



Those Girls: Single Women in Sixties and Seventies Popular Culture (Culture America (Hardcover))

Katherine J. Lehman

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Long before Carrie Bradshaw in *Sex and the City*, there was Mary Richards in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. Every week, as Mary flung her beret into the air while the theme song proclaimed, "You're gonna make it after all," it seemed that young, independent women like herself had finally arrived. But as Katherine Lehman reveals, the struggle to create accurate portrayals of successful single women for American TV and cinema during the 1960s and 1970s wasn't as simple as the toss of a hat.

Those Girls is the first book to focus exclusively on struggles to define the "single girl" character in TV and film during a transformative period in American society. Lehman has scoured a wide range of source materials—unstudied film and television scripts, magazines, novels, and advertisements—to demonstrate how controversial female characters pitted fears of societal breakdown against the growing momentum of the women's rights movement.

Lehman's book focuses on the "single girl"—an unmarried career woman in her 20s or 30s—to show how this character type symbolized sweeping changes in women's roles. Analyzing films and programs against broader conceptions of women's sexual and social roles, she uncovers deep-seated fears in a nation accustomed to depictions of single women yearning for matrimony. Yet, as television began to reflect public acceptance of career women, series such as *Police Woman* and *Wonder Woman* proved that heroines could wield both strength and femininity—while movies like *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* cautioned viewers against carrying new-found freedom too far.

Lehman takes us behind the scenes in Hollywood to show us the production decisions and censorship negotiations that shaped these characters before they even made it to the screen. She includes often-overlooked sources such as the TV series *Get Christie Love* and *Ebony* magazine to give us a richer understanding of how women of color negotiated urban singles life. And she reveals how trailblazing characters continue to influence portrayals of single women in shows like *Mad Men*.

This entertaining and insightful study examines familiar characters caught between the competing fears and aspirations of a society rethinking its understanding of social and sexual mores. *Those Girls* reassesses feminine genres that are often marginalized in media scholarship and contributes to a greater valuation of the unmarried, independent woman in America.

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