first glance, an article such as “Town Talk” that is about society at large in Washington, still catches the eye.⁸

1946-1960

In a section in the *Washington Post* that specifically calls out women titled, “Society and Women’s News Books, Theaters” there is a much bigger emphasis on weddings than in the previous two examples of 1930 and January 1946. This section has columns called “To Have and to Hold” which runs on two pages and discusses marriages and news related to weddings, and a

⁸ Eva Hinton, “Town Talk” *The Washington Post*, January 27, 1946, 2S.

section titled, “Rings on their Fingers,” which announces engagements and includes one announcement of a vacation.⁹

Something else to note about this issue of *The Washington Post* is that there is an article that uses the idea of marriage to promote its message. The article, titled, “Want a Wedding-Ring Waist? Then Stretch, Twist and Bend!” is under a header, “Ida Jean Kain’s 18-day Diet.” Aside from the shocking diet for grown women this article promotes—written by someone who is not a physician—this article shows how women were viewed not only by society at the time, but by newspapers, in the fact they would run the article; other women, in the fact a woman was promoting this advice; and the perceived male ideal of a female body, in the fact the article’s main objective was for women to appeal men at the time. The article promotes, “With just a twist and a turn you can have a wedding-ring waist before the boys come home.” All the pandering of and to these different actors is done in the article for the purpose of promoting the institution of marriage. This goal of marriage shows the perception of women and their bodies was someone who had to be altered for the reason of appeasing to men, not to be healthier.¹⁰

In the February 5, 1950, issue of *The Washington Post*, the fourth section is titled “Society” with a subheading of “Marriages—Engagements,” and “Women’s News” with a subheading of “Club Activities.” This difference builds off of what was seen in the February 1946 issue and article because here the reader can see marriage specifically called out in the heading of the section, but it is not labeled under the gendered heading. This choice suggests the

⁹ “‘To Have and to Hold’,” *The Washington Post (1923-1954)*, February 3, 1946, 1S, 2S; “Rings On Their Fingers” *The Washington Post (1923-1954)*, February 3, 1946, 3S.

¹⁰ Ida Jean Kain, “Want a Wedding-Ring Waist? Then Stretch, Twist and Bend!” Ida Jean Kain’s 18-day Diet, *The Washington Post*, February 3, 1946, 2S.

nuclear family dynamic as the ideal in Washington D.C. society, through its reflection in the newspaper. In the same vein, this difference shows how women's interests are implemented in the section because of what is being promoted at the front of the section.¹¹

“for and about Women”

The February 6, 1955 issue has an example of the next iteration of the women's section. The section is titled, “for and about Women” with only three subcategories listed next to it. The categories are: “Gardens”, “Society”, and “Fashion”, each subheading on its own line. Despite none of the subheadings mentioning marriage, the second page of the section is used to announce engagements. However, a likely reason for this choice was that the marriage content in the section is meant to be assumed under the subheading of “Society.”¹²

An article that ran in this section also shows a modern audience how the interests people have today hold a longer history than is currently realized. ““Do It Yourself’ Is Her Household Motto” by Elinor Lee appeared in this issue. “Do it yourself” is a peculiar phrase to find in this section because, do-it-yourself, or its acronym DIY, are thought by a modern audience to mainly have been a trend in the 2010s. But, as this article boasts, “DO-IT-YOURSELF is the biggest of all hobbies, and a six-billion-dollar a year business in the United States today!”¹³ This quote shows how DIY projects are not something new to American society, and that people have been participating in this practice for longer than modernly realized. However, this article is

¹¹ *The Washington Post*, February 5, 1950, 1S.

¹² *The Washington Post*, February 6, 1955, F1, F2.

¹³ Elinor Lee, ““Do It Yourself’ Is Her Household Motto” *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, February 6, 1955, F7.

discussing do-it-yourself projects of a different nature than the 2010s small craftlike DIY projects. The article describes the do-it-yourself projects of an upcoming event as, "...featuring new tricks in repairing, remodeling and redecorating the home."¹⁴ Even though this shows a difference between the two time periods, there were people in the 2010s who shared DIY projects that would fit into the categories the 1955 article discusses. Also, in the twenty-first century there are home improvement shows that, while done by professionals, still show that people today have an interest in home improvement projects. This article in itself shows a modern reader how the past shapes the present.

Lee mentions a specific family and especially focuses on Maggie Olesen, a wife and mother. Lee discusses Olesen, writing, "She makes many of her own clothes, also Erik's [her son]; and is an excellent cook. Mrs. Olesen says her husband inspired their current do-it-yourself activities. He got started on boats."¹⁵ While these accomplishments are in the home or domestic sphere, they are indicative of *how* women are perceived in the home, not just *that* they are perceived in the home.

The Lee article ends with more background on Maggie, in which Lee writes, "Maggie got her master's degree in theater from Western Reserve University in Cleveland. She is currently with the Community Arts Association of Montgomery County, where she teaches creative drama to children."¹⁶ It is curious this information comes at the end of the article, but it is assumed this is simply where the article comes to a natural conclusion and may not necessarily be purposefully diminishing her academic accomplishment.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Kimberly Wilmot Voss in an article about the women's pages, stated, "Women's liberation leaders called for the elimination of women's pages, noting that this was segregating news. The idea was for news to be spread throughout the newspaper. It was a great idea in theory but did not happen in practice." The article speaks to the point of women's involvement with the women's section and enlightens the reader on how the women's movement viewed the women's pages.¹⁷ In "Style" it will be seen how Voss' analysis of women's liberation leaders is exemplified in the kinds of articles that would be run, and the male influence in the section.

In the February 7, 1960 issue, an article written by Bill McPherson is printed on the first page of the section, and is specifically directed toward men. It advertises a pamphlet by James Elliott Twyman on how men should behave in public. The article specifies the pamphlet was made for men at Northwestern University.¹⁸ This article in itself proves definitively that men would read the women's section of the newspaper because there is no way to consider this article was directed toward women. This observation also contradicts Voss's analysis of women's liberation leaders because news in the women's section was not "segregated," as she described.¹⁹ It is of note that this article is about manners, so it would make sense as an article that relates to society, but the fact this section is specifically calling out the female sex in its heading, and then printing an article for men on its front page, means that the women's section, as a concept, is a complicated ecosystem that cannot be explained in a simple sentence, as Voss attempted.

¹⁷ Kimberly Wilmot Voss, "Hey, Don't Knock the "Women's Pages"!" *Ms. Magazine*, July 19, 2010. <https://msmagazine.com/2010/07/19/hey-dont-knock-the-womens-pages/>

¹⁸ Bill McPherson, "Digest this (Quietly), Act (Politely)" *The Washington Post*, February 7, 1960, F1.

¹⁹ Voss, "Hey, Don't Knock the "Women's Pages"!"

In *The Washington Post*, news that relates to women specifically, and seems as though it could fit in a women's section, is found in other parts of the newspaper. The women's section was not the only place to find news about women. For example, the "What About Women" advertisement did not run in a women's section, but rather peculiarly, in the "Sports" section of the paper. The peculiarity being that the advertisement itself does not mention sports. The notion of a women's section changed from 1920 to 1960. "Society" and "for and about Women" both exemplified the interests of women during the times of their publication, but that shift happened gradually, and culminated in a section that could also cater specifically to male interests. "Society" was mainly about women and for a female audience, "for and about Women" saw a shift to including male interests, which indicates what will later happen in "Style"—content that was in favor of male reporters and interests.

Chapter 2 – “for and about Women”?

The First Sunday Issue of “for and about Women”— 1952

The first Sunday edition of the “for and about Women” section that ran in *The Washington Post* was on June 1, 1952.²⁰ Where the previous chapter illustrates change over time in the factual representation of the word “women” in the titles of sections, this chapter will focus on the content of the Sunday “for and About Women” section.²¹ The title of the section “for and about Women” of course implies that women will be the main driving force behind not only the content provided within the section, but also—at the very least—the main audience for the section. It comes as a surprise, then, to see men and their involvement in the community as not only a part of the section, but a rather prominent one. Female reporters in the section would face hardship in their inclusion in the workplace, which leads to the observation of the section’s shift skewing toward men and their interests. With each iteration of the women’s section in the *Washington Post*, there is less and less of an emphasis on women. “For and about Women” signifies the second link in the chain reaction that created the male-leaning “Style” section of the later half of the century.

In the first Sunday issue with “for and about Women” in 1952, there are many instances of articles and advertisements that are clearly directed toward women, such as one ad of the

²⁰ In the early 1900s, there would be a page indicated as “for and about women” in the index on the front page, but it would be a part of a larger section in the paper rather than its own titled section.

²¹ There are other versions of women’s sections found on weekday issues of this newspaper, but because of the extensive length of the Sunday editions, I will be focusing on Sunday sections.

Elizabeth Arden brand, but there are also articles that discuss men in the community.²² For example, on the second page of the section, an article is seen about then-presidential-candidate Dwight Eisenhower titled “Man With a Hoe at White House Would Be None Other Than Eisenhower” as well as articles that discuss politics, especially male politicians.²³ This observation already shows a continuation of the shift toward male interests in the section, since in 1946, articles written by men could be seen in the section.

An article titled “All Roads Lead to Washington” discusses male political ambassadors and their families.²⁴ The mention of men versus women in the article is relatively equal but the crux of the problem is how they are represented. A woman in this article is only discussed through the lens of her relationship to another man. However, this article could have been included because this is a newspaper printed in the political capital of the country and it has to do with politics. In the article, “When The Times Kept Female Reporters Upstairs,” Amanda Svachula discusses how women were involved in the staff of *The New York Times*. She writes, “Historically, women who came to The Times were immediately placed in the women’s pages, informally known as the “four Fs,” and explains, “‘Food, Fashions, Family, Furnishings’ [the four F’s] ran from 1955 to around 1971 as a one-page section in the paper [*The New York Times*] on varying days of the week.”²⁵ In *The Washington Post*, the article “All Roads Lead to

²² Face treatment, Elizabeth Arden, “Portrait of a Lady who has just had the joy of an... Elizabeth Arden Face Treatment,” advertisement, *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1952, 6S.

