

Viewers Like You: The Audiences and Fan Memories
of *I Love Lucy*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*,
and *All in the Family*



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And to the cast and crew of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, a special group of people that made one of—if not, the greatest—sitcoms of all time.

Thank you.

Introduction

The 400-mile trip from my house in Queens to the Lucille Ball-Desi Arnaz Center for Comedy in Jamestown, New York is a little under seven hours. Or, as I used to think of time when I was younger, the equivalent of about 14 episodes of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*.

The opening sequence starts with the horn section playing the two-note introduction of one of the most recognizable television theme songs, while I, as the viewer, wait in the Petries' living room for the front door to open. Rob opens the door, greets Laura and Ritchie, and finds Buddy and Sally working on a script at the living room table. Is he going to trip over the ottoman today? I was, and still am, admittedly a little upset whenever Rob sidesteps the ottoman instead of taking his famous tumble. The sequence ends with the title of the episode on the screen, and for the next 23 minutes I am transported to early 1960s New York.



Rob tripping over the ottoman

*Rob sidestepping the ottoman*¹

In the summer of 2003, and again in 2008, I watched this opening sequence about 14 times as my family drove to the mecca for *I Love Lucy* fans—Lucille Ball's hometown of Jamestown which has a museum with archival material, replicas of sets, and bus tours of the area as it relates to Ball's life. The city, with murals of her on buildings and yearly festivals, is

¹ "Dick Van Dyke Opening Times Three," *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPsofhzu9f0>.

devoted to the redhead. I grew up watching classic sitcoms. I wrote my first nonfiction piece, in the fourth grade, on Ball. She was also the subject of the social studies Exit Project I wrote in order to graduate middle school. I even remember buying a 1960s-inspired outfit including pants that looked just like Laura Petrie's. *The Dick Van Dyke Show* was always my favorite show to watch on car trips. Even though I rarely watched *All in the Family*, I knew of its historical and cultural significance. In my conclusion, I quote fans of these sitcoms telling their favorite television stars how much their shows were a part of their growing up. I can certainly relate.

I knew I wanted to write about television popular culture of the mid-twentieth century for my thesis. Originally I planned to write only about *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, but could not find much left to say that had not already been written by television scholars. So, I juxtaposed the sitcom with one earlier and one later series, focusing on the relationship between the sitcoms and their audiences.

This thesis traces the evolution of the relationship between the audience and sitcoms, specifically looking at *I Love Lucy*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and *All in the Family*. In the 1950s, executives viewed the audience as one homogenous entity, but over the next two decades, their view of the audience became more fragmented. This mirrored the American social and political events happening off-screen, as the 1950s, often seen as a consensus period, gave way to the New Frontier of the early-1960s, and finally the counter-culture period of the late 1960s and 1970s. *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957), a sitcom about a housewife who continuously tries to break into show business with crazy schemes, was intended for all American television viewers, and saw record-breaking success. Later, slightly more progressive themes and racial diversity appeared on television, such as on *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961-1966), a show about a television comedy writer who works in Manhattan and lives in the suburbs with his wife and

son—the first sitcom to show both the home and work life of a protagonist. However, *The Dick Van Dyke Show* was rare for its time when most of television was filled with unrealistic and unintelligent escapism shows, magicoms, meant to let the audience forget about the troubles of the outside world. In the late 1960s and 1970s, executives and advertisers created television shows aimed at young adults, an era represented by *All in the Family* (1971-1979), a sitcom about a working-class bigot living in Queens with his wife, daughter, and liberal son-in-law. The intents of each of these shows have affected their current status and popularity, as *I Love Lucy* still has the largest fan base of the three shows, since it was originally created to appeal to the largest group of people.

These three shows are all domestic situation comedies taped in front of a live studio audience. Scholars have focused on the impact of news television on the American audience, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, but this thesis will show how television executives used fictional families to comment on American society, or to get the audience to think differently.² Each show originally aired toward the beginning of a decade, making them good markers for what happened off screen. In turn, I will show how each sitcom is associated with the political and social events of its era: Dwight D. Eisenhower, suburbanization, consumerism, conformity, and McCarthyism for *I Love Lucy*; John F. Kennedy and The New Frontier for *The Dick Van Dyke Show*; and the counterculture generation and tensions among Americans under Richard Nixon's administration for *All in the Family*. Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh's television encyclopedia names different periods which show the progression of sitcoms. The period from 1948-1957 is named "First Era: 'Vaudeo,'" and includes shows whose origins came from vaudeville, such as *I Love Lucy*. The 1960s is the era of the "Idiot Sitcom," the period in which *Dick Van Dyke* premiered, but was an exception. The late 1960s through 1975 is the Relevance

² Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time: Television and the Civil Rights Movement*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012).

Era.³ It is important to note the popularity of each show as *I Love Lucy* and *All in the Family* are two of the most popular series in television history, while *The Dick Van Dyke Show* is critically acclaimed, but not as popular.

Nielsen Rankings for <i>I Love Lucy, The Dick Van Dyke Show, and All in the Family</i>	
October 1951-April 1952:	<i>I Love Lucy</i> #3
October 1952-April 1953:	<i>I Love Lucy</i> #1
October 1953-April 1954:	<i>I Love Lucy</i> #1
October 1954-April 1955:	<i>I Love Lucy</i> #1
October 1955-April 1956:	<i>I Love Lucy</i> #2
October 1956-April 1957:	<i>I Love Lucy</i> #1
October 1961-April 1962:	<i>The Dick Van Dyke Show</i> not in top 30
October 1962-April 1963:	<i>The Dick Van Dyke Show</i> tied for #7
October 1963-April 1964:	<i>The Dick Van Dyke Show</i> #3
October 1964-April 1965:	<i>The Dick Van Dyke Show</i> #7
October 1965-April 1966:	<i>The Dick Van Dyke Show</i> #16
October 1971-April 1972:	<i>All in the Family</i> #1
October 1972-April 1973:	<i>All in the Family</i> #1
September 1973-April 1974:	<i>All in the Family</i> #1
September 1974-April 1975:	<i>All in the Family</i> #1
September 1975-April 1976:	<i>All in the Family</i> #1
September 1976-April 1977:	<i>All in the Family</i> #12
September 1977-April 1978:	<i>All in the Family</i> tied for #4
September 1978-April 1979:	<i>All in the Family</i> : tied for #9

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Domestic situation comedies create a unique relationship between the audience and show.⁵ Jess Oppenheimer, producer and co-writer of *I Love Lucy*, compared a situation comedy series to a visit to a friend’s family.⁶ The viewer becomes familiar with the characters of the show, and with time, is able to predict how each character will react to situations, as the comedy is largely based on characterization. “In its earliest manifestations, the family comedy provided television viewers with more than just an idealistic picture of themselves at home,” Lynn Spigel writes. “A refraction rather than a reflection of family life, the domestic sitcom appealed to viewers’ experiences in postwar America and, above all, their fascination with the new television

³ Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows: 1946-Present*, 6th ed. rev. (New York: Ballantine Books., 1995), xiv—xvii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, compiled from pages 1455-1459, 1460, 1462-1464.

⁵ For more information on the television genre of domestic comedy, see: William Douglas, *Television Families: Is Something Wrong in Suburbia?* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2003).

⁶ Jess Oppenheimer with Gregg Oppenheimer, *Laughs, Luck—and Lucy: How I Came to Create the Most Popular Sitcom of All Time*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 189.

medium.”⁷ This fascination is seen in the three sitcoms. The episode “Ricky and Fred are TV Fans,” of *I Love Lucy* focuses on Ricky and Fred’s admiration of their television set.⁸ Rob Petrie is a comedy writer for a television variety show. The majority of scenes of *All in the Family* take place in the living room, with the audience viewing the scenes from where the Bunkers’ television would be, while the Bunkers’ armchairs face directly toward the camera—their television. Spiegel continues that television, “offered viewers a sense of imaginary transport, promising to carry them into the homes of familiar television neighbors, who lived in a new electronic landscape where the borders between fiction and reality were easily crossed.”⁹ Jerry Palmer describes the sitcom, writing, “the basic characters are the same in each episode; the relationships between them do not change from episode to episode, and therefore the situation is always essentially the same; the story always refers to some situation which, however farcically exaggerated, is a recognizable feature of the everyday social world of its audience.”¹⁰

The scholarly work I read while researching included works on sitcoms in general, works specific to the three sitcoms, and works on fandom and audiences. No scholar has researched the relationship between the audience and sitcoms while specifically looking at three shows that represent different eras. Nina C. Leibman’s *Living Room Lectures: The Fifties Family in Film and Television* was helpful in finding out about the introduction of the television into American life, and supports the idea that audience members were first seen as being similar. David Marc presents a history of the sitcom from its origins until the 1980s, but was most pertinent to my research when discussing *The Dick Van Dyke Show*.¹¹ He portrays the show as a transitional phase in television, a bridge between the suburban sitcoms of the 1950s, and the relevant sitcoms

⁷ Lynn Spiegel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 180.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁰ Jerry Palmer, *The Logic of the Absurd: On Film and Television Comedy*, (London: BFI Publishing, 1987), 170.

