

Chapter 6

'HIT HIM WITH YOUR HANDBAG': HOMOPHOBIA IN AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINES OF THE 1960S

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Mass-market magazines constitute a principal sphere within the mass media and its popular cultural forms. Australians have historically remained avid readers of magazines; consistently maintaining one of the highest per capita readership levels in the world. Not only do magazines provide a ready and relatively inexpensive form of entertainment, but recent research indicates that a large proportion of the community rely on the publications for information and ideas on a wide range of topics. Magazines therefore play an active role as mediators between the public and society's dominant institutions, facilitating the transmission of governing ideologies, ideas and beliefs and helping shape public opinion.

Magazine production (like other commodities of popular culture) involves satisfying a network of competing and complementary influences. Subsequently, it is another arena in which social, cultural, and political struggles are often played out. This is particularly relevant to the 1960s. During that period, many Australians were awakened to new individual possibilities unrestricted by conservative dictates, especially those that challenged the socially and culturally entrenched mythologies of sex and gender. However, despite the increasing degree of social radicalisation during the decade, popular magazines remained stoic in their portrayal of conservative expressions of sexuality. Within their pages, homosexuality remained largely a taboo subject for public discussion unless it was configured in terms of a social problem that required 'solving' or a medical problem that required 'treatment'. Thus the most popular magazines in Australia during the decade of the 'swinging sixties' reinforced long-standing homophobic

This is a preview. Not all pages are shown.

Notes

- 1 *Pix*, 11 February 1967, p 5.
- 2 *The Australian Women's Weekly: A Study of Women's Magazine Audiences* (Sydney: McNair Survey Pty Ltd, 1960), Report No 1, p 16.
- 3 Susan Sheridan contends that the *Australian Women's Weekly* continues to maintain one of the world's highest levels of market penetration. See, Sheridan, 'Introduction' in *Who Was That Woman?*, p 3.
- 4 *Gals and Gags*, January 1962, front cover.
- 5 Roman Kuhar, *Media Representations of Homosexuality: An Analysis of the Print Media in Slovenia, 1970-2000*, Peace Institute: Institute for Contemporary Social and Political, Media Watch Series, Ljubljana, 2003, p 15.
- 5 Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and evaluation of taste* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p 43.
- 6 Kuhar, *Media Representations of Homosexuality*, p 24.
- 7 Graham Willett, 'The Darkest Decade: Homophobia in 1950s Australia', in John Murphy and Judith Smart (eds), *The Forgotten Fifties: Aspects of Australian Society and Culture in the 1950s*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997), p 121.
- 8 Kuhar, *Media Representations of Homosexuality*, p 24.
- 9 *Ibid*, p 16.
- 10 Gans, *Popular Culture & High Culture*, p 43.
- 11 John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1992), p 14.
- 12 Howard Gossage cited in John C Merrill and Ralph L Lowenstein, *Media, Messages, and Men* (New York: David McKay Company Inc, 1971), p 84.
- 13 Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, p 28.
- 14 Norman MacKenzie quoted in 'Women in Australia', *Woman's Day*, 5 November 1962, p 10.
- 15 Stella Lees and June Senyard, *The 1950s: how Australia became a modern society, and everyone got a house and car* (Melbourne: Hyland House, 1987).
- 16 Robert B Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: the emergence of separate spheres* (New York: Longman, 1998). See also Mrs Craik, 'The Mistress of a Family' in *A Woman's Thoughts About Women* (London: Hurst and Blackett Ltd, 1858), pp 122-164. The author supported her friend's contention that the 'men of the family' should always be absent at least six hours in the day ... A house where 'papa' or 'the boys' are always 'pottering about', popping in and out at all hours, everlastingly wanting something, or finding fault with something else, is a considerable trial to even feminine patience. And I

beg to ask my sex generally – in confidence, of course – if it is not the greatest comfort possible when, the masculine half of the family being cleared out for the day, the house settles down into regular work and orderly quietness until evening ... it is good for them, as well as for us, to have all the inevitable petty domestic ‘bothers’ got over in their absence. Let them, if possible, return to a quiet smiling home, with all its annoyances brushed away like the dust and cinders from the grate ... it might be as well, too, if the master himself could contrive to leave the worldly mud of the day at the scraper outside his door ...’.