²³ Dorothy McCardle, “Man With a Hoe at White House Would Be None Other Than Eisenhower.” *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1952, 2S.

²⁴ Elizabeth Maguire, “All Roads Lead to Washington,” Diplomatic Circling, *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1952, 7S.

²⁵ Amanda Svachula, “When The Times Kept Female Reporters Upstairs,” *The New York Times*, September 21, 2018, sec. Times Insider.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/20/insider/times-womens-section-female-reporters.html>.

Washington” has a sway toward what can be deemed “society” news because it mostly just discusses the various activities of people in the community, all of whom related to politics in some way.²⁶

If the name of the section, “for and about Women” is taken at face value, it is assumed that all the content will be *about* women, but that was not the case in the first Sunday issue of the section. In fact, on page 7S of the section, of the four articles printed on the page only two could be deemed predominantly ‘about’ women—the engagements and the mention of a club. In the “Society” sections of the newspaper, engagements and club activities were a prominent part of the section at that point in time. This change proves a goal of the newspaper editors to appeal to male readers in this section as well as female readers, once “Society” became “for and about Women.”²⁷

However, to the section’s credit, there is no male byline until page 8S in the section. In this particular issue, there are overwhelmingly more women than men published in the section, while this may not have always been the case, the impression is left that there were more women reporting/ being published in “for and about Women” when compared to what will be seen in “Style”. The work on page 8S is a poem titled “Your Words” which appears to be only a segment of a larger piece titled “Portraits” by James J. Metcalfe.²⁸ The work, a love poem, could be deemed in line with the title of the section, and it is seen in this work the first use of a male-written perspective printed in the issue. This perspective may have been used because women at the time would have wanted to hear about love that they can imagine for themselves. Especially

²⁶ Elizabeth Maguire, “All Roads Lead to Washington.”

²⁷ *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1952, 7S.

²⁸ James J. Metcalfe, “Your Words,” Portraits, *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1952, 8S.

considering the use of wedding and engagement announcements in the section, a woman reading this newspaper would want to feel hopeful for love in the future and a love poem written by a woman printed in this section in this time period would most likely have been about relating to women readers. While relatability is a useful part of the newspaper section, encouraging romanticism for the future seems to be the main reason for this poem being printed in this particular section. The poem could have run in other sections related to creative work, but it is included here, and the desired impact would not have been the same if it were a woman's poem instead.

In another article in the section, titled, "We Can't Spare Them!" by Marie McNair, another example is seen of news about men in the community being included in the "for and about Women" section. The article, which is an amalgamation of short pieces on various topics, does mention women as well as men. After reading the article which is comprised of different, shorter stories, the assumption is made that the first short piece in the article is the one the article is named for because it is talking about men, or to be more specific "bachelors" as the article calls them, in the community who have left for a period of time.²⁹ Having this be the title of the entire article shows how much emphasis there was on men in terms of interest to women.

"We Can't Spare Them!" appeared in the "for and about Women" section, so assuming this news about men was of prominent interest to women at the time is not beyond the realm of possibility. This observation again proves how the interest of the "for and about Women" page was meant to foster women in the community to get married, or at the very least shows how the

²⁹ Marie McNair, "We Can't Spare Them!" Town Topics, *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1952, 9S.

social politics at the time still held an emphasis on marriage for women, despite other news in the section being about other endeavors.

However, it is important to underscore the difference between an article written by a woman about a man versus an article about a woman. Since the “Society” section did run stories for and about women (even though there was a heavy emphasis on marriage), seeing stories by women but in service of and about men, shows not only how women were seen in the workplace, but in the culture at large because women could be a part of the section, but their influence would sometimes hold a tie to their coverage of men.

In addition to the difference in content of the section, on page 9S, where “We Can’t Spare Them!” appeared, there is not much mention of a married woman with her full name present, often she is referred to by the full name of her husband with “Mrs.,” or “Senora” preceding it.³⁰ An example of this style is “Mrs. Roy F. Knox,” the title given to one of the women mentioned in the article “Mother’s Memory Club to Meet June 4,” on page 7S.³¹ While addressing women in this way was not uncommon at the time, the purpose in illustrating this point is that, in a section that is named in such a way to single out women in its readership, only naming women in this style diminishes the femininity of the section in itself. If the purpose of the section is to bolster women in the community, it seems somewhat antithetical to name them only with their husband’s name. This observation is evidenced by how women at the time viewed their names and the way they were addressed by others.

³⁰ *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1952, 9S.

³¹ “Mother’s Memory Club to Meet June 4,” *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1952, 7S.

In the article, “We Can’t Spare Them!” there is mention of a club that only refers to women by their first names, underscoring the previous observation of women mostly being referred to by their husband’s full name. The article itself explains,

She [MME. El- Khouri] had almost forgotten that her name was Angelina, but she’ll be hearing it often now, as it’s the custom of the Wheels [Inner Wheel, women’s auxiliary of the Rotary Club] to address each other only by first name.³²

It is particularly interesting to see how women want to refer to each other by first names if being married was also a symbol of status in society at the time. Perhaps this shift is because the club wants to emphasize their work in the community. Through referring to women by their first names, this club could also have been trying to emphasize the *person* rather than the title a woman gets once she is married.³³ This practice shows how progression is moving through the twentieth century toward women and their identities being more of a part of Washington D.C.’s lexicon. This observation is important when trying to understand the shift in women’s representation through the section because when it is understood that women were demanding to be seen in this way—for who they are rather than to whom they are married—in the first Sunday issue of “for and about Women” then a tone being set, whether it is intentional or not. This level of feminism would be assumed from a time period such as the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, so to see an example of women advocating for themselves in this manner as early as 1952, it is truly shocking and signals to how social dynamics were changing.

³² McNair, “We Can't Spare Them!”

³³ Ibid.

Men in “for and about Women”

Intrinsically, when discussing a newspaper in Washington D.C., the mention of men in the community often will be politicians. However, while all male politicians are men in the community, not all men in the community are politicians. On February 7, 1960, there are articles about men in the political sphere in the first pages of the “for and about Women” section titled “Phone Lines Sizzle Daily ‘Twixt Capital and B.A.”³⁴ and “Another Veep from the Blue Grass State?”³⁵ Interestingly both of these articles were written by women. The fact both of these articles were written by women show that even if some of the news could not really be seen as “for” or “about” women, it could at least be *by* women.

In the February 7, 1960, section, there is also an article titled “Dancer’s Streetcar Got There” by Jean Battey which mentions a male ballet dancer, Frederic Franklin, and his decision to play Stanley Kowalski in a ballet version of *Streetcar Named Desire*.³⁶ Unlike most of the other men previously discussed in the 1952 example and this 1960 one, Franklin is not a politician. However, Franklin is involved in the community because the article says that Franklin would become “co-director (with Mary Day) of the Washington Ballet.”³⁷ This inclusion of Franklin’s news shows the modern viewer that even though the section was changed to “for and

³⁴ Rosemary Donihi, “Phone Lines Sizzle Daily ‘Twixt Capital and B.A.: Planning for Ike’s Entourage,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, February 7, 1960, F1, F2.

³⁵ Marie Smith, “Another Veep from Blue Grass State?: Lyndon’s Ladybird: Humphreys Spotlight Backyard Trampoline,” Nixon Intimates Say GOP Chairman Has ‘In,’ *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, February 7, 1960, F1, F8.

³⁶ Jean Battey, “Dancer’s Streetcar Got There: ‘Rodeo’ Corrals Kudos,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, February 7, 1960, F3, F7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

about Women,” an article about men could be published prominently. This observation indicates female readership would find this article interesting possibly for the aspects of this article that discuss Washington society, or for the parts of the article that simply talk about the man himself. The most puzzling aspect of this article is not the writing, author, content, the subject printed to take up about a quarter of the page, or even the photo of Franklin, but rather the article’s location. When the newspaper already had a “Show” section that could very plausibly run this article, it ran in the “for and about Women” section.

Another explanation for this article to be running in “for and about Women” could be related to the fact that the article’s writing style shifts from narratively talking about Franklin’s career, then to a review-like style of his work (which briefly talks about his involvement in the Washington community), and finally to what can be considered mostly an advertisement for ballet in America. The end of the article mentions another—female—colleague of Franklin’s in her pursuit of creating and executing the show *Rodeo* with Franklin’s help.³⁸ Because of this shift in writing style, it is possible that editors would not think it would make sense to place the article anywhere else.

However, of all the possibilities for the location of the “Dancer’s Streetcar Got There” article, the most plausible seems to be that women reporters could not really write for other sections of the newspaper. As Svachula explained, women reporters at the *New York Times* could not really work in any other section than one designated for women, the four F’s, at least not initially.³⁹

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Svachula, “Female Reporters Upstairs.”

In Donald A. Ritchie's book *Reporting from Washington: the history of the Washington press corps*, he mentions,

Women reporters found it difficult to overcome their newspapers' traditions and their editors' stereotypes. "For reasons I will never understand," presidential press secretary Pierre Salinger commented in the 1960s, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* maintained policies of "printing news off the women's beat only in the women's section, regardless of its importance."⁴⁰

This source is offering a new perspective on where news was printed. It can be understood how printing news for women all in one place would be sensible, but at the same time, as Ritchie discusses, it could also be hindering to women who did not want to report only on women's issues and cites other sources.⁴¹ However, Salinger's quotes in this reference show that "women's beat" news could be of interest in other parts of the newspaper and expresses his frustration with that practice. Salinger's is an interesting perspective for another reason because it is from the 1960s but holds an opinion that may not have been popular with the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* since he mentioned them explicitly.⁴²

In terms of the social side of the newspaper industry, Ritchie mentions, in terms of Washington newspaper society,

Men defended their fraternal clubs and stag dinners as harmless social escapes from mixed company. For men, the National Press Club served as a convenient watering hole, especially as so many Washington reporters worked out of news bureaus on the lower floors of the National Press Building. [...] Excluded as a class, women naturally saw these institutions differently, arguing that they combined social and professional activities.⁴³

⁴⁰ Donald A. Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington: The History of the Washington Press Corps*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 160. Cites: Pierre Salinger, *With Kennedy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 120.

⁴¹ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 169-170, 172.

⁴² Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 160. Cites: Pierre Salinger, *With Kennedy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 120.