¹¹ David Marc, *Comic Visions: Television Comedy and American Culture*, (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

of the late 1960s and 1970s, arguing that it represents the New Frontier, as the Petries, resembling the Kennedys, are on their way up in the world—striving to be good, sophisticated, moderately progressive citizens. Aniko Bodroghkozy's *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion* focuses on the era of relevant programming aimed at young adults in the late 1960s and 1970s.¹² The definitive histories of each television show—Bart Andrew's *The I Love Lucy Book*, Vince Waldron's *The Official Dick Van Dyke Show Book*, and Donna McCrohan's *Archie & Edith, Mike & Gloria: the Tumultuous History of All in the Family*, were published for fans to get behind-the-scenes knowledge, and also act as primary sources when talking about the shows' fan communities. The works I read related to fandom differ from my own study since many scholars of fandom and audiences have concentrated on fans of niche markets, such as *Star Trek*. In contrast, I have chosen three CBS shows that premiered at a time in which CBS was just one of three major networks, thereby making the shows easily accessible to Americans, and almost impossible to avoid, making it possible to compare the three sitcoms to what was happening in the real world at the time.

My archival research has exhausted the available sources related to the audiences of these three sitcoms. At The Paley Center for Media, I watched video archival material of question-and-answer sessions between the shows' fans, and the shows' stars and creative teams. I looked at the trade magazines *Television Magazine* from 1952 to 1968; *Broadcasting, Telecasting* from 1951 to 1957; and *Advertising Age* from 1969 to 1971—all the issues that were available and relevant to my topic. Some of these issues contained audience studies, and I also read other audience studies published in books. I read newspaper articles about the audience, from the time of the shows' original airings. I also read recent newspaper articles about the shows' fans. I interviewed current fans of the shows including Lucy Studd, a volunteer at the Lucy-Desi Center; Gregg

¹² Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

McCullough, a member of the Lucy-Desi Center; Waldron, author of *The Official Dick Van Dyke Show* book, and administrator of a Facebook group dedicated to the show; and David Van Deusen, who wrote a newsletter for *Dick Van Dyke Show* fans for 20 years. I looked at websites, namely blogs and Facebook pages, to research the shows' current-day fandoms. The hearings of a subcommittee meeting on television and juvenile delinquency proved helpful in my discussion of *I Love Lucy*. I read the autobiographies of the casts and creative teams of these three sitcoms.

The end of this chapter will discuss the early relationship between television and its audience, and give a brief history of television audience studies, looking at how Americans perceived this new form of mass media—specifically the relationship between Americans and weekly sitcoms. The first chapter will discuss the audience of *I Love Lucy* during its original run, looking at the widespread popularity of the show and how the show's creation of the three-camera system and live studio audience affected the experience of the audience, in addition to how the audience related to the show. The second chapter will look at the same relationship for *The Dick Van Dyke Show* during its original run. This sophisticated show included smarter comedy and more progressive themes, and had a more selective following than *Lucy*. The third chapter will look at *All in the Family* as an example of the era of relevant sitcoms created with a specific young market in mind, discussing the fears of putting such controversial material on television, and the audience reaction. The conclusion will discuss present-day fandom of the three sitcoms, the memory of these three shows, and why they are remembered differently.

A Brief History of Audience Studies

The introduction of the television into American homes was a significant moment in the history of mass media. Many were skeptical that television was just a passing fad in the 1940s,

but as Ronald Primeau writes, “the postwar boom brought prosperity, Sputnik, the Cold War, and television as a way of life. It was not long before Milton Berle and ‘*I Love Lucy*’ were household words,” adding that by 1957, 39 million homes had at least one television.¹³

Specifically, the domestic sitcom genre created a unique dynamic between viewers and the television, as the audience invited the same characters into their homes every week. During *I Love Lucy*’s original run, not all viewers understood that they were watching fictional families. “I was introduced to someone as the producer of *I Love Lucy*,” Oppenheimer wrote. “After telling me how pleased she was to meet me and how much she enjoyed the show, this person said she had a question for me. ‘*I Love Lucy*’ is only a half hour a week,’ she observed. ‘What do you do during the rest of the week?’” Oppenheimer added, “They assumed that each week we just filmed whatever happened to be going on at the time in the Ricardo apartment.”¹⁴ Darrell Hamamoto writes that postwar sitcoms “were a soothingly entertaining balm for a nation aching from years of grappling with crises both foreign and domestic,” adding that, “the television situation comedies of the 1950s reflected corporate America’s push for a placidly idealized way of life presented to a fairly receptive audience unaccustomed to the new affluence.”¹⁵

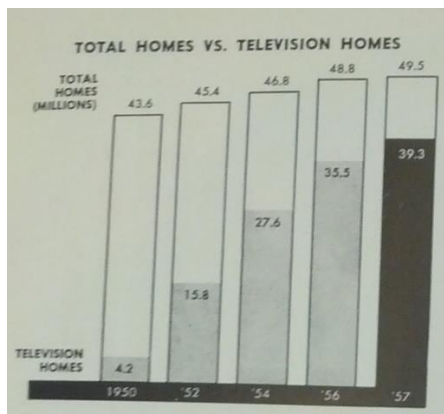
With the introduction of television came audience studies examining the relationship between the audience and medium. Audience studies were not new, as they existed for radio programs. Wil Brooker and Deborah Jermyn characterize World War I as a transitional moment that led to the rise of audience studies. “Early audience research sought to discern the ‘effects’ that the media had on its audiences,” they write, “based on an assumption that a quantifiable audience response would be identifiable and predictable given a certain media stimulus.”¹⁶

¹³ Ronald Primeau, *The Rhetoric of Television*, (New York: Longman, 1979), v.

¹⁴ Oppenheimer, *Laughs, Luck—and Lucy*, 179.

¹⁵ Darrell Y. Hamamoto, *Nervous Laughter: Television Situation Comedy and Liberal Democratic Ideology*, (New York: Praeger, 1989), 49.

¹⁶ Wil Brooker and Deborah Jermyn, *The Audience Studies Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 6.



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Year	TV Households (000)	% U.S. Total	% with Color	Sets Per Home	Average Daily Hours Tune-in
1950	3,880	9.0%	—	1.01	4:35
1955	30,700	64.5	Negligible	1.03	4:51
1960	47,750	87.1	0.7	1.13	5:06
1965	52,700	92.6	4.9	1.22	5:29
1970	59,550	95.2	39.3	1.41	5:56

Source: National Broadcasting Co. for set figures; A. C. Nielsen Co. for annual average tune-in. Tune-in for 1970 is a Television Bureau of Advertising estimate based on eight months' data. Compiled by TvB.

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Chart from June 1957

Chart from November 1970

Early audience studies included broad demographics of viewers, as researchers wanted to find out how the invention of the television affected Americans. A 1953 audience study traced the increase in the number of television sets and average hours of television watched from 1951 to 1953. The study included categories of husbands, wives, other male adults, other female adults, children 10-18, and children under 10 when listing people who owned a television and how many hours of television they watched.¹⁹

One 1955 article had the following statistics, showing television's impact on Americans:

For the first time, tv penetration at 'the head of the creek'—in the rural and small town homes—which comprise 40% of the American total—is over 50%, Oliver Treyz, president of the Tv Bureau of Advertising, told the Los Angeles Advertising Club last week. Since July, more rural and small town families have tv sets than do not, and these families use their sets 23% more during day hours than their big city counterparts, despite a marked increase in big city viewing as well, Mr. Treyz noted. 'For the first time, tv is now the dominant medium in the small towns and on the farms. ... This is because of new stations on the air in new markets...until 96% of all families are now in range of easily viewable tv signals,' Mr. Treyz reported. He disclosed that in the present 35 million tv homes, average viewing is four hours and 57 minutes daily.²⁰

¹⁷ "Television's New Dimensions," *Television Magazine*, June 1957, 62. This article also showed studies about viewing habits.