- 17 For an explanation of the historical construction of the modern nuclear family see Bettina Cass ‘The Ideology of the Family in Sociological Theory’, a paper delivered to the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS) 44th Congress, Sydney 1972, Sect 27/748. See also, Lisa Adkins, *Gendered Work: Sexuality, family and the labour market* (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1995).
- 18 Ross Laurie, ‘From bodybuilders to Breadwinners: Depictions of masculinity and gender roles in popular magazines in Australia during the 1950s’, unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University, 1995, p 224.
- 19 Carol J Auster and Susan C Ohm, ‘Masculinity and Femininity in Contemporary American Society: re-evaluation using the Bem Sex-role inventory,’ *Sex Roles*, October 2000, p 499.
- 20 Harriet Bradley, *Men’s Work, Women’s Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp 1–70, discusses the historical background to the segregation of labour according to gender. Bradley considers the horizontal segregation of labour whereby men and women are placed into different types of work and also the vertical division of labour, which allows for a concentration of men in jobs with higher status and income. Bradley examines these conditions in terms of patriarchy and Western capitalist society.
- 21 Ann Oakley, *Woman’s Work: the housewife past, and present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), p 60.
- 22 Alice E Courtney and Thomas W Whipple, *Sex Stereotyping in Advertising* (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1984), p 10
- 23 Garry Wotherspoon, *City of the Plain: History of a gay sub-culture*, (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1991), p 100
- 24 Helen Wilson and Jane Butterworth, *Media Papers No 6, Occasional papers in Media Studies*, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (Sydney: Institute of Technology, 1980), p 6.
- 25 Wilson and Butterworth, *Media Papers No 6*, p 9.
- 26 Ballaster et al, *Women’s Worlds*, p 161.

- 27 Erving Goffman, *Gender Advertisements* (London: Macmillan, 1985), p 26.
- 28 Vivian Gornick and Barbara Moran, *Woman in Sexist Society* (New York: New American Library, 1972), p 310.
- 29 Craig McGregor, *Profile of Australia* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1967), p 61.
- 30 David Cohen, *Being a Man* (London: Routledge, 1990), p 73
- 31 Goffman, *Gender Advertisements*, (nos 68-71) discusses the impact of this belief system in connection with advertisements concerning the domains of feminine authority within the home. Goffman suggests that images of men in the home usually picture the male in a non-contributory role, which obviates the risk of picturing male subordination or 'contamination' through participation in a 'female' task.
- 32 Janice Winship, *Inside Women's Magazines* (London: Pandora Press, 1987), p 14.
- 33 Anthony McMahon, 'Blokus Domesticus' in Australian Masculinities, *Journal of Australian Studies*, Guest editors Clive Moore & Kay Saunders, Number 56, 1998, p 150.
- 34 See John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1992), pp 70-83 for an historical account of the relationship between work, leisure and social control in Western society. Refer also to Eileen Green, Sandra Hebron and Diana Woodward, *Women's Leisure, What Leisure?* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p 29.
- 35 Margaret Bevege, Margaret James and Carmel Shute (eds), *Worth Her Salt: Women at work in Australia* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1982); Karen Mumford, *Women Working: Economics & Reality* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989); Ann Game & Rosemary Pringle, *Gender at Work* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1989); Janeen Baxter, *Work at Home: The Domestic Division of Labour* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1993); Janeen Baxter and Diane Gibson with Mark Lynch-Blosse, *Double Take: The links between paid and unpaid work* (Canberra: AGPS, 1990) and Sol Encel, Norman MacKenzie and Margaret Tebbutt, *Women and Society: An Australian Study* (London: Malaby Press, 1975)
- 36 Ivan Krisjansen, 'Female Asceticism: Press Representations in 1930s South Australia', *Journal of Australian Studies*, No 64, March 2000, p 53.
- 37 Jill Julius Matthews, *Good and Mad Women* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1984), p 93.
- 38 Kaisa Kauppinen-Toropainen and Johanna Lammi, 'A Cross-Cultural Comparison' in Christine L Williams (ed), *Doing 'Women's Work': Men in Nontraditional Occupations*, (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1993), p 92.
- 39 Cynthia Cockburn in the foreword to Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle, *Gender at Work* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989), p 9. Refer also

to Janeen Baxter, *Work at Home: The gendered division of labour* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1993), pp 9-19; and Jessie Bernard, 'The Good Provider Role: Its Rise and Fall' in *American Psychologist*, Vol 36, No 1, January 1981, p 3.