⁴³ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 160.

This book offers an important distinction from what the “We Can’t Spare Them” article provides because it explains there was a difference in the way men and women viewed club activities. A club activity for women would be written about in “Society” as if it were news, but a club for male reporters would be kept from such reporting. While men could have clubs in which they could work on the news, women would be fundamentally excluded, as Ritchie explains.⁴⁴

Keeping with the “We Can’t Spare Them” example, the Rotary Club website mentions it started in 1905 and, “Over time, Rotary’s reach and vision gradually extended to humanitarian service. Members have a long track record of addressing challenges in their communities and around the world.”⁴⁵ It can be assumed a women’s chapter of this club would follow the same credo.⁴⁶ This statement is in stark contrast to how Ritchie describes men viewed their club—in terms of self-interest and for a purpose of soothing their own troubles.⁴⁷ Where women could join clubs based on interest or serving the community, men could join clubs to reaffirm their own sense of power and influence.

Reporting in the Section

In terms of women’s treatment in the Washington newspaper sphere, Ritchie mentions, “As journalists, women confronted situations that men never faced. When Susan Jacoby applied to the *Washington Post* in 1962, she was required to write an essay on how she planned to

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “Our History,” About Rotary, Rotary, <https://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary/history>.

⁴⁶ McNair, “We Can’t Spare Them”

⁴⁷ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 160.

combine motherhood with reporting.”⁴⁸ Ritchie uses a quote from Jacoby to illustrate that she did not have children and was 21 at the time, so hearing her experience with this context makes it all the more shocking.⁴⁹

Ritchie mentions the start of the “Style” section, a start that also includes context on women’s struggle in Washington reporting. Ritchie writes, “In renovating the *Washington Post*, [Katherine] Graham’s new managing editor, Ben Bradlee, had combined the women’s pages with theater and music reviews into a new section called Style, and had appointed a man as its editor.”⁵⁰ Here, an example can also be seen of men showing up in what was women’s news, this time in staffing. Svachula does mention that the four F staff at the *New York Times* “was mostly female,” implying not all people who wrote in the women’s sections were women.⁵¹ The “What about Women” ad also mentioned there was one male member of the staff in 1939, so men being involved in the *Washington Post*’s reporting of the section was not out of the ordinary.⁵²

Ritchie explains when he writes, citing other sources, in the context of Bradlee’s secondary response to Katherine Graham’s opinion on the content in “Style,” “Thinking twice, Bradlee decided to mollify his publisher by restoring some of the society news, but the reporters he had just liberated from the women’s pages now considered it sexist to be stereotyped as party

⁴⁸ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 171.

⁴⁹ “I poured all of my childless 21-year-old wisdom into several paragraphs insisting that the combination of work with parenthood would pose *absolutely no problem*,” Susan Jacoby quoted in Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 171.

⁵⁰ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 172.

⁵¹ Svachula, “Female Reporters Upstairs.”

⁵² “What About Women?” *The Washington Post*, December 24, 1939, 6X.

reporters.”⁵³ Assuming these reporters were women, there is a setback this time on the part of the reporters. It is intriguing how women’s section reporters’ opinions are explained by Ritchie because their opinion shows how sexism was underscored to the reporters when they were asked to return to that kind of reporting, at this time. Ritchie makes the point that women’s news was in a place of genuine importance, in terms of its role in “the status of women,” but then was all-but erased when “for and about Women” became “Style,” and a male editor was hired.⁵⁴

Through making the “Style” section in the *Washington Post*, and establishing this new editor, a dismantling of women’s involvement in the news was prevalent, despite Graham being publisher. It is of note that Katherine Graham “succeeded her late husband as publisher.”⁵⁵ Even if women did not necessarily want to be in the section once Bradlee revised it because of its content, taking away prestigious roles from them, when Richie explains Marie Sauer was replaced by the male editor, would not be the way to go about progress.⁵⁶

Women Reporters

In terms of women’s response to treatment in the industry, on a larger scale, there was a significant measure taken by reporters. In a book by Kay Mills called *A Place in the News*, Mills mentions a reporter, Eileen Shanahan who was, “[...] one of the first journalists to spot the

⁵³ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 172. Cites: Carol Williams and Irwin Touster, *The Washington Post: Views from the Inside* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 120-23; Peggy A. Simson, “Covering the Women’s Movement,” *Neiman Reports*, 53-54 (Winter 1999-Spring 2000), 40-45; *Washington Post*, July 18, 2001.

⁵⁴ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 172.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

political and social implications of the new women's movement. She along with other women at *The New York Times* put their considerable careers on the line by suing their own newspaper for discrimination."⁵⁷ This is clearly an indication that women reporters for newspapers felt strongly about the way they were treated. Through this acknowledgement of Shanahan and others' lawsuit, it can be seen how the opinion of women reporters at this time was that they would not be silent on the issues that were of importance, regardless of what that meant for their jobs.⁵⁸ Svachula also mentions a lawsuit, it is characterized as a "[...] 1974 class-action sex discrimination suit against the paper led by Betsy Wade, The Times's first female copy editor — who had been placed in the four Fs when hired. That suit ultimately changed women's roles in the newsroom."⁵⁹ It is possible that this is the same lawsuit Mills describes Shanahan was involved in, but that is not clear.

Dustin Harp cites Mills' book when discussing readership in women's pages when he explains,

Mills (1988) notes the increasing trend in the 1950s to cover serious issues on the women's pages, explaining that a number of papers stretched the content in the women's pages "to better reflect women's lives. Giving them a political bite that men didn't notice because men didn't read them."⁶⁰

Here, Harp shows clearly what male readership of the women's section was like when he cites Mills and says that men were not prevalent in the readership. But, if that is the case, then one

⁵⁷ Kay Mills, *A Place in the News* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), 52.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Svachula, "Female Reporters Upstairs."

⁶⁰ Dustin Harp, *Desperately Seeking Women Readers: U.S. Newspapers and the Construction of a Female Readership*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 25. Cites: Mills, Kay. 1988. *A place in the news: from the women's pages to the front page*. New York: Dodd, Mead. 114.

wonders why articles like the one discussing male etiquette, or other articles about men are included in the “for and about Women” section at all if men didn’t read them. At the very least, the article discussing male etiquette is explicitly meant for male readership. There is not an argument for any other interpretation, so Harp’s analysis here is misguided.

Kimberly Wilmot Voss mentions, in regard to the changing of the women’s pages, a Floridian reporter named Anne Rowe:

By April 1969, she put that knowledge and experience to work in what was really a revolution in newspapers: replacing women’s pages with a lifestyle section. At some newspapers, there was a change in name only and the traditional content continued. But at the *St. Petersburg Times*, there was a real change [...]⁶¹

Voss explains how the change to the new names of women’s sections could mean a refresh of the content in the section, but it was not a strict rule to follow. In the *Washington Post*, when the section became “Style” it was much more than a name change as well. Voss cites Katharine Graham’s memoir in which Graham discussed her and Ben Bradlee’s opinion of the content of the “Style” section was that it had been a change that was mutually wanted by—at least—both the male and female readership, but Voss’ use of Graham’s and Bradlee’s quotes only cite news about women as the wanted change.⁶² There were stories printed that could be seen as for and about men before the change, specifically in the February 7th, 1960 example, but this coverage is not the kind that is expressed as needing a change in Voss’s book.⁶³ Also, it has to be established if this is an accurate assessment of readers’ interest at the time. The argument can be made that if other papers were making a similar change throughout the country, like Voss describes, then a

⁶¹ Kimberly Wilmot Voss, *Re-Evaluating Women’s Page Journalism in the Post-World War II Era: Celebrating Soft News*. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 161.

⁶² Voss, *Re-Evaluating Women’s Page Journalism*, 160.

⁶³ Ibid.

shift in the wants of the readers, as Voss describes Bradlee and Graham believed, could be possible as well.⁶⁴

Adding in “Style”

In an article by Sarah Jaffe titled “From women’s page to style section” for the *Columbia Journalism Review*, she offers insight into how much *The Washington Post* is connected to the history of the “Style” section. She writes,

The first paper to transition was the *Washington Post*, on January 6, 1969. Ben Bradlee, then editor at the *Post*, told Mills that the reasons for the change were to “treat women as people and not as appendages to men,” as well as to organize the paper between work and leisure, rather than men and women.⁶⁵

Did what Bradlee asserted actually come to fruition? Earlier in the same article, Jaffe mentions instances where this may not be true at a modern standard. If instances can be found where this goal is not met within over a decade into the next century, as Jaffe mentions, then it can be said the “Style” section did not meet Bradlee’s standard, as Jaffe described.⁶⁶

In terms of whose interests are being served in “Style”, Ritchie explains,

On the other hand, he [the male editor] showed little interest in the women’s movement. For and about Women had been systematically following federal policy on the status of women, but Style largely abandoned that coverage, just as it jettisoned the traditional women’s reporting on parties, fashions, and interiors.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Voss, *Re-Evaluating Women’s Page Journalism*, 160, 161.

⁶⁵ Sarah Jaffe, “From Women’s Page to Style Section,” *Columbia Journalism Review*, https://www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/womens_page_to_style_section.php.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 172.

Here it can be seen how the women's section had been involved in the progress of women and how that progress included a restructuring of the section. Sarah Jaffe discusses Ben Bradlee's motivation for a "Style" section saying it was meant to be seen, "as to organize the paper between work and leisure, rather than men and women."⁶⁸ Ritchie shows Jaffe's explanation of Bradlee's motivation may not be true because Ritchie says "Style" got rid of "traditional women's reporting on parties, fashions, and interiors," all of which seem to clearly be about leisure.⁶⁹ If "Style" got rid of all the leisure reporting in the news, then how could it be a section that separates between work and leisure? However, Ritchie explains Bradlee would add news on society back into the section.⁷⁰

Voss also describes Bradlee's motivation for making the "Style" section as, "The intent of the new section was to broaden the definition of women's news beyond that of interests only to wives and mothers."⁷¹ Again, there is a representation of the readership of women's sections that is not wholly accurate when compared to the content that was actually found in those sections. While it is seen that men's interests were not served as predominately in "Society" as women's news, February 3, 1946 is an example of this, the very fact that any article pertaining to men was included in the women's sections proves that women's interests were not the only ones being served in this section of the newspaper.⁷²

⁶⁸ Jaffe, "From Women's Page to Style Section."