¹⁸ "Television Households and Sets Per Home," *Advertising Age*, November 2, 1970, 100.

¹⁹ "Table II," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, October 5, 1953, 89.;

However, even a September 1964 issue of *Television Magazine* included a chart with predictions of viewers' demographic data, but not for specific television shows. See: "Forecast, 64/65," *Television Magazine*, September 1964, 14.

²⁰ "Rural, Small Town Tv Now Over 50%--Treyz," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, July 18, 1955, 80.

“In its developmental years, TV was relatively unconcerned with actual ratings and more interested in habituating the American public to television consumption in general, offering an abundance of distinct and often controversial material,” Leibman writes. “During its highest period of growth and penetration (from 1954 to 1963), it maximized its newly won mass appeal by constructing the bulk of its programming for the family viewers it wished to woo.”²¹ A 1955 article with the subheading “For viewers as well as advertisers, the magazine concept is aimed at making television ‘everybody’s medium,’” read, “We at the networks must program as that we get not only the heavy viewers, who will look at almost anything, but also the light television viewers, who are not tempted by soap operas, who are not tempted by give-away programs, who do not laugh at pratfalls and low comedy.”²²

Category (# in groups)	# Men per set	# Women per set	# 13-18 per set	12 & under per set	Total viewers per set
Drama (20)	.85	1.15	.14	.40	2.53
Western (9)	.76	.89	.21	1.06	2.92
Musical variety (8)	.90	1.15	.09	.40	2.54
Children (17)	.46	.75	.19	1.21	2.60
Situation comedy (15)	.76	1.06	.15	.74	2.70
Mystery (19)	.88	1.05	.13	.46	2.52
Mystery (19)	.68	1.17	.12	.31	2.28
Quiz & aud. partic. (18)	.88	1.18	.16	.61	2.84
Comedy variety (18)	.88	1.18	.16	.61	2.84

Source: National Videodex, April

²³ Audience study, 1953.

A study published in November 1953 looked at viewers’ socio-economic classifications, and which types of programs reached the most men, women, children, and teenagers, finding that families with a television were larger than the average family.²⁴ A July 1956 article looked at the percentage of men, women, and children who watched a syndicated comedy at 6 to 7:30 p.m., 7:30-10:30 p.m., and after 10:30 p.m.²⁵ *Television Magazine* issued an annual data book which

²¹ Nina C. Leibman, *Living Room Lectures: The Fifties Family in Film and Television*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 85-86.

²² “A Broader Base for TV,” *Television Magazine*, June 1955, 42.

²³ “The Audience—A profile of TV owners, their habits and preferences,” *Television Magazine*, November 1953, 21.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

²⁵ “Syndicated Films—A Status Report: Who Watches What When? Patterns of audience composition based on study of 25 shows in 14 markets,” *Television Magazine*, July 1956, 112.

included viewer statistics. “Characters of television viewers as projected by Nielsen—showing findings on income, education, family size, occupation...and comparison to radio audience characteristics,” read an article from the 1952 data book.²⁶ The 1955 version showed a chart with geographic and family characteristics of the television audience, with sections divided by regions, city size, total family income, education of family of head, occupation of family head, family size, age of housewife, and presence of children.²⁷ This was repeated in the 1956 data book, without the family head’s occupation.²⁸ The 1958 data book looked at the region, county size, age of housewife, and family size.²⁹ This was repeated in the 1959 data book.³⁰

Researchers were interested in the overall impact of the new form of media on American daily life. A 1955 study conducted by a graduate student at Ohio State University found that housewives with the television on during the day mostly listened to the audio, like a radio.³¹ A 1956 study found similar results.³² Another 1956 article showed that people spent more time with television than with newspapers.³³ A 1962 article focused on Americans’ increasing amount of leisure time.³⁴ Politician Estes Kefauver’s 1954 Senate subcommittee hearings looked at the relationship between television and juvenile delinquency, as adults worried that television had a negative influence on children.³⁵ “Milton Berle’s *Texaco Star Theater* (which was famous for its inclusion of ‘off-color’ cabaret humor),” Spigel writes, “became so popular with children that

²⁶ “The Television Audience,” *Television Magazine Data Book*, 1952, 66.

²⁷ “The Television Audience: How the U.S. TV audience breaks down geographically and by family characteristics,” *Television Magazine Data Book*, 1955, 25.

²⁸ “The Television Audience: A breakdown of the U.S. TV audience by regions and family characteristics,” *Television Magazine Data Book*, 1956, 218.

²⁹ “The Television Audience,” *Television Magazine Data Book*, 1958, 79.

³⁰ “The Television Audience: A Breakdown of the United States television audience by territories, county sizes and family characteristics,” *Television Magazine Data Book*, 1959, 87.

³¹ “Is That Video Picture Being Wasted?” *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, August 22, 1955, 35.

³² “Do They Watch in the Daytime?” *Television Magazine*, February 1956, 32-35, 76.

³³ Leon Arons, “They Spend More Time With TV,” *Television Magazine*, June 1956, 74-75, 77, 95.

³⁴ Morris J. Gelman, “Short End of the Boom,” *Television Magazine*, May 1962, 45-49, 73.

³⁵ Lynn Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 194.

Berle adopted the persona of Uncle Miltie, pandering to parents by telling his juvenile audience to obey their elders and go straight to bed when the program ended.”³⁶

WHAT DO THEY DO WHEN THE SET IS ON?
P&G Agency Study, 1955

	% group
Housewife "away from set" when set is on during daytime	48%
Housewife sitting before set, doing something else in addition to viewing during daytime	27
Housewife viewing and doing nothing else, daytime	25
Housewife viewing and doing nothing else, nighttime	28

P&G's interpretation: There is no significant difference between the daytime and nighttime attention levels of the housewife.

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Audience study from February 1956

In time, it became more profitable to target young adult viewers—the audience sector most likely to buy products.³⁸ So, audience studies became more specific. Leo Bogart published a study of viewing habits in 1956, and correctly predicted in the book’s 1972 rerelease that television would continue to move away from looking at the audience as a homogenous group. “But because television aims its programming directly at the modal points in the society, at the middle-aged, middle-income, average American with an IQ of exactly 100, it remains, as was originally described in the first edition of this book, a force for homogeneity,” Bogart wrote. “The changes that seem in store for television in the decades to come are bound to reduce this homogenous effect, for they inevitably suggest that viewing will become a steadily more individual affairs, with a greatly expanded range of choice.”³⁹ Leibman writes that the trend of

³⁶ Ibid, 203.

³⁷ “Do They Watch in the Daytime?” 32-35, 76.

³⁸ “How TV Gets Bigger Audience At Less Cost Than Newspapers,” *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, November 19, 1956, 54.

³⁹ Leo Bogart, *The Age of Television: A Study of Viewing Habits and the Impact of Television on American Life* [1956], (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1972), xxxiii.

steering away from a mass audience started in the 1960s when, “given the increasing costs of advertising, sponsors began to seek proof that they were reaching their most probable consumers, and pushed the networks toward more defined audience ratings. Because television programming was produced solely to encourage viewers to watch commercials and buy sponsors’ products, the networks complied.”⁴⁰ ABC, the least popular of the three networks, conducted demographic studies to find out which viewers to attract—which viewers would buy products advertised on the network. NBC and CBS followed with similar studies to find information about viewers.⁴¹ “The push toward refined statistics after 1962 fostered another change in television’s program composition, toward specific consumers within the family,” Leibman writes. “It was now understood that the family no longer sat down together to watch television, but consumed it individually. Remarkably—and probably not coincidentally—television’s fictional families mirrored the demographic specifics. No longer depicted as an amorphous nuclear enclave, TV families were splintered and resolidified into a hodgepodge of witches, Martians, widowers, widows, combined families, adoptive families, and extended families.”⁴²

Gary A. Steiner’s 1963 study, *The People Look at Television: A Study of Audience Attitudes*, sponsored by CBS, looked at commercial television’s effect on American society. “The first comprehensive—often surprising—study of how the American viewer actually feels about TV and the uses he makes of it,” read an advertisement for the book.⁴³ The study was conducted two years after Federal Communications Commission Chairman Newton Minow’s speech in which he famously referred to television content as a “vast wasteland,” complaining that the television industry was not providing content for the public good.⁴⁴ However, Steiner

⁴⁰ Leibman, *Living Room Lectures*, 85.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴³ Advertisement for *The People Look at Television*, *Television Magazine*, April 1963.