- 40 Matthews, *Good and Mad Women*, p 47.
- 41 Candy Jones, 'Stay feminine', *Australian Women's Weekly*, 19 June 1963, p 69 and Vivian Gornick, 'Why women fear success', *Australian Women's Weekly*, 1 March 1972, pp 39, 42. Refer to Encel *et al*, *Women and Society*, p 70. Encel traces this perception of work as inherently 'unfeminine' to 19th century attitudes wherein work was identified with poverty and necessity and consequently was considered 'unladylike' and lacking in prestige. See also, Matthews, *Good and Mad Women*, p 58, who argues that downgrading of women's work was an essential element in the construction of the feminine ideal.
- 42 '100 Careers for Boys and Girls,' *Pix*, 9 December 1961, pp 29-38.
- 43 Refer to Harriet Bradley, 'Across the Great Divide: The Entry of Men into 'Women's Jobs' in *Doing 'Women's Work': Men in Nontraditional Occupations* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993), p 17-27. Bradley argues that three dominant patterns account for the gender cross-over in occupations: takeover; invasion, and infiltration. The 'invasion' analogy accounts for the process whereby the previously excluded gender moves into an occupational sphere in sufficient numbers to become the dominant gender in terms of numbers that work in that area. Bradley proposes that in terms of women moving into previously male-dominated areas of production, the number of women may not have to constitute a majority for masculine perceptions to consider their movement an 'invasion'.
- 44 'Persons reported for homosexual tendencies and serious character defects': Commonwealth Public Service, Vol 1, Canberra: National Archives of Australia, A12694, 14, 1965-1968.
- 45 Gregory Herek, 'The context of Anti-Gay Violence', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol 5 No 3, 1990, p 330.
- 46 'Sex appeal is driving force: male models' in *Pix*, 10 December 1966, pp 3-5.
- 47 Barry D Adam, 'Theorizing Homophobia', *Sexualities*, vol 1, 1998, p 394.
- 48 Alan Tomlinson (ed), *Gender, Sport and Leisure: Continuities and Challenges*, Chelsea School Research Centre Edition, Vol 3 (Aachen: Meyer & Meyer Verlag, 1997).
- 49 Michael A Messner and Donald F Sabo (eds), *Sport, Men, and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives* (Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics Books, 1990).

- 50 Michael Kaufman, cited in Varda Burstyn, *The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) p xi.
- 51 'Sex appeal is driving force' in *Pix*, 10 December 1966, p 4.
- 52 David Rowe, *Popular Cultures: Rock Music, Sport and the Politics of Pleasure* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), p 153.
- 53 Wotherspoon, *City of the Plain*. Pp 94-95.
- 54 John Fiske, Bob Hodge and Graeme Turner, *Myths of Oz*, (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987).
- 55 Craig McGregor, *Profile of Australia* (London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1967), p 285.
- 56 Clive Moore, *Sunshine and Rainbows: The Development of Gay and Lesbian Culture in Queensland*, (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2001), p 135.
- 57 See Edward S Herold and Marnie E Foster, 'Changing Sexual References in Mass Circulation Magazines', *The Family Coordinator*, Vol 24, No 1 (Jan, 1975), pp 21-25.
- 58 Ross Edwards, 'Another Woman's Day Outrage', *GCN*, March 1970, p 7.
- 59 Mark McLelland, 'Inside Out: Queer Theory and Popular Culture', University of Wollongong, *Research Online*, 2005, p 6.
- 60 Rex Jory, 'Thirty years of change, yet the stigma remains', *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 11 August 2005, p 20.
- 61 Wm David Sloan and Jenn Burleson Mackay, *Media bias: finding it, fixing it*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2007), p 11.