⁶⁹ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 172.

⁷⁰ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 172. Cites: Carol Williams and Irwin Touster, *The Washington Post: Views from the Inside* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 120-23; Peggy A. Simson, "Covering the Women's Movement," *Neiman Reports*, 53-54 (Winter 1999-Spring 2000), 40-45; *Washington Post*, July 18, 2001.

⁷¹ Voss, *Re-Evaluating Women's Page Journalism in the Post-World War II Era*, 160.

⁷² *The Washington Post*, February 3, 1946, Section III.

In Ben Bradlee's own memoir, *A Good Life*, he discusses the creation of the "Style" section. In the memoir, he admits, regarding "for and about Women," "We didn't cover parties as political happenings, with political as well as social purposes."⁷³ Also, about a gossip columnist for the section, "[Maxine Cheshire] She would rather write about the foreign businessman's financial irregularities than his social behavior."⁷⁴ And, regarding the type of coverage in the section, "But the internal culture of 'for and about Women' made me feel uncomfortable. Women were treated exclusively as shoppers, partygoers, cooks, hostesses, and mothers, and men were ignored."⁷⁵ At this point, with an understanding of how coverage was actually implemented in the section, Bradlee's opinion on the male coverage in the section is misguided. While male-interest stories and stories catering to men are not the only thing noticed in the section, they were still there, and they showed a shift toward a male-dominated section that goes into the late twentieth century in "Style." This shift, however, was not Bradlee's intention. Bradlee wrote that the intent for the new section, "...would deal with how men and women lived—together and apart—what they liked and what they were like, what they did when they were not at the office."⁷⁶ This intention is an idyllic vision of what was to come in "Style". In practice, "Style" would become more like Bradlee's opinion of "for and about Women," because women were represented in advertisements overwhelmingly.⁷⁷

In Katharine Graham's memoir, *Personal History*, she writes about "Style,"

...I was cautiously optimistic. I didn't like some of what I saw, but was willing to reserve final judgement. . . . What was right was that we had broken an old mold and were

⁷³ Ben Bradlee, *A Good Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 297.

⁷⁴ Bradlee, *A Good Life*, 298.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

inventing an important and entirely new one—one for the new times that were dawning, in which women’s and men’s interests were coming together, in which neither one nor the other wanted to hear about women holding teacups around a table...⁷⁸

There is something to be said about how when women’s only involvement in society was relegated to “holding teacups around a table,” then there really was not much else for a newspaper to report on regarding women’s news, Voss’ discussion and quote of Graham’s memoir and Bradlee alludes to this. But, when progress began being made in the second and third waves of feminism, then there were more things to write about, so a change in the section is justified, Graham alludes to this in the quote and Voss’ discussion and quote of Graham’s memoir and Bradlee alludes to this as well.⁷⁹ Changing the section could even be considered necessary when thinking in these terms, but the reality is that, generally when men came more into the forefront of “Style,” women took more of a backseat than they ever did in “for and about Women.”

The Penultimate Sunday Issue of “for and about Women”

In the penultimate Sunday edition of the section, on December 29, 1968, an article is seen about three men titled, “Arena Bachelors Star Offstage as Les Gourmets” which discusses three men who have professions in the entertainment industry who find time to cook for themselves. While it is important to encourage self-sufficiency—especially in the case of Morris Engle in the

⁷⁸ Katharine Graham, *Personal History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1997), 414.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*; Voss, *Re-evaluating Women’s Page Journalism*, 161.

article because he is described as just then picking up the hobby of cooking when he is sixty-five—this news can be seen as a setback for women in society in the United States.⁸⁰

First, the article describes different ways men in general try to procure meals for themselves. The article, by Vicki Ostrolenk, states,

Bachelors have a recurring problem of what to eat, where, and how to maintain a fairly sensible diet. In some cases, they establish themselves in a house or apartment, proceed to scout the scene for femmes who are fatale in the kitchen, and launch a more or less (depending upon the extent of their hunger) calculated campaign to invoke sympathy, which will manifest itself by frequent offers of “home cooking”—her home, of course.⁸¹

The statements made in this quote alone are problematic because they reinforce the idea that it is a woman’s imperative duty to provide for a man, at least in terms of his meals. This quote is problematic on another level because it shows, through the fact this article was written by a woman, that women knew men manipulated women and their emotions for personal gain. The very notion that Ostrolenk wrote in this way proves that not only did women know about the way men could manipulate them, but that it was a normalized practice.

In a way, this article could be seen as supporting the idea of men caring for themselves rather than relying on women, but when the article starts with the quote mentioned above, it is clear there is still a sense of misogyny to the overall message of the article. These three men mentioned in the article do not read like they are malicious or controlling, quite the opposite. The article reads like they are simply friends and co-workers who like to make food.

⁸⁰ Vicki Ostrolenk, “Arena Bachelors Star Offstage as Les Gourmets: Ham Baked in Crust With Brandy, Poor Man's Brunch,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, December 29, 1968, D13.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

It is possible another purpose for this article is that it is to encourage other men to cook for themselves, thereby trying to dismantle giving this role of home-cook solely to women. The article ends with two recipes mentioned in the article that two of the men can cook. However, despite what can be seen as an effort for male self-sufficiency, the article still acknowledges women's domestic role at the time and normalizes it.

Getting Some Advice

Another example of men being discussed in the women's pages is in an advice column. This advice column, in the same December 29th, 1968 issue, gives insight into how men could be perceived by women found in the women's section, by both the letter writer and respondent. The latter, Anne Landers, titled the column that day "Loser on All Accounts" referring to the letter one woman sent in about a man she was considering marrying. The letter was written by a woman named Quintella and she described her experience with proposals in the past and her situation with Lionel, the man who wanted to marry her. The concerns Quintella mentioned were Lionel's drinking habits, his lack of interest in maintaining a job, and his troubles with various people; to all this, Landers replied succinctly: "DEAR QUIN: Congratulations—an offer for marriage from a job-hopping lush who is hiding from an ex-wife, a landlady and the sheriff. If you marry a man because he has gorgeous wavy hair and great sideburns, you'll wish you were single again."⁸²

⁸² Ann Landers, "Loser on all Counts," Ann Landers, *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, December 29, 1968, D15.

This discussion of a man in the “for and about Women” section is interesting because it illustrates how women at the time viewed men. Through this column, it is understood that there were still standards that women held for themselves and others. It was not simply that a woman had to marry, but she had to marry well. However, in this particular article, it is not necessarily about status within a community that is the motivation for Landers to dissuade Quintella from marrying Lionel. Here, Landers is engaging with a notion that Lionel is “not good enough” for Quintella. But, since she does not know much about Quintella’s life, it is assumed that Landers simply believes that Lionel is not good enough for anyone to marry.⁸³

All these observations on the three main people involved in this part of the column are to say that understanding an advice column when the subject is a man but the people discussing the subject are women, give a sense of how men are incorporated into articles in the section. In other words, this is to understand that a column lead by a woman with a letter written by another woman, can still bear a headline that refers to a man, and what that means in regard to the time period is that the section has not shifted that much from viewing marriage as prominent interest.

What Happens in “Style?”

Finally, taking a look at the first iteration of the “Style” section in *The Washington Post*, on January 6, 1969, what Jaffe mentioned about the historical significance of it being the first newspaper to don the “Style” section on its pages, is remembered.⁸⁴ The newspaper acknowledges the change on the front page of the paper with an announcement titled “‘Style’

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Jaffe, “From Women’s Page to Style Section.”

Makes Debut.” The announcement continues, “Woman’s and entertainment features will be in STYLE every day as part of expanded coverage of woman’s, cultural and leisure news.”⁸⁵ The reasoning given in this announcement does not really give insight as to exactly why the section was ungendered. For that reasoning, Jaffe’s article offers insight. Jaffe discussed that part of the reasoning was “...to organize the paper between work and leisure, rather than men and women.”⁸⁶ However, that issue of *The Washington Post* also ran a “Sports” section that day. So, if the reason for the change is that it is meant to be a separation between two areas of life, it is interesting that one activity that people enjoy leisurely—sports—that is stereotypically enjoyed by men, is given its own section but the Women’s section now includes an amalgamation of “...Television and radio logs; Fred Karpin’s bridge column; crossword puzzle; the Mary Haworth and Ann Landers advice columns; health; Anne’s Reader’s Exchange; calendar of today’s events and Theatre Show Times,” as it is mentioned in the announcement.⁸⁷ Interestingly, not many of these topics are about style and there is no mention of fashion in this announcement, something that will become a very prominent part of “Style.” To call a section “Style” and to not even mention a topic that will become a major hallmark of the section, is not only a major oversight but a direct exclusion of women’s interests from the news—and highly ironic.

There were four articles that ran on the front page of the first “Style” section. Two of the articles were explicitly written by men, one written by a woman, and one that uses initials in the byline. One of the articles, by Nicholas von Hoffman, discusses women in The United Waiting

⁸⁵ “‘Style’ Makes Debut,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, January 6, 1969, A1.

⁸⁶ Jaffe, “From Women’s Page to Style Section.”

⁸⁷ “‘Style’ Makes Debut,” A1.