⁴⁴ Hamamoto, *Nervous Laughter*, 51.

saw television as a form of mass media whose content had to appeal to people of all classes and ages. Hamamoto writes that Steiner “rejected the distinction made by the FCC between ‘public service’ and ‘entertainment’ programming. He reasoned that if the widest audience sought entertainment fare, then this would be justification enough for the networks to provide it. Steiner implied that the differences in the levels of viewers’ cultural attainment (class position) were resolved through what he referred to as ‘cultural democracy.’”⁴⁵ An article about the study read, “The American television audience, until now, has been known better in its abundant collectiveness than in its individual singleness. Whereas the large dimension is important, and measures of it essential to informed television management, the industry has long wanted an in-depth measure of its customer. It has one now.”⁴⁶ Steiner’s research also showed *I Love Lucy*’s popularity a decade after its premiere. He asked participants “If you personally were in charge of a leading television network, what changes would you like to make?” to which someone answered “I’d put *I Love Lucy* on for four hours a day for my family.”⁴⁷

Television trade magazines focused on the changing relationship between television and viewers. These journals included profiles of rating systems, such as the Nielsen ratings.⁴⁸ *Television Magazine* credited Steiner and feedback ballots for the more personal relationship between the audience and television.⁴⁹ “The Public will be heard, and nobody knows it better than the TV networks,” read a 1961 article.⁵⁰ One study looked at the attitude of the public toward four major media, including television, and found inconsistencies between the public’s

⁴⁵ Ibid, 51.

⁴⁶ “What the People Say,” *Television Magazine*, March 1963, 47.

⁴⁷ Gary A. Steiner, *The People Look at Television: A Study of Audience Attitudes*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963,) 237-238.

⁴⁸ See: Abby Rand, “How to Test Television: An Exclusive *Television Magazine* Report For Advertisers on Testing Media, Programs, Commercials and TV Viewing,” *Television Magazine*, August 1952, 16-19;

“Focus on: A.C. Nielsen Co.,” *Television Magazine*, September 1964, 19-20.;

“The Rating Services,” *Television Magazine Data Book*, 1953, 90;

“Who’s Who in TV Ratings: Today’s Audience Scorecard,” *Advertising Age*, November 2, 1970, 58-59. This article gives a summary of A.C. Nielsen Co, Trendex Inc., Home Testing Institute, Local Ratings, American Research Bureau, Pulse Inc., C.E. Hooper Inc., and Mediastat.

⁴⁹ Donald West, “A New Dialogue Between TV and Its Audience,” *Television Magazine*, February 1964, 54-55, 93-94.

⁵⁰ “Letters... We Get Letters,” *Television Magazine*, September 1961, 56.

perception of television. “Up to five times as many respondents indicated television as appealing most to the lazy, the easily influenced and the ignorant person,” the article read, adding, “Yet between 10 and 80% of those who say television appeals to these types of people spend more time *themselves* with television than with any of the three other media.”⁵¹ *Television Magazine* interacted with readers, asking them in a 1964 issue to create the perfect television schedule.⁵² Articles also focused on advertising and the psychology of television viewers.⁵³

A 1971 article referenced a May 11 report from Chicago that showed the growing popularity of television since earlier studies of the 1950s. The report states:

Household tv usage for 1970 averaged six hours per household per day, according to ‘Nielsen Television ‘71’ compiled by Nielsen Television Index (NTI). On a monthly basis, tv households averaged more than six and one-half hours of tv usage per day during November, 1970, while during December, 1969, that figure was reported at more than six hours a day. Figures show that women, with 30 hours, viewed six hours more tv per week than men, based on November, 1970, measurements. According to 1969 figures, women watched 29 hours a week, while men totaled 22 hours per week. In NTI’s highest income bracket, \$15,000-plus, men averaged 20 viewing hours a week, while women in the same households registered 23 tv hours,” adding, “An estimated 60,100,000 households in the continental U.S. have tv sets, representing 96% of total U.S. households and a 1,600,000 increase over 1969’s tv household figure. Sunday evening was the most popular viewing night, followed by Monday night, according to the report, while Friday night attracted the fewest viewers. NTI figures show tv viewing reached a peak between 8 and 10p.m.”⁵⁴

By the 1970s, the television audience was perceived as being made up of different niche groups. “The few audience studies carried out in the 1970s indicate that viewers’ interpretations of television interact with the beliefs and conditions of their own lives, a conclusion that supports

⁵¹ “What is Television’s Image?” *Television Magazine*, June 1959, 47.

⁵² “You, Too, Can Be a Program Expert,” *Television Magazine*, October 1964, 9.

⁵³ See: Fred Kugel, “1954—The Year of Research,” *Television Magazine*, January 1954, 60.

⁵⁴ “TV viewing is still on the increase, Nielsen reports,” *Advertising Age*, May 24, 1971, 14.

a more complex view of audience response,” Ella Taylor writes. The next few chapters will reference the progression of audience studies in relation to the three specific sitcoms.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ For audience studies from the 1980s, see: Patrick Barwise and Andrew Ehrenberg, *Television and Its Audience*, (London: SAGE Publications), 1988; James T. Lull “Family Communication Patterns and the Social Uses of Television” *Communication Research*, 7 (1980): 319-334.; G.J. Goodhardt, A.S.C. Ehrenberg, and M.A. Collins, *The Television Audience: Patterns of Viewing*, (Brookfield: Gower, 1987).

Chapter 1: *I Love Lucy*: Widespread Hysteria and the Uniform Audience

Somewhere in America, there is a college textbook that has January 19, 1953 listed as “one of the great emotional events of 1953.”⁵⁶ This event had nothing to do with war, the death of a public figure, or a great moment in sports history. In fact, the event did not even happen in real life. Though, it kind of did. On that January evening, forty-four million Americans—on 68.8 percent of the country’s television sets—watched the fictional Lucy Ricardo give birth to Little Ricky on CBS between 9 and 9:30 P.M.—15 million more viewers than tuned in the following day to watch President Eisenhower’s inauguration.⁵⁷ “As a week-in, week-out TV fare,” read a 1953 article in *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, “the type of production surrounding President Eisenhower’s inauguration could never hope to compete with, say, *I Love Lucy*.”⁵⁸

That morning, the real Lucille Ball gave birth to her son, Desiderio Alberto Arnaz IV—Desi Arnaz, Jr. The news of that birth was broadcasted over every news service. It interrupted television shows, was announced in schools, and, only seven minutes after the birth occurred, was announced on the radio in Japan.⁵⁹ “There were seven thousand letters and a thousand telegrams waiting for me,” Ball recounted of the hysteria after her son’s birth. “Counting the telegrams, letters, cards, phone calls, baby booties, and other gifts, one million people sent some expression of their good wishes for the new baby.”⁶⁰ The dual births—one of reality and one of fiction—cemented the significance of Lucy—both the character and the actress—and her relationship to the nation’s audience. “Work of television production in its first two decades,” P. David Marshall writes, “(from the late 1940s to the late 1960s) was the maintenance of a large mass audience, so that the same programs would be acceptable to all members of the family.

⁵⁶ Lucille Ball with Betty Hannah Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, (New York: Berkley Boulevard Books, 1996), 183.

⁵⁷ Erik Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 148.

⁵⁸ “In Review: The Inauguration,” *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, January 26, 1953, 14.

⁵⁹ Oppenheimer, *Laughs, Luck—and Lucy*, 3.

⁶⁰ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 184.

Although different time periods were targeted by producers and advertisers for different audiences (e.g., daytime for women with the correlative programs, the soap opera; Saturday morning for children; Saturday afternoon for men and sports), there was a relative lack of audience differentiation beyond this level,” adding, “The television celebrity embodies the characteristics of familiarity and mass acceptability.”⁶¹ The same 1953 article in *Broadcasting, Telecasting* argued that America’s response placed Ball in a category of unprecedented celebrity:

With complete benefit of clergy, including representatives of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish faiths who approved his introduction into this leading TV series, Ricky Ricardo Jr. has arrived.

Similarly blessed events have occurred among idols of the public without arousing half the interest that the approach and arrival of this one did. It is conclusive testimony to the popularity of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz or Lucy and Ricky Ricardo—the names and characters apparently are interchangeable—that 44 million people joined Mr. Arnaz-Ricardo in the fathers’ waiting room.