Wives during the Vietnam War and throughout the article, there is discussion of their temperament and general attitude toward their husbands being involved in the war and the circumstances that keep them away.⁸⁸ Through this article, a part of the beginning of men's involvement in the "Style" section is exemplified. The content of the article itself is about women, and it can be read as an article for women too, following the promises in the name of "Style's" predecessor. But the way von Hoffman describes the women's attitudes implies that he may not have been as civil as one would hope in an interview. He describes in the continuance on the third page of the section, "[...] if it's said to them that implicitly the protest message is there, that what they're doing pecks away at the solidity of military discipline, they nod yes, but choose not to follow up the conversational lead."⁸⁹ Assuming that von Hoffman was the one saying these accusations to the women, there is a sense he is not handling the situation with much tact, evidenced also by the way he describes their response. The answer to whether this lack of civility is because he is a male reporter (the Mills book saying men could be more aggressive than women when reporting due to the fact it would not be acknowledged in the same way), or because of his opinions of the Vietnam war, as that is shown a little in his reporting of the women, is unclear.⁹⁰

In the other article explicitly written by a man on the front page, a topic can be read that is not specifically for or about women, which can be a part of the shift Bradlee describes in the various sources discussed. The article is about public broadcasting and the creation of a national

⁸⁸ Nicholas von Hoffman, "We're Not Protesting ..." Minus One, *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, January 6, 1969, B1, B3.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Mills, *A Place in the News*, 61.

network. It is a general article that can be of interest to anyone, but is this novel for the “Style” section, or is it also found in “for and about Women?” An argument can be made for the latter. Through some of the articles already mentioned, such as the one discussing Eisenhower, one can see how news that can be read by anyone could appear in the women’s section.⁹¹

In the one piece on the front page of the first “Style” section explicitly written by a woman, Judith Martin, the topic is about fashion—specifically rings. However, it is of note that the piece does not have a traditional byline like the other articles on the page, so it is unclear if this piece is meant to be an article or another piece of writing like an advertisement. The latter seems plausible because there is mention of where the reader could buy rings. The rings in question, are described in a rather eerie fashion. They are described as “poison rings” because of their construction to have a secret compartment in the main element of the ring. Only at the end does one read a less sinister reason for buying the rings, “Or you can use them to carry your alkaseltzer, or whatever you find most comforting, within quick reach.” The title of the piece in itself suggests that perhaps its purpose was meant to inform the reader, the title being, “Rings . . . : ...have taken a vicious twist.”⁹²

Through this article, the discrepancy can be seen between the female written content and the male written content. Martin’s piece was essentially a glorified advertisement, while von Hoffman’s article was an expose that involves elements of female protest, or lack thereof, the Vietnam war and the struggles of being married to someone in that war. While the reason for von

⁹¹ Lawrence Laurent, “Fourth Network, But Not in East: Network Misses a Link,” Radio and Television, *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1969, B1, B9.

⁹² Judith Martin, photos by Steve Szabo, “Rings . . . : ...have taken a vicious twist,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, January 6, 1969, B1.

Hoffman covering the article about the United Waiting Wives is not explicitly clear, it is wondered if he covered this article because the new “Style” section made it more feasible for him to.

What remains from this analysis is a question: is having a man reporting on women’s news progress or regression? After all, equality does not just apply to one party. However, this perspective of male inequality cannot compare to the inequality women faced at the time. Mills and Ritchie make it clear that women faced hardship in the industry, so the argument can be made for the latter.⁹³

There are two sides of the argument on the inclusion of the “Style” section. One is that making a “Style” section does make the news more equal in its genderlessness. Voss in “Hey, Don’t Knock the “Women’s Pages”!” and Jaffe in her article, both acknowledge this point in terms of women leaders’ opinions, and Jaffe discusses other sources, including Voss’s work.⁹⁴ Another side of the argument is that a sense of community is lost when a section title is changed in this way. Jaffe somewhat alludes to this idea as well when she quotes Voss’s work.⁹⁵ Women would participate in advice columns in the “for and about Women” section. Due to this example being implemented with a new context when the section became “Style,” a loss of community happened when that change occurred. But this loss of community that women had in the past iterations can be seen as the price to pay if one wants progress. Who defines that progress? Looking at current society, can it be said that progress has occurred? In many ways, yes. With

⁹³ Ritchie, *Reporting from Washington*, 169-172; Kay Mills, *A Place in the News* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), 52.

⁹⁴ Jaffe, “From Women’s Page to Style Section.”; Voss, “Hey, Don’t Knock the “Women’s Pages”!”

⁹⁵ Jaffe, “From Women’s Page to Style Section.”

women's publications available today such as Ms. Magazine, Woman's World, Women's Health and others, it is seen how news that is gendered can empower women without compromising on interests.

Chapter 3 – “Style” and Ads

The shift in culture from the early twentieth century to the late cannot be understated. A person today can clearly mark the differences between the 1920s and 1970, but more than that, they can see a drastic change from the 70s to the 80s. These changes that occurred in the twentieth century are not found in the twenty-first. There is not as drastic a change from the 2000s to the 2010s, for example. To understand how much has changed in the twentieth century, there has to be a look at how the last two decades are represented in the “Style” section of *The Washington Post* which includes fashion, the articles/ advertisements associated with it, and the representation of women through it all. In 1939, on Christmas Eve, a holiday known for consumerism, there is a very limited amount of advertising in the “Society and Women’s Activities” section. Two of the advertisements from companies offer a greeting for the holidays, with limited acknowledgement of themselves, and there were limited advertisements for anything else.⁹⁶ On February 7, 1960, there are more advertisements and they are mostly of clothing, beauty, home goods, and jewelry/accessories, multiple times these advertisements take up most of the page.⁹⁷ In the last twenty years of the “Style” section, the amount of advertisements would stay about the same, with a more modern angle.

In the last twenty years of the twentieth century another shift in the section is seen. When it was called “Society,” there was more emphasis on women’s activities, marriage, etc. When the section became “for and about Women” there were still echoes of the “Society” section in the type of news that would be reported. However, a male influence can be seen in “for and about

⁹⁶ *The Washington Post* December 24, 1939, 2S-6S.

⁹⁷ *The Washington Post*, February 7, 1960, F2- F14, F16-F34.

Women” in the type of articles that would be run for and/or by men. Now, in the 1980s and 1990s, quite a bit more of male influence in the type of articles and the reporters regularly printed in the section is seen. On the whole, the female representation in the “Style” section of the 80s and 90s is mostly found in the advertisements. Advertisements that would focus on beauty products, fur coat sales, hair salon services, and weight loss programs. In this final stage of “Style,” the *Washington Post* is exemplifying a shift from interests such as weddings, which used to be found in “Society” for example, to viewing women as people to be advertised to. “Society” was all about women’s interests. While “Style” or “for and about Women” had advertisements targeting women, in these issues from the 80s and 90s the number of advertisements and the impressions they leave show how female consumerism was represented in a much more overt way.

The 1980s

Looking to the last score years of the twentieth century, in the first Sunday issue of the *Washington Post* of 1980 there is a man, Governor Jerry Brown, on the front page of the section, which signifies not much of a change from the prevalence of male interests represented in the “for and about Women” section.⁹⁸ Understanding how men are represented in “Style” shows the reader how women are represented. The impression is the “Style” section, on the whole, shifts toward news for and/or about men in the years discussed, and it is wondered if the “Style”

⁹⁸ Myra McPherson, “Gov. Jerry Brown and The Third-Man-Out Theme, From Seminary to Brownspeak in the Cool Quest for the White House: From Seminary to Brownspeak—Seeking the Presidency: Brown And The Third-Man-Out Theme.” *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1980, G1, G3, G4.

section in practice is neglecting the interests of women. Looking at the ratio of articles written by women versus men, and the comparison of advertisements between the 1980s-90s and previous decades of the newspaper help to understand the representation of women at the end of the century. In order to understand how the *Washington Post* became the paper it is today in terms of its representation of women, it has to be seen how it came to that point, which is the reasoning for this last chapter to focus on this specific time period.

Seeing the “Style” section of the 1980s through its visual media—photographs—explains how women were represented in the fashion industry as something to be admired. The women in figure 1, the way they are posing, and the article beneath them, show that this part of the “Style” section is similar to what is expected in a fashion article today. The difference of the 1980s version from today is the references made to what was topical at the time (for example, the moon landing is mentioned in the article).⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Nina S. Hyde, Fashion Notes, *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1980, G2.

Fashion Notes

By Nina S. Hyde

Isn't it curious that at the end of each decade designers start paring away at the excesses in clothing, simplifying lines into minimal chemises and even shortening them a bit. Witness the Balenciaga full back chemises just prior to the 1960s, the Courreges spacy chemise as we entered the '70s and now the clean cut chemise of designers in Paris, Milan and New York for next spring.

At the start of the 1970s the focus was outer space, the conquest by man of the moon. Fashion creators, eyeing those astronauts in their sleek, functional space suits, came up with equivalents: architectural, stiff

seamed chemises and even, as done by Andre Courreges, with the addition of clean white boots.

Rudi Gernreich says the whole futuristic thrust was nipped when we actually got to the moon. "We were all looking for a staggering thing when we went to the moon. We were expecting a whole new source and when we finally got there discovered a dead, completely dead planet. And in our disappointment we went back to the old, to nostalgia, to things done before."

Gernreich took a sabbatical, designing only for the Bella Lewitzky dance company and other dance clothes. But other designers felt called upon to renew or redo costumes of

other times, other places. We saw the costume revival of cowboys and Indians, Russian peasants and mod revolutionaries. You name the character or the period, someone surely redressed him or her in the 1970s. (In Paris they are already talking about "reviving" the 70s.)

While much of the inventiveness and the silliness kicked off in Paris, New York was quick to regroup and peddle many of these ideas in some

what more wearable forms. But on Seventh Avenue the focus, too, was zeroed in on real women with real jobs, in pursuit of real money.

If the '70s didn't show us much worth framing and saving in terms of clothes, it certainly reshaped attitudes towards clothing that will certainly continue to develop in the '80s. Like these:

- Catalogue shopping became an instant and easy shopping tool, but developed the same problems as retail shopping—customer service.
- Energy became an influence in clothing design and purchase. Needed were clothes offering warmth with indoor thermostats down, cool comfort with air conditioners off.
- Cheap chic became an admired practice and at the same time, expensive.
- Buying discount became a skill you no longer had to hide from your friends, but bragged about and shared.
- Fast-good fabrics soothed Me Generation sensitivities with satin undies, silk shirts, cashmere sweaters, leather pants and the like.
- Comfort became the common ground rule for clothes, with the con-

firming exceptions of heels too high, pants too tight, skirts too narrow.

- Designers, once undistinguished dinner party guests, became media stars. Not that they had that much to say, but they are big money makers and look pretty.
- The anti-fashion attitude of the '60s spilled into the last decade as fashion independents—do your own thing, but do it with a designer label.
- Even if you never jogged to the ice box, wearing jogging clothes and sneakers showed you thought about it.
- Success dressing offered a formula for board room chic. Even if you never got the job, the fashion industry gained a purchase.

By Matthew Lewis—The Washington Post

The graphic chemise, as it appeared in Milan, Paris and most recently on the runway in New York (from left) Hubert de Givenchy's navy and white chemise in crepe, Krizia of Milan's pin stripe chemise, Bill Haire's midi chemise, Frank Bissenden's angular chemise, Richard Assuly's bare armhole, Dominic Rompolio's asymmetrical chemise.

Figure 1. Nina S. Hyde, Fashion Notes, The Washington Post, January 6, 1980, G2.

Figure 1 shows a part of the second page of the first style section of 1980, a January 6th issue. The women in the "Fashion Notes" article themselves, and what they are wearing are not exactly examples of what readily comes to mind when thinking of 1980s fashion. The photos are in black and white, so there is no way to know at first glance if they are wearing the typical neon that comes to mind when thinking of the decade. But the fashion does not exude 1970s fashion either, which is curious due to the fact that in all probability these photos were taken in the 1970s. In fact, if one were to choose a decade to which this fashion seems to belong, it would be the late 1950s or 60s, with the exception of the woman second from the right, who looks as though she could be a model of the 90s, evoking the same style or pose from models at that time.

There is obviously nautical influence in these photographs in terms of the woman shown in the third image from the left (despite there being no mention of it), and in many of these photos there is an emphasis on statement in design as it relates to the print of the dresses, the article itself also alludes to this point. These observations and the article itself show that fashion, as an interest to the public, is still taken quite seriously in 1980.¹⁰⁰

When the article is read, it becomes clear that fashion is not light fare in terms of news consumption, and that Hyde, a woman, was qualified to handle such reporting. The article talks about trends in terms of the difference between 1970s fashion and what the author believes the next decade of fashion would look like. The perspicacious mind on the part of Hyde, is displayed when she takes the discussion of fashion further. She offered her analysis of consumer behaviors in the 1970s that she believed would persist in the next decade. A connecting theme throughout many of Hyde's points is her commentary on money. The method people are spending their money, the frugality of consumers, and the social attitude toward that frugality are all things Hyde shines a light on. One of her bullet points reads: "The anti-fashion attitude of the '60s spilled into the last decade as fashion independence—do your own thing, but do it with a designer label," this observation shows not only a comment on money habits at the time, but also that shifts happen in terms of the positive or negative feelings of the public toward fashion.¹⁰¹

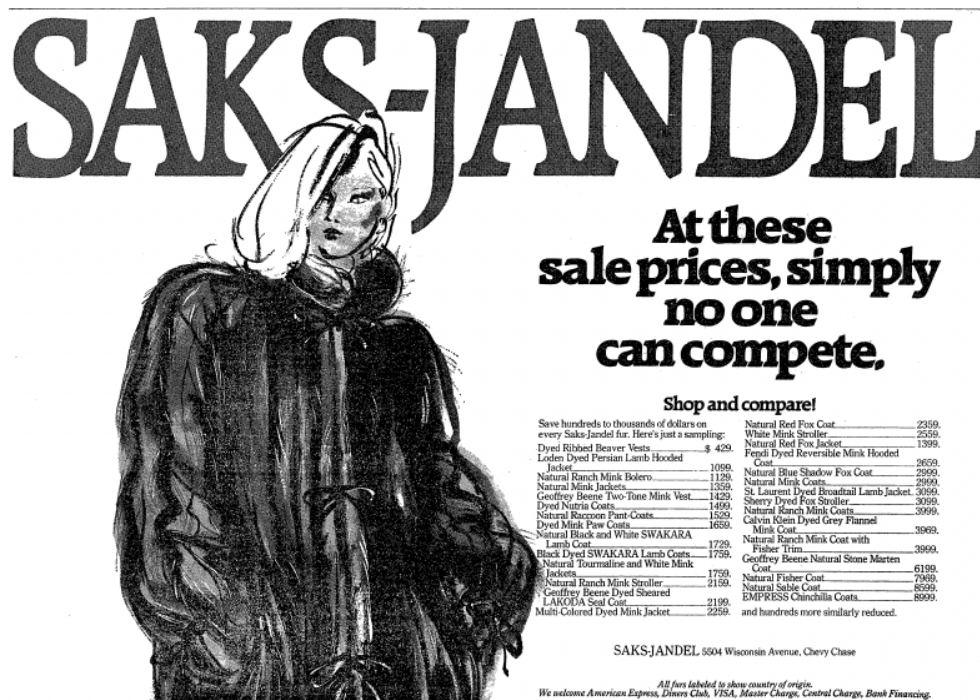
On the very page this article ran, the only other piece to be seen is a Saks- Jandel advertisement, figure 2, for furs with an illustration of a woman looking chic in her expensive coat, despite the ad boasting a sale. The least-expensive item advertised is a \$429 vest.¹⁰² Here,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Clothing, Saks-Jandel, advertisement, *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1980, G2.

Hyde's comment about a "designer label" is shown to be true in the issue.¹⁰³ However, another one of her bullet points she mentions in the article is challenged. Hyde wrote, "Cheap chic became an admired practice and at the same time, expensive," this advertisement can be indicative of consumer trends actually heading toward both expensive and expensive-looking clothes, or that another one of Hyde's points is true, "Success dressing offered a formula for board room chic. Even if you never got the job, the fashion industry gained a purchase."¹⁰⁴ While that point is chilling to think of because of the preying on some of the most economically vulnerable—the unemployed—this advertisement does not denounce that notion as a possibility for the future of the twentieth century.



SAKS-JANDEL

At these sale prices, simply no one can compete.

Shop and compare!

Save hundreds to thousands of dollars on every Saks-Jandel fur. Here's just a sampling:

Dyed Ribbed Beaver Vests	\$ 429.	Natural Red Fox Coat	2359.
Loden Dyed Persian Lamb Hooded Jacket	1059.	White Mink Strolcher	2559.
Natural Ranch Mink Bolero	1129.	Natural Red Fox Jacket	1399.
Natural Mink Jackets	1359.	Ferchl Dyed Reversible Mink Hooded Coat	2659.
Geoffrey Beene Two-Tone Mink Vest	1429.	Natural Blue Shadow Fox Coat	2959.
Dyed Nutria Coats	1499.	Natural Mink Coats	2999.
Natural Racoon Pant-Coats	1529.	St. Laurent Dyed Broadtail Lamb Jacket	3059.
Dyed Mink Paw Coats	1659.	Sherry Dyed Fox Strolcher	3099.
Natural Black and White SWAKARA Lamb Coat	1729.	Natural Ranch Mink Coats	3099.
Black Dyed SWAKARA Lamb Coats	1759.	Calvin Klein Dyed Grey Flannel Mink Coat	3099.
Natural Tournai and White Mink Jackets	1759.	Natural Ranch Mink Coat with Fisher Trim	3999.
Natural Ranch Mink Strolcher	2199.	Geoffrey Beene Natural Stone Marten Coat	6199.
Geoffrey Beene Dyed Sheared LAKOTA Seal Coat	2199.	Natural Fisher Coat	7999.
Multi Colored Dyed Mink Jacket	2259.	Natural Sable Coat	8599.
		EMPRESS Chinchilla Coats	8999.

and hundreds more similarly reduced.

SAKS-JANDEL 5504 Wisconsin Avenue, Chevy Chase

All furs labeled to show country of origin.
We welcome American Express, Diners Club, VISA, Master Charge, Credit Card, Bank Financing.

Figure 2. Clothing, Saks-Jandel, advertisement, *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1980, G2.

¹⁰³ Nina S. Hyde, Fashion Notes, *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1980, G2.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

In the June 1, 1980, issue, there was an advertisement for LSAT prep courses that ran in the “Style” section.¹⁰⁵ There can be two reasons for this advertisement to run in this section; it proves men would be actively reading the section, or it is an example of women’s advancement in the workforce and an advancement in the kinds of jobs available to them. The only article on the page this advertisement ran on was an Ann Landers column, which proves that there would be female readers looking at this advertisement. Of the two, the latter example appears to be right because an overwhelming amount of advertisements in the section were geared toward women.

A look at census data for 1980 shows that 13.8% of lawyers and 17.1% of judges in 1980 were female. This is a sharp increase from the previous decade, in 1970, where the percentages were 4.9% of lawyers and 6.1% of judges were female.¹⁰⁶ Looking at this data, it is seen how this LSAT prep course advertisement is most likely for female readers, and therefore that the overall impression of the section does not completely ignore female advancement. Although, it is of note that this advertisement is smaller than most of the advertisements for beauty or clothing and is the only one of its kind in the issue, whereas the other kinds of advertisements are repeated often, such as the ones for furs. This observation shows how the advertiser was not willing to pay for an ad of similar size. Despite this, the advertisement ran in “Style” anyway, showing that advertising in “Style” was better than not advertising at all. It just so happened that women

¹⁰⁵ LSAT preparation course, National Center for Educational Testing, “Take the National Center for Educational Testing LSAT preparation course,” advertisement, *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1980, G8.

¹⁰⁶ John A. Priebe and Thomas S. Scopp, “Detailed Occupation of the Experienced Civilian Labor Force by Sex for the United States and Regions: 1980 and 1970: Supplementary Report” (1980 Census of Population, United States of America, March 1984), 8.

would now be a part of the market, therefore allowing them to consider different paths for their lives.

Other types of advertisements did not focus on fashion or clothing, but rather the bodies of women. An advertisement for the nutri/system diet is on the eighth page of the section. Diet culture is not new to the *Washington Post*, however, while this diet may not be as detailed or specific as previous examples, it still uses prose that targets appearance rather than health. The first line underneath the heading in the 1980 example states, “A new you ... slimmer, younger-looking!” Diet culture, as it is represented in the newspaper, does not shift very much as the century comes to a close.

THIS YEAR... INTRODUCE YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO SOMEONE NEW, YOU!

A new you ... slimmer, younger-looking!

It's a new year ... time to create a new, slimmer, younger-looking you! Start now and Nutri/System will help you lose those unwanted pounds ... give a trim, youthful look that will make everybody think they're meeting someone new!



Lose up to a pound a day

The famous Nutri/System program has worked for thousands ... and it can work for you! You'll lose quickly and easily ... up to a pound a day!

Our doctors make it safe

You'll lose without dangerous drugs or injections, without strenuous exercise. And you'll be supervised by a staff of registered nurses!

The food's delicious

Every day, Nutri/System is proving that calorie-controlled meals can be delicious, too! No back-tasting dehydrated foods for you ... instead you choose from a wide variety of all-natural, pre-packaged gourmet dishes you just heat and enjoy!

Say goodbye to hunger

Exclusive Nutri/System meals provide tempting, hearty dishes for breakfast, lunch and dinner. And, for extra variety, follow our easy recipes for such treats as French Vanilla pancakes, Chicken Divan, Seafood Creole, Pizza ... even luscious desserts like Chocolate Bismark Creme and Lemon Velvet Pudding!

You'll keep the weight off!

Once you've lost weight, our trained counselors will show you how a few simple adjustments in your lifestyle and eating habits will assure you a lifetime free from weight worries!



Marlou Sudders lost 211 lbs. in 48 days!

Bob Melroe lost 85 lbs. in 90 days!

Our "Weightminder"™ Guarantee

You'll reach your goal or there's no additional charge for our services until you do!

Call today for a free, no-obligation consultation

Over 180 Centers Nationwide
nutri/system
weight loss centers

DOWNTOWN
1750 K St., N.W.
466-6010

FALLS CHURCH
6201 Leesburg Pike
532-1022
SEVEN CORNERS

ROCKVILLE
152 Rollins Ave.
468-2332
OFF ROCKVILLE PIKE

SPRINGFIELD
6417 Laidole Rd.
971-0400
SPRINGFIELD MALL

Figure 3. Weight loss program, nutri/system, "This year... introduce your friends and family to someone new, you!" Advertisement, *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1980, G8.

The January 6, 1980 nutri/system advertisement shows a woman holding up her hands with an expression on her face that leaves the impression it is meant to entice and excite the viewer to try what is being advertised. A look down to her feet shows she is standing on a scale in the advertisement. What advertisements like this imply is that not only is losing weight a mainly female endeavor, but it is mostly, if not all, a comment on the way someone looks as opposed to if they are healthy or not. The way the advertisement is worded makes that statement very clear. The advertisement implies that it is a safe, effective, and permanent change, similar to

the way the advertisements for perms were boasting just pages before, as if a person can change their body as quickly as they can change their hair. One of the two men represented in the advertisement is the doctor, which implies just as much about gender dynamics in the 1980s. The simple fact the doctor represented is a man and not a woman is not horrible in its own right, but it implies that women would be placing their trust over what their female body looks like in a man.¹⁰⁷

This single advertisement in itself comments on many things at one time. First, it comments on the bodies of women specifically in terms of its depiction of the clients in the advertisement mostly being women, with the exception of the depiction of one male client. Second, it focuses on appearance rather than health. All of this is represented in their logo at the bottom right side of the advertisement. A scale with a measuring tape around it represents the company. The logo does not represent food or exercise, just size and weight. The facts of this advertisement's representation of their clients (again, mainly women) make one connect that the "Style" section had enough eye-traffic from the demographic they were obviously trying to reach.¹⁰⁸

In the late twentieth century, there is a shift in the representation of women in the *Washington Post* from having articles be "for and about women" to their main representation being in the advertisements that sell their interests. On the whole, it can be said that the *Washington Post* sold their female readership to advertisers and made the "Style" section under the guise of male-female equality, but later devolved into giving print space that required

¹⁰⁷ Weight loss program, nutri/system, "This year... introduce your friends and family to someone new, you!" Advertisement, *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1980, G8.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

reporters and writing to male interests. None of this is to say that the articles being reported were not of interest or important to the female readers of the *Post*, just that a shift had occurred toward reporting on other matters.

In the 1980 example, the women shown in the advertisements and in the fashion article were all depicted similarly to how Julie Golia described in her article, “Newspaper content and marketing materials portrayed the ideal American woman as white, married, financially comfortable, and rooted in her home—though papers rarely mentioned race and class explicitly.”¹⁰⁹ While this article is describing the women’s page, it is evident in the 1980 issue that the *Washington Post*’s “Style” section was continuing parts of Golia’s observation post-civil rights era United States.

The 1990s, and More Diet Ads

Looking to the first “Style” section in the last decade of the twentieth century, on January seventh, 1990, the kind of modernity that would be expected for the 90s is not initially seen. First, there is a continuation of the “Miss Manners” articles that were also evident in the 1980 example. The manners article that appears at the front of the section, however, is not as gendered as the article previously mentioned on men’s manners in 1960. This “Miss Manners” article, titled “Compliments and Killjoys” uses genderless wording in its writing, although it is assumed

¹⁰⁹ Julie A. Golia, “Courting Women, Courting Advertisers: The Woman’s Page and the Transformation of the American Newspaper, 1895–1935,” *The Journal of American History* 103, no. 3 (December 2016): 607, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48560225>.

the article is directed toward women due to the kind of conversation discussed.¹¹⁰ The continuation of this type of article shows how the practices of the past still can persist in eras we think of as modern.

The “Fashion Notes” article in 1990 (figure 4) shows many differences since the 1980 example. First, there is more diversity in the models in the 1990 example. The 1990 example also showed a fairly drastic change in the clothing depicted in the article when compared to the

¹¹⁰ Judith Martin, “Compliments and Killjoys: When Others Rain on Your Parade,” Miss Manners, *The Washington Post*, January 7, 1990, F1, F8.

1980 example. Clean lines of the early 1980 example were traded for leather, textured fabric, and dramatic shoulder pads which are associated with the 80s.

THE WASHINGTON POST SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 1990 F3

Fashion Notes

The Trickle-down Theory of Knockoffs

By Nina Hyde
Washington Post Fashion Editor

"I love to see my clothes walking," says Emanuel Ungaro.

He's not referring to seeing women strolling into swanky restaurants in superb mixed-pattern suits from one of his pricey boutique collections. Besides, he's rarely at those restaurants.

And he doesn't mean seeing a woman arriving at a chichi dinner party in one of his amazingly sensuous couture gowns. He's almost never at those parties, either.

What he's referring to is walking through any neighborhood in New York or Paris, or anywhere, and seeing women wearing clothes from his lower-price collections. The fit may be less precision-perfect, the cut less extreme, but they have the Ungaro spirit.

"Clothes, like cars, are the only thing that move on the street. I'm always happy to see my clothes on someone out on the street walking," says Ungaro, who is not prone to smiling, with a big grin.

Designers of very expensive collections in Paris and Milan are increasingly seeing their clothes on the street. It's an old and proven formula for many American designers, but only a handful of Europeans have made it work. It's hardly for the ego trip, and some designers admit feeling a little wobbly when they see a woman who, perhaps, has sewn up one of their patterns in a size 16, particularly if the fabric is questionable and the fit a bit curious.

For some designers, what works best is the "trickle-down" theory, diluting the original ideas of the most inventive and expensive things they make. Some see this as supplementing the wardrobes of their high-price customers. And some see it as a totally different animal, perhaps for their customers' kids. Whatever the concept, if it is done well, and design and craftsmanship are never out of control, it is a boon for both designer and retailer. And the biggest winner is the consumer, which is what this business should be all about.

For Gianfranco Ferré, the designer and artistic director for Christian Dior, couture and ready-to-wear are two different things.

"Couture is the expression of one's own identity, of what is on your mind," he says. "That is why I would be embarrassed to do a couture collection under my own label in Italy as well as for Dior. I cannot be two people."

Ferre has not spun off his ready-to-wear designs from his couture collection at a cheaper price, he says firmly. "These days

ready-to-wear is built on separate pieces—a small jacket, a long jacket, a shirt, a T-shirt, a coat, a raincoat, put together with a certain spirit. Ready-to-wear has to be easy to understand, easy to wear. This is what we want to do. We want to make the *pre-à-porter* as simple as possible."

And the Dior ready-to-wear collection has little connection to what Ferré designs under his own ready-to-wear label in Italy, he says. The differences between ready-to-wear from Italy and that from France start with the individual designer. "For me, French fashion is not just white camellias, bows and gold chains with the gold buttons," Ferré says with a not-so-gentle whack at Chanel.

Valentino has developed spinoff lines more aggressively than others in recent years. *Gliver*—named for his pug—is the upstart in the group, sportswear for young men and women sold in Valentino boutiques as well as in independent shops. Best known in the United States is the *Misa V* line, targeted to "the most classic of Valentino's customers" and selling for 30 percent

less than the ready-to-wear collection. Also very successful are the *Studio (units)* and *Night (evening clothes)* collections.

For several of these, Valentino demands to see the clothes on models on the runway with his staff around him, just as he does before his other collections are presented. He usually applauds everything he sees.

That other Italian heavy hitter, Giorgio Armani, starts with ready-to-wear collections he calls *Armani Borgonova*, after the small street where his house and atelier are located. Those are his masterpieces, always seen most completely in his own boutiques.

And then there is Emporio Armani. Shops of the same name were once the great hangouts of young Milanese and the sources for special fashion gifts at reasonable prices, treasures (like Armani boxer shorts) that American buyers would take home to trendy friends. Those boutiques now cater to a far broader audience, because the clothes do. The line is still very popular for its younger spirit, often spun off from street fashion.

The ready-to-wear spring line Ungaro showed in Paris, which he calls *Parallele*, must be considered a steal for his couture customers at one-quarter or one-third the price. (A *Parallele* suit retails in the United States for \$2,000 to \$4,000.) It's a concept he has worked with since he opened his own house 23 years ago. Undoubtedly many of his couture customers wear *Parallele*, but it just plain doesn't work the other way around.

Solo Donna is even lower priced—it retails at 30 percent less than *Parallele*—though still with Ungaro's exclusive patterns and mixes. And now there is *Ter*, which is to *Parallele* what *Anne Klein II* is to *Anne Klein*, a whoppingly successful formula in America. The newest label in the group, *Ter* was added two years back.

"Imagine, you have finished the couture collection and three months later you see versions of these clothes, clothes in the same spirit, on the street," says Ungaro. "Once it starts rolling, it is a very good feeling."



Variations on a theme: From left, a suit from Ungaro's couture collection; the same suit from his *Parallele* line; the less expensive *Solo Donna* version and finally, the least expensive Ungaro *Ter* ensemble.

Figure 4. Nina Hyde, "The Trickle-down Theory of Knockoffs," *Fashion Notes*, *The Washington Post*, January 7, 1990, F3.

The article itself, unlike the trend predicting one from 1980, discusses the difference between couture and street fashion, discussing major brands like Valentino and Dior, and an interview with Gianfranco Ferré, the designer for the latter. The article does show how Hyde's predictions in 1980 could be correct. To predict in 1980 that the rest of the decade would include consumers would move more toward expensive-looking clothing but shopping for it at a lower price, also that people would be shopping from a "designer label," and then exactly 10 years later have the ability to write an article in the same series that confirms these predictions is an


incredible feat. Because of this insight, Hyde showed how the journalistic instincts of the female reporter extend to the fashion coverage. Even if women didn't always report on hard-hitting, nationally recognizable stories in the penultimate decade of the twentieth century, then they could bring real talent to the articles they did report on.¹¹¹

Underneath the "Fashion Notes" article of 1990, there is also a half-page advertisement for cosmetics, some of them even from designers mentioned in the article above. The advertisements throughout the section boast perm treatments and relaxers, fashion and beauty from Chanel, Lord & Taylor, and Kmart photo portraits—all aspects of the time period, but mostly reminiscent of the 1980s. These examples show once again that historical concepts like the women's page or the uniqueness of each decade, do not happen all at one moment. There are gradual changes that happen through a decade that all add to the understanding of that time.

The 1990 issue also shows an advertisement for diet culture in the form of a Weight Watchers ad, shown in figure 5. In this advertisement however, a major shift is seen from the visuals of the 1980 nutri/system example. In 1980, there were real customers of nutri/system advertised. Here, there is only one person, a model, who is presumed to be the person writing in the paragraph, but one does not know for sure. In all likelihood, the person who is writing the prose could be an advertising agent. The article does not claim otherwise, so it is not really known. This level of manipulation shows how an advertisement can change the culture one lives in. If this faceless model was a real customer of the program, one could imagine the advertisers

¹¹¹ Nina Hyde, "The Trickle-down Theory of Knockoffs," Fashion Notes, *The Washington Post*, January 7, 1990, F3; Nina S. Hyde, "Fashion Notes," *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1980, G2.

would want to exploit that. Instead, women of the time are forced to compare themselves to models who most likely never even used the service they are advertising.



I hate diets. I like to eat what I want to eat when and where I want to.

I hate starving myself. And with Weight Watchers New Fast & Flexible Program, I don't have to. The new food plan lets me lose weight fast, live the way I want, eat with family and friends, and still have fun. I can even eat out! And best of all, there's always a meeting that fits into my schedule—with an experienced, caring leader who supports me and keeps me on track. It's reasonably priced, too. I can live with this program, so I've stuck to it. And in no time at all, I lost the weight I wanted. Now there's only one thing I hate—not joining Weight Watchers sooner! (There's a Weight Watchers meeting near you. Just check the listing below or see your phone book.)

when and where I want to.

Weight Watchers®

Figure 5. Fast & Flexible Program, Weight Watchers, "I hate diets. I like to eat what I want to eat when and where I want to," advertisement, *The Washington Post*, January 7, 1990, F6. (Only part of the full advertisement is shown)

The comparison of both these years from the last two decades of the twentieth century shows how a century can change not only between the beginning and end, but between the decades of which it is comprised. The fact there are many similarities and some differences between 1980 and 1990 is evidence of this change. The way women are represented visually in fashion articles and general advertisements, and how their bodies are represented and commented on, show how the women's section when it was changed to "Style," effectively did as its title describes. It commented on the style of a woman with advertisements that were meant

to mold every American woman into what the advertisers and designers thought she should be and look like, similar to what Golia discussed.¹¹²

What is interesting about the *Washington Post's* June 1, 1980 advertisement for weight loss and their choice to run both a “Nutrition” and a separate “Health” column, is that they chose to run all these pieces in the “Style” section as opposed to the “Food” section, where it is thought these pieces would make more sense given the context.¹¹³ If weight loss is supposed to be about health, then why run these ads and articles in a section that had historically been made for women and not in a genderless section? It is because the culture of the time saw weight loss as a mostly female industry, as proven by the way customers are portrayed in the advertisements of figures 3 and 5, and the inequality in male versus female representation in those weight loss advertisements.

One striking example of a weight-loss program advertisement is shown in figure 6. In reading the text of the advertisement in the lower part, the impression is that the program is trying to say it will be a compassionate experience for the customer, but that impression is in stark contrast to the immediate feeling one gets when seeing the attention-grabbing headline, with the word “fat” written larger than any other text on the page. A compassionate feeling is not gained when that is the first thing seen.

¹¹² Julie A. Golia, “Courting Women, Courting Advertisers”: 607.

¹¹³ Dr. Jean Mayer and Dr. Johanna Dwyer, Nutrition, *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1980, G10.; Dr. G. Timothy Johnson, Health, *The Washington Post*, June 1, 1980, G11.

**Break the
vicious cycle
that keeps
you
fat!**

You diet and lose . . . stop dieting and gain it all back again. You feel guilty, frustrated, and extremely unattractive. So you eat to feel better — and your weight problem becomes even worse. Then you desperately repeat the entire cycle once more — diet and lose . . . stop and gain . . . hate yourself for failing . . . try another diet . . .

If this describes your past weight-loss history, consider **WEIGHTWISE B/C**. It's a hospital-based, medically approved program that's **not** at all what you expect — **not** an exercise class, **not** a diet . . . **not** like anything else you've ever before experienced. You'll slowly lose a significant amount of weight — but at the same time break once and for all that awful lose-gain-lose cycle.

To attend the free information meeting, please call now for reservations.

Call 891-5640 or after hours 891-7600. Meetings will be held at Washington Adventist Hospital, 7600 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912. Come Wednesday, June 5, 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., or Thursday, June 6, 10 a.m., 6 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. Don't miss this opportunity. Bring a friend.

891-5640 **WAH** **891-7600**

WASHINGTON ADVENTIST HOSPITAL
7600 Carroll Avenue • Takoma Park Maryland 20912

Figure 6. Weightwise B/C, Washington Adventist Hospital, "Break the vicious cycle that keeps you fat!" advertisement, *The Washington Post*, June 2, 1985, H6.

The defining difference between three iterations of this kind of section: "Society", "for and about Women", and "Style", is how the role of expectations for women is implemented. On the whole, in "Society" women are portrayed as wives, brides, mothers; in "for and about Women" that portrayal shifts to some advice columnists and limited stories that can be considered hard-hitting; when Ben Bradlee creates the "Style" section, he—consciously or not—introduces a section that generally devolves into pandering for female consumerism, more concerned with dollars than interests. While echoes of the past sections ring out in "Style," in terms of their acknowledgement of women's interests in fashion and advice columns, the general impression is that society has shifted for the last time in the twentieth century toward women

being a commodity for advertisers. But an acknowledgement has to be made of the variety of advertisements. Showing an advertisement for an LSAT prep course when far less than half of lawyers at the time were women, shows how the expectations for women in this section have changed because it proves women at this time are able to want and to choose a life for themselves, where before they could just want. Even then, women wanting a different life for themselves than the ones shown in the predecessors of “Style” were not generally evident in those pages. For that, one would have to look to Sister Suffragette, or Rosie the Riveter— emblems of ideas that pushed the waves of feminism—to find examples of women leading lives that broke the mold.

In the last Sunday issue of the *Washington Post* in 1999, after noticing the complete lack of any mention of weddings in the extensive index (when there would be significant wedding coverage in the “Society” section) and takes their eyes to the last “Style” section in 1999, it is seen how the century was abridged in an article comprised of many sub-articles by different authors.¹¹⁴ Because of this article, there are not many examples of advertisements in this issue of the section. The advertisements seen are similar to many advertisements of the last two decades of the century. Sales in stores and for furs are among such examples, as well as furniture, etc. It is plain to see the impulse to wrap the century up in a bow for readers, but that is not a simple task. A century cannot be defined like dots on a map. It is an amalgamation of ideas and triumphs; interests and steppingstones that march society on into the next, greater versions of ourselves and into the future.

¹¹⁴ Henry Allen, et al, “Turning Points,” *The Washington Post*, December 26, 1999, F1, F4, F5.

Conclusion

The concept of a women's section of the newspaper was not only found the *Washington Post*, but their execution of it explains how U.S culture has shifted over the course of the century. From "Society", to "for and about Women", to "Style", the *Washington Post* shows the trends of the previous century through the types of stories they chose to run, and, more importantly, their depiction and inclusion of women. Notably, the most obvious shift that occurred was the role of women in the section transforming, generally, from a demographic to which to be catered, to then a pair of eyes to be bought by advertisers and their advertisements.

The connective tissue between the different forms of the section is their inclusion of women. The *Washington Post's* most prominent women's sections were "Society", "for and about Women", and "Style", in chronological order. "Style" is the section that remains to this day and came about when Ben Bradlee and Katharine Graham wanted to update the section "for and about Women" for their audience in the later half of the century.

In "Society," there was coverage on marriage—a woman's relationship to a man. In "for and about Women" there was generally less of an emphasis on the interests of female readers as opposed to its predecessor. Then, in the last decades of the century, women generally became a syndicated or regular-column part of the "Style" section, writing columns such as "Miss Manners" and "Anne Landers," an advice column, and "Fashion Notes," by Nina Hyde, for example. Women in "Style" were also, on the whole, seen more outwardly in the advertisements on the page as opposed to the articles printed. Women became both a tool and the market for advertising in the section, rather than a fully acknowledged part of the readership akin to previous iterations of the section.

From here, the thread between what was and what remains must be acknowledged. Elements of the past live in culture today and none can be seen so clearly as in the “Style” section one can pick up in a news rack on the street. What one should gain from this thesis is a critical understanding of how our current news coverage of the average women came to be, and the women’s section’s role in that shift. Then, it can be understood how this coverage seeps into culture and alters the way we relate to each other on both a large and small scale.

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