I Love Lucy is now established as the standard marital farce on TV. Its ingredients are as old as story-telling, its situations as old as the theatre. Why Lucy should become a Monday evening must for a vast proportion of the television audience remains one of those elusive conundrums of show business.⁶²

The frenzy was not for only that one episode. Telephone companies reported a “substantial reduction” in calls in that half-hour slot of *Lucy* on Monday nights while New York City streets had fewer taxis as drivers stopped into bars to watch each weekly episode. The Marshall Field department store of Chicago hung a sign on the front door that read “We love Lucy, too, so we’re closing on Monday nights.” Some doctors and dentists closed early on Mondays to prevent appointment cancellations by those who would rather watch the nationally

⁶¹ P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 119.

⁶² “*I Love Lucy*,” *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, January 26, 1953, 15.

adored comedy than get a cavity filled.⁶³ Executives perceived early American television audiences as one large mass of people, and the response to *I Love Lucy* supports this.

The show was popular among all ages, and even crossed language barriers.⁶⁴ A study by a Dr. Wattenberg, referenced in the 1955 hearings of the Senate subcommittee that investigated juvenile delinquency, found “that the favorite program of delinquents and nondelinquents was the same one—*I Love Lucy*.”⁶⁵ In Lynn, Massachusetts members of the PTA petitioned their local CBS station, demanding that *Lucy* air earlier in the evening so that children would not have to go to bed so late. A Santa Barbara Lions Club bought a television for their meeting room for their half-hour breaks on Monday nights. Michael Stern, who became friends with Ball after introducing himself to her as her “number one fan,” wrote that his grandfather’s lack of understanding English did not stop him from loving *Lucy*. “He would watch her shows with rapt interest, careful not to miss anything,” Stern wrote. “Even though he didn’t quite know what words were being spoken, he would always be doubled over with laughter, reeled in completely by *Lucy*’s facial expressions and physical movements. Our deep appreciation of *Lucy* was one of the things we had in common. Our love of *Lucy*’s galvanizing nature truly connected us.”⁶⁶

This chapter will look at the reasons for the record-breaking success of the series. First will be a discussion of how the technological innovations of the show—the three-camera set-up with a live audience, and the notion that a series could be filmed on a soundstage and saved for posterity—created a strong relationship between the audience and show. The chapter will then discuss how blending both realistic and fictional situations led to the series’ success. Following this is a discussion of 1950s consumer culture in relation to the series. A discussion of Ball’s Communist scare and her fan’s reaction will follow, as will a discussion of fan letters, audience

⁶³ Bart Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel: The Story of “I Love Lucy,”* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1976), 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Juvenile Delinquency (Television Programs)*, 6 and 7 April 1955, pp. 58.

⁶⁶ Michael Stern, *I Had a Ball: My Friendship with Lucille Ball*, (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2011), 29.

surveys, and fans interacting with celebrities in person. The social and political events of the 1950s, related to *I Love Lucy* that will be discussed include suburbanization, consumerism, conformity, and McCarythism. All of the sections of this chapter will argue that *I Love Lucy* represents a time in which the television audience of the 1950s was viewed as one mass of similar people, as the show had such a strong and widespread connection with the audience.

The Audience's Experience At A Live Taping

The decision to film the sitcom in front of a live audience was a first for the television industry, and led to unprecedented popularity. "I had insisted upon having a studio audience; otherwise, I knew, we'd never hit the right tempo," Ball wrote. "We did the show every Thursday night in front of four hundred people, a cross-section of America."⁶⁷ "On the set of *I Love Lucy*, starring Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz: The nation's Number 1 TV show for 1951, 1952 and 1953 is a pioneer of the technique of filming its program as a live show with audience," read a 1955 advertisement for the Mitchell Camera Corporation.⁶⁸ Arnaz transformed a film soundstage into a place suitable for an audience by adding water fountains, a sprinkler system, and microphones over the bleachers to record laughter.⁶⁹ He thought it was amusing when later shows like *All in the Family* emphasized the fact that they were taped in front of a live studio audience, presumably because *I Love Lucy* was the first to create this phenomenon.⁷⁰

Lucy also set the precedent for making the experience of attending a live-taping one of pure entertainment. An orchestra played before each episode's taping after which Arnaz warmed up the crowd by telling jokes and introducing the cast. "In she came with her red hair flying, while the orchestra played the *I Love Lucy* theme, and believe me, she is just as good as Hope or

⁶⁷ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 172.

⁶⁸ Advertisement for Mitchell Camera Corporation, *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, July 11, 1955, 57.

⁶⁹ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 173.

⁷⁰ Desi Arnaz, *A Book*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1976), 266.

Jolson or Chevalier about taking over an audience,” Arnaz recalled of Lucy greeting the crowd before the taping of the first episode. “She went over and kissed Bill and Vivian, came to me and said, ‘How ya doing, you gorgeous Cuban?’ and threw kisses to the audience. The whole atmosphere had a happy, carnival type of feeling.”⁷¹



The three-camera setup used to film I Love Lucy

A few particularly memorable moments of the audience’s reaction during the series’ run shows the audience’s investment in the characters. Ball recalled an episode in which Lucy and Ricky separate. When Ricky moves out, Lucy walks around her apartment “touching each piece of furniture wistfully.”⁷³ Ball wrote that because the audience knew of Ball and Arnaz’s real-life public separation and reconciliation, “people in the studio audience took out their handkerchiefs and started weeping. Then when Ricky and Lucy were reconciled a few minutes later, in what was supposed to be a hilarious scene, nobody laughed. They were too happy and relieved to see us together again.”⁷⁴ Early television audiences had trouble at times distinguishing fact from fiction—made more difficult by the fact that Ball and Arnaz were actually married.

⁷¹ Ibid, 227.

⁷² Leigh Allen, “Filming the ‘I Love Lucy’ Show,” *Lucy Fan*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.lucyfan.com/filmingthe.html>.

⁷³ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 178.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 178.

Another emotional scene, more memorable for fans, appears in the episode “Lucy is Enceinte.” Lucy learns she is pregnant, but can’t find the right time to tell Ricky before he has to leave for work. So, Lucy goes to Ricky’s nightclub to see him perform with his band. During the show, Ricky tells his audience that he was informed there is a couple expecting a baby. He then sings “Rock-a-Bye Baby,” and walks around the tables, asking the couples present whether they’re the people in question. Ricky gets to Lucy’s table and jokingly asks if she is pregnant, not expecting her to say yes. But Lucy nods her head. “Suddenly, they remembered their own real emotions when they had discovered at last that they were going to be parents, and both of them began crying,” Oppenheimer wrote. “It was one of the most moving things I’ve ever seen.”⁷⁵ However, at the taping’s end, director Bill Asher realized that Arnaz had sung incorrect lyrics because he was so emotional. Using the control room’s talk-back button, Asher told the audience that he had to redo the scene for the correct lyrics. Oppenheimer called the audience’s response “immediate and overwhelming,” as they cried along with Ball and Arnaz. The audience members got on their feet and refused a retake of the scene.⁷⁶ The creative team obeyed the audience and kept the emotional, imperfect version of the song in the episode.

⁷⁵ Oppenheimer, *Laughs, Luck—and Lucy*, 208.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*



Lucy tells Ricky that she is going to have a baby

The longest laugh of the series, which occurred during “Lucy Does the Tango,” shows how Ball used comedic skills to purposely and significantly engage with the audience. The episode takes place in the suburban Connecticut home the Ricardos move to later in the series. Lucy tries to hide the fact that the chickens she bought are not actually laying eggs, so she buys five-dozen eggs, and hides them in her shirt, just before Ricky asks her to help rehearse a tango. The sixty-five second laugh that occurred when Lucy and Ricky break the eggs during their dance was so long that it was cut in half during post-production. “Once the eggs cracked in her blouse, after Lucy and Desi’s big tango number, she kept milking the bit for laughs,” director Jay Sandrich said. “She would do one funny thing after another and then when the audience’s laughter started dying down, she’d do more.”⁷⁸ “She first looked at Ricky with a silly little smile on that pitiful-looking face, the big blue eyes dancing from Ricky to the audience and back to Ricky, as if claiming innocence,” Arnaz explained. “She then looked squirmishly at her bosom

⁷⁷ “Lucy is Enciente,” *Lucy Fan*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.lucyfan.com/ilovelucy50.html>.

⁷⁸ Andrews, *The “I Love Lucy” Book*, 194.

and daintily pulled her blouse away from it, looked back at Ricky with the same silly smile, shook her torso and her waist a little bit, letting the audience know the broken eggs were finding their way down her body.”⁷⁹ When the laughter started to wane, Lucy shook her leg and foot showing that the eggs had traveled down, making the audience roar once again.⁸⁰



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The longest laugh of I Love Lucy's run

“From the initial performance of *I Love Lucy* before the cameras, there had been magic in the air,” Oppenheimer wrote. “The audience had fallen in love at first sight, and they acted like giddy lovers, indeed. Once the spell was cast, laughing at the jokes wasn’t enough for them. They soon started laughing at the straight lines, and then at any line, as long as it came from this particular cast. More than once I’d seen ‘Good morning. How are you?’ knock them right into the aisles. It was the audience’s way of saying ‘I love you.’”⁸² Never before did a sitcom have a live audience able to give the actors and creative team an immediate reaction. This immediate

⁷⁹ Arnaz, *A Book*, 265-266.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 266.

⁸¹ Jackson Upperco, “The Ten Best I LOVE LUCY episodes of Season Six,” *Jackson Upperco*, July 23, 2013, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://jacksonupperco.com/2013/07/23/the-ten-best-i-love-lucy-episodes-of-season-six/>

⁸² Oppenheimer, *Laughs, Luck—and Lucy*, 4.

reaction created a new type of relationship between the studio audience and the actors, which translated to mass viewership at home.

Holding Up a Mirror to the Audience

After an early career in Hollywood films, Ball starred in the CBS radio show, *My Favorite Husband* (1948-1951), for which she had wanted Arnaz to play her husband. CBS executives said that since Arnaz was Cuban, he did not represent an average American husband, showing the importance of the national audience being able to relate to fictional characters. Ball agreed to star in the radio show with Richard Denning, but in 1950 she and Arnaz created Desilu Productions, Inc., still hoping to work as a team.⁸³ To see how an audience would react to Ball and Arnaz together, they created a vaudeville show, performing at army camps in California. Word spread and they were offered theater contracts, before CBS eventually agreed to finance a pilot for a television show starring the couple.⁸⁴ CBS Executive Milton Biow presented the *I Love Lucy* pilot to friends Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II who told him to not allow Arnaz to sing since it was difficult to understand him.⁸⁵ So, Biow added contract clauses that minimized Arnaz's vocals: "It is agreed," the contract read, "that in each program the major emphases shall be placed on the basic situations arising out of the fictional marriage of [Lucy and Ricky Ricardo], and that the orchestra will furnish only incidental or background music except where an occasional script shall require a vocal number by Desi Arnaz as part of the story line."⁸⁶ The series did ultimately include a few episodes featuring Ricky's heritage.

I Love Lucy creators and executives had the potential audience reaction in mind, wanting to make the show relatable to postwar families. The effort to make the Ricardos as down-to-earth

⁸³ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 156.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 167.

⁸⁵ Oppenheimer, *Laughs, Luck—and Lucy*, 172.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 173.

as possible created a certain connection between the audience and characters that helped create the national hysteria. Originally the show was not about Lucy and Ricky Ricardo, but about a celebrity couple. The creative team decided that the average American viewer would not be able to relate. Ricky's nightclub eventually became a place that was not particularly glamorous, and Ricky and Lucy became a couple just trying to make ends meet.⁸⁷ "Desi and I okayed each pillow, picture, pot, and pan that went into the Ricardos' apartment, to make sure it was authentically middle-income," Ball wrote.⁸⁸ The set's kitchen appliances actually worked as Arnaz wanted everything to be as realistic as possible.⁸⁹ The Ricardos' move to the suburbs from Manhattan showed that the writers of the show "capitalized on the living-in-suburbia syndrome that had become widespread in the 1950s," mirroring the viewing audience's suburbanization.⁹⁰



The Ricardos' simple Manhattan apartment

The show's success was also due to content created to be the "least-objectionable." This can be seen in the creative team's actions once Ball became pregnant. A pregnant actress had

⁸⁷ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 30.

⁸⁸ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 173.

⁸⁹ Arnaz, *A Book*, 160.

⁹⁰ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 138.

⁹¹ Jessica Vaillat, "I Love Lucy," *The Red List*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://theredlist.com/wiki-2-17-1483-1492-1500-view-sitcom-soap-profile-i-love-lucy.html>.

never played a pregnant woman on television before.⁹² To make sure that episodes surrounding the pregnancy would not be offensive, executives invited a rabbi, a minister, and a priest to watch a special performance of an episode about Lucy's pregnancy. The clergymen found nothing wrong with the episode.⁹³ "Television has been sold to the American public as an item for the living room, and, hence, the industry must keep in mind the essentially domestic nature of its audience," the director of the Radio and Television Communications, Rev. Timothy J. Flynn, Archdiocese of New York, said in a 1955 article, adding, "Television is the advertiser's key to the American home, and he must bear in mind that children, in large measure, determine the viewing habits of the family," commenting on how shows' content was meant for all ages.⁹⁴ However, censors barred the use of the word "pregnant," so the word "expecting" was used.⁹⁵ Though the reception of the pregnancy on television was largely positive, some viewers sent disapproving letters.⁹⁶ However, the decision created an even greater personal connection between some viewers and Lucy. One woman sent a letter explaining that she had planned on quitting her position as a volunteer for American GIs in Korea because she was pregnant and embarrassed to meet with the public. After watching the way the show treated Lucy's pregnancy, the woman wrote that she continued to volunteer.⁹⁷ The pregnancy also created a public relations campaign as the public became invested in finding out when the baby would arrive.

Much writing about *I Love Lucy*'s success lauds the show's portrayal of reality. However, it is difficult to view *Lucy* as a realistic show since Lucy's character is a housewife who longs to be in show business and continually finds herself in ridiculous situations, whether it is wrapping chocolates on a quickly-moving conveyor belt in a candy factory, dressing up as Superman and

⁹² Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 65.

⁹³ Arnaz, *A Book*, 236.

⁹⁴ "How 'Realistic' Can TV Get?" *Television Magazine*, February 1955, 29, 68-69, 71.

⁹⁵ Oppenheimer, *Laughs, Luck—and Lucy*, 199.

⁹⁶ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 77.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 78.

standing on the windowsill, or accidentally getting drunk while filming a television commercial. Andrews writes that the show explored basic human emotions—emotions with which a family could relate. While this may be true, the show is largely remembered not for the scenes in which Lucy and Ricky act like an average American couple, but for the scenes in which there is physical comedy during an unusual circumstance, usually when Lucy wants to escape the conformity of the era. A 1952 *Washington Post* article commented on the mundane domestic situations gone awry. “A staggering number were waiting gleefully for the return of a program which they had catapulted into number one audience-popularity spot last year,” reporter Sonia Stein wrote.”⁹⁸ Stein specifically wrote about the episode in which Ricky cooks rice, but does not know how much to add to the pot. “A pound a person seemed about right to Desi—an estimate which must have sent every housewife in the audience into hysterics,” Stein wrote, “knowing as she does that a pound of raw rice swells to a sizable cooked amount.”⁹⁹ The situation takes a mundane task and made it physically humorous, as Ricky returns to the kitchen to find rice making its way into every corner of the room. “The captivating thing about Lucy and Ricky is the fact that they hold a mirror up to every married couple in America,” television writer Jack Sher and his wife, Madeline, wrote. “Not a regular mirror that reflect the truth, nor a magic mirror that portrays fantasy. But a Coney Island kind of mirror that distorts, exaggerates, and makes vastly amusing every little incident, foible, and idiosyncrasy of married life.”¹⁰⁰ The creative team had the audience in mind when creating zany situations. Arnaz stressed that he did not believe in mild comedy—he did not want the audience to just smile, but rather laugh out loud.¹⁰¹ “We always had in mind the guy who has worked eight or ten hours a day driving a truck or a taxi, or putting down bricks and mortar, or fixing faucets, or driving nails, or sitting at a

⁹⁸ Sonia Stein, “Desi and Lucy Back in Tested Comedy,” *The Washington Post*, September 22, 1952, p. 23, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 7.

¹⁰¹ Arnaz, *A Book*, 259.

desk, or whatever his job is,” Arnaz wrote. “When he gets home at night, kicks off his shoes, puts his feet up on a chair, opens a cold can of beer and, by turning his television set on, has a half-hour of just laughs and relaxation, I’m all for it.”¹⁰² The success of *I Love Lucy* rested on its ability to hold up a mirror to the American audience through domestic scenes, but to also create unrealistic situations that made Lucy Ricardo unconventional, memorable, and lovable.



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“Job Switching”

“Lucy and Superman”

“Vitameatavegamin”

1950s Consumerism and *I Love Lucy*

“As he walked into his house, his wife shouted, ‘Don’t track mud on my *I Love Lucy* rug!’ As he started to sink into a chair, she added, ‘Don’t mess up my *I Love Lucy* chair!’ He finally shoots her, and she moans, ‘You shot a bullet through my *I Love Lucy* blouse!’” Lucille Ball recalled of a Red Skelton skit commentating on the consumer culture of the postwar United States, but specifically of *Lucy* fans.¹⁰⁶ The 1950s consumer culture, combined with the fanatic

¹⁰² Ibid, 267.

¹⁰³ “I Love Lucy Poster Gallery for Lucille Ball,” *Lucille Ball: We Love Lucy*, December 4, 2013, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://lucille-ball.info/love-lucy-poster-gallery/>.

¹⁰⁴ “LUCILE BALL,” *Ebay*, March 13, 2015, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.ebay.com/itm/160944387875>.

¹⁰⁵ “I Love Lucy: ‘Lucy Does a TV Commercial,’” *Archive of American Television*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.emmytvlegends.org/interviews/shows/i-love-lucy-lucy-does-a-tv-commercial>

¹⁰⁶ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 185.

following of the sitcom, created products that enabled Americans to watch *I Love Lucy* easily and often, in addition to *Lucy* merchandise in the forms of house furnishings and apparel.

The postwar era saw a focus on advertisements directed toward women, the consumers, who spent their days keeping home in the suburbs, just like Lucy did when the Ricardos moved to Connecticut, showing the conformity associated with the 1950s.¹⁰⁷ “Consumerism not only informed buyers what to purchase; it told Americans what to dream,” Rochelle Gatlin writes. “As an ideology, consumerism mobilised individual desire or discontent into material aspirations rather than political or ‘class’ thinking.”¹⁰⁸ Early 1950s advertisements for toasters “showed them in use in the living room, in front of the TV set: the lady of the house could prepare a family snack without running into the kitchen and missing the better part of *I Love Lucy*.”¹⁰⁹

Families sat in front of their new television sets while eating TV dinners so that they would not miss an episode, but also bought products specific to *I Love Lucy*. Albums featuring Arnaz’s music from the show, including “There’s a Brand New Baby at Our House” and the theme song, released by Columbia in 1953, were top-sellers on the Hit Parade.¹¹⁰ *Lucy’s Notebook*, a book introduced by sponsor Philip Morris, taught readers to cook and plan a party.¹¹¹ There were also baby items such as an *I Love Lucy* “hobby horse, a toy baby carriage, toy kiddie baths, training chairs, insulated diaper bags, mattresses, and a complete set of bedroom furniture,” in addition to living room and bedroom furniture, and floors made of *I Love Lucy* linoleum.¹¹² One furniture manufacturer sold one million *I Love Lucy* bedroom sets in a ninety-day period, and over a thirty-day period in late 1952, fans bought 32,000 *Lucy* aprons and

¹⁰⁷ William H. Young with Nancy K. Young, *The 1950s*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004).

¹⁰⁸ Rochelle Gatlin, *American Women Since 1945*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1987), 54.

¹⁰⁹ Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 266.

¹¹⁰ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 11.

¹¹¹ Andrews, *The “I Love Lucy” Book*, 110-111.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 111.

85,000 *Lucy* dolls.¹¹³ Andrews lists various products for the avid fan, including clothing, jewelry, desk and chair sets, “3D picture magazines with Polaroid eyeglasses, nursery furniture (after Little Ricky was born), dressing gowns, toys, games.”¹¹⁴ There were also *Lucy* cigarette lighters and cufflinks featuring Ricky and Lucy.¹¹⁵ An architect even designed a house based on the show, which claimed to have every aspect of the Ricardo’s home excluding a toilet (just like on the show).¹¹⁶ Between 1954 and 1962, thirty-five *I Love Lucy* comic books were introduced, as were coloring books. Lucy appeared in the King Features Syndicate comic strip from December 8, 1952 to May 30, 1955, featured in 132 newspapers nationwide.¹¹⁷ The Dramatic Publishing Company of Chicago sold one-act plays based on episodes of the sitcom while in January 1955 the four stars of the sitcoms performed in a musical version of the show in Las Vegas.¹¹⁸

The births of Little Ricky and Desi Arnaz, Jr. created another consumer craze that named Ball’s son “Lucy’s \$50,000,000 Baby,” as it was believed that earnings from tie-in commitments of the birth would exceed that number.¹¹⁹ The first issue of *TV Guide*, from April 1953, features Desi Arnaz, Jr. on the cover and is considered the most valuable issue ever published.¹²⁰ However, all products were created about Little Ricky, and not Desi Arnaz, Jr., since Ball wanted to protect her son from media coverage.¹²¹ A baby food company offered Ball \$50,000 to use Desi Arnaz, Jr.’s name on their product, but she refused, even though it was the company whose food her son actually ate.¹²² Within two months of the character’s birth, a Ricky, Jr. doll was created.¹²³ More than 85,000 units of a 14-inch, stuffed vinyl Ricky, Jr. doll were sold over a

¹¹³ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 10.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Andrews, *The “I Love Lucy” Book*, 113.

¹¹⁶ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 11.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

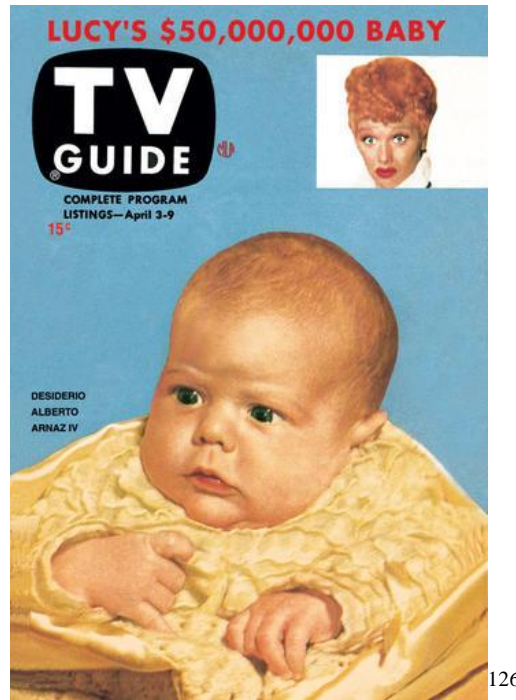
¹²⁰ Andrews, *The “I Love Lucy” Book*, 113.

¹²¹ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 80.

¹²² Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 185.

¹²³ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 80.

thirty-day period in 1953.¹²⁴ Though the conclusion of this thesis will discuss fan practices of *I Love Lucy* in the years following its original airing, it is important to note that Andrew's books about the show are also fan items. "A fan-cult item in its exaggeration of detail," Primeau writes of *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, "but it is also a beginning in the kind of rigorous study required to understand the impact of television serials on our thinking."¹²⁵



April 3, 1953 TV Guide with Desi Arnaz, Jr.

The Redhead's Red Scare and Fan Loyalty

"The top television comedienne has been confronted with her membership in the Communist party," Walter Winchell announced toward the end of his September 11, 1953 radio program.¹²⁷ This was the beginning of a scandal that saw Ball on a list of suspected Communists,

¹²⁴ Ibid, 112.

¹²⁵ Primeau, *The Rhetoric of Television*, 171.

¹²⁶ Michael Logan, "TV Guide Magazine's 60th Anniversary: How Desi Arnaz Jr. Became Our First Cover Star, *TV Guide*, April 3, 2013, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.tvguide.com/news/tv-guide-magazine-60-arnaz-1063463/>.

¹²⁷ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 90.

but an event that proved the loyalty of her fans. Though Ball was ultimately cleared of her link to the party for which she signed up 17 years prior in order to appease her grandfather, she and Arnaz were still concerned that *I Love Lucy*'s studio audience that night would boo her off the stage. So, Arnaz organized a press conference at 6 p.m. at the Statler Hotel, which included an Associated Press reporter with whom he was friends. "Arnaz had to know that Lucille had been publicly cleared before he went out to face the studio audience," Andrews writes, showing that the audience's feelings toward the actors, especially during a live taping, were invaluable.¹²⁸

At that night's taping, instead of Arnaz's usual upbeat audience warm-up, he wanted to make sure that the audience knew the truth about Ball and the red scare. While facing the audience of about 300 people, Arnaz announced:

Lucy has never been a Communist, not now and never will be. I was kicked out of Cuba because of communism. We both despise the Communists and everything they stand for. Lucille is one hundred percent an American. She is as American as Barney Baruch and Ike Eisenhower. Last November we both voted for Ike. Tomorrow morning the complete transcript of Lucille's testimony will be released to the papers and you can read it for yourself. Then you will know this is all a pack of lies. Please, ladies and gentlemen, don't believe every piece of bunk you've read in today's papers! And now I want you to meet my wife, my favorite redhead. In fact, that's the only thing red about her and even that's not legitimate.¹²⁹

Arnaz's speech was interrupted by audience members standing and cheering. One person even shouted, "We're with you, boy!" to which Desi replied with a thank you.¹³⁰ After that show's taping, the cast took their bows and Ball told the audience, "Good night, God bless you for being so kind—and thank you," while the audience gave her a standing ovation.¹³¹ Arnaz recalled the scene, noting that Frawley and Vance were crying, the orchestra was playing the

¹²⁸ Ibid, 95.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 96.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 96.

¹³¹ Ibid, 97.

theme song, and “the cameramen, the electricians, the whole crew were all shouting, applauding, crying, laughing.”¹³²

“Everybody Still Loves Lucy,” read the headline of the *Los Angeles Times* the following morning.¹³³ Of the 4,000 letters that Ball received after the incident, only two were critical.¹³⁴ She was named B’nai B’rith’s “Woman of the Year,” on November 25, and she and the show’s cast were soon invited to the White House.¹³⁵ The first episode of the third season, aired on October 5, 1953, received the same high ratings of previous seasons.¹³⁶ Oppenheimer echoed this positivity in an interview with *The Washington Post* from December 13, 1953. When asked about the effect of the red scare, Oppenheimer replied, “No, I don’t think it has any effect,” adding, “We were worried about it at the time, but now can’t notice any reaction. The number of crank letters we received are [sic] infinitesimal compared to how many we get commending Lucille.”¹³⁷ Jack Gould of the *New York Times* expressed similar sentiments. “For once the accusation and rebuttal,” Gould wrote, “became known simultaneously and the public had an opportunity to judge and act for itself. Did millions of viewers as one man swear to forgo Philip Morris cigarettes because seventeen years ago Miss Ball registered as a Communist voter? To the contrary, they deluged her with wires of support.”¹³⁸ In *Variety*, television executive producer Harry Ackerman wrote, “People seem to feel this thing is silly, not serious, and they all love Lucy” while Ed Sullivan emphasized the relationship between *I Love Lucy* viewers and the actress in his column: “It’s a singularly fortunate thing for Lucille Ball that she’s been a weekly visitor to millions of American living rooms. In those Monday night visits, people have come to

¹³² Arnaz, *A Book*, 254.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 257.

¹³⁴ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 192.

¹³⁵ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 98.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 98.

¹³⁷ Bob Thomas, “They Find Fans Still ‘Love Lucy,’” *The Washington Post*, December 13, 1953, p. L13, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

¹³⁸ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 192-193.

know her well. TV cameras being as revealing as they are, so the jury of Public Opinion is an informed jury as it renders its verdict on a silly thing she did seventeen years ago.”¹³⁹

“*I Love Lucy*, *I Like Ike*, *Drop Dead*”: Fan Letters, Audience surveys, and Celebrity Sightings

Millions of Americans invited the show’s cast into their homes on Monday nights, but they also interacted with the cast members in real life by writing letters, attending events celebrating the actors, and meeting in person. Sociologists Donald Horton and Richard Wohl studied the effects of television and the “illusion of intimacy” in which only the spectator learns about the celebrity—not vice versa.¹⁴⁰ In order to do this, “certain television fans, in particular, engage in another set of activities that are intended to bring them into direct contact with one or more of the actors who play characters in their favorite shows.”¹⁴¹

Fans sent letters to the actors of *I Love Lucy*. After Ball suffered a miscarriage in early 1950, she received 2,867 encouraging letters from fans, who knew Ball from *My Favorite Husband*. “I thanked everyone personally,” Ball recalled, “although it took me five months to do it.”¹⁴² She and Arnaz received about 10,000 monthly fan letters, in addition to the 500 gifts they received after their son’s birth.¹⁴³ Some of these letters were unusual: “a woman who wanted to sell them her home to finance a major operation; a man who wanted them to adopt his dog’s puppies; a mother whose son invented a clothespin for them to manufacture; a maid with stage experience who wanted to be an actress; and several strangers seeking financial assistance. ‘To get to this point,’ one such person wrote, ‘could you lend me \$10,000 and write it off your taxes?’”¹⁴⁴ One man wrote to Arnaz, “‘Dear Ricky, I want you to know I thought my wife was a

¹³⁹ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 97.

¹⁴⁰ Kerry Ferris and Scott Harris, *Stargazing: Celebrity, Fame, and Social Interaction*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 12.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁴² Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 24.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

real nut and was about to divorce her. But after looking at your shows, she began to look pretty normal. Thank you for saving our marriage.”¹⁴⁵ In 1952, Adlai Stevenson received critical mail from *Lucy* fans after his speech preempted a regularly scheduled *Lucy* episode. Letters to Stevenson included messages such as “I love Lucy, I like Ike, drop dead.”¹⁴⁶ And as expected, fans sent in letters expressing their sadness when the series ended.¹⁴⁷

Trade magazines polled readers to find out which shows viewers most watched. A 1957 poll asked parents for which programs their children were allowed to stay up late. *I Love Lucy* was mentioned the most.¹⁴⁸ A 1955 article read, “Can you name a program that you really like, that you go out of your way to see? As expected when this query was tossed up, the results, to a great extent, paralleled the findings of the rating surveys. Jackie Gleason, *I Love Lucy*, *Dragnet*, and Groucho Marx all garnered many affirmative nods, indicating that their followers are far more than passive viewers who watch merely because ‘nothing else is on at the same time.’”¹⁴⁹ One respondent said about *I Love Lucy*, “She’s nuts enough to love. I like Desi, too.”¹⁵⁰ Another answered, “I’d rather miss my dinner than miss Lucy.”¹⁵¹ A 1955 issue asked readers “Can you name a program that you really like, that you go out of your way to see?” to which 39 viewers of 552 respondents answered with *I Love Lucy*—good for second place.¹⁵²

Interactions between the *I Love Lucy* actors and fans were especially significant, since the show was so popular. “We soon discovered that when you play a continuing character on television, even if they’ve only seen you on the screen once or twice, everyone on the street recognizes you instantly,” Ball explained of the differences between a movie star whose looks

¹⁴⁵ Arnaz, *A Book*, 267.

¹⁴⁶ Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty*, 210.

¹⁴⁷ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 137.

¹⁴⁸ John R. Thayer, “How Parents Rate TV Shows,” *Television Magazine*, November 1957, 105.

¹⁴⁹ “What Will Your Rating Be Next Year?” *Television Magazine*, April 1955, 45.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² “*Television Magazine*’s Continuing Study of the Audience: What Will Your Rating Be Next Year,” *Television Magazine*, February 1955, 44.

vary from film to film, and a television star. “One afternoon we went down to the Seventh Avenue garment district to talk to the manufacturer of *I Love Lucy* dresses,” Ball wrote. “It tickled me when a tousle-haired old woman threw open the window of her tenement apartment and called admiringly to us, ‘Say, Lucy, that guy of yours sure gives you hell!’”¹⁵³ In 1960, William Frawley said, “That Fred Mertz character on *I Love Lucy* has made me the hero of all husbands. Just last week, a fella came up to me on the street and said, ‘Mertz, I’ve gotta buy you a drink...the way you tell that Ethel off is beautiful!’”¹⁵⁴ Even the role of Little Ricky was cast because the young actor’s father was a fan of *I Love Lucy* who took his son “to the casting department at Motion Picture Center, not really expecting a job to materialize, but anxious to get a firsthand look at the lot where his favorite TV show, *I Love Lucy*, was made.”¹⁵⁵ Doris Singleton, an actress on the show, told of two fan interactions she had in Europe. Once in an Italian shoe store a woman greeted her as if they were close friends. In Paris, a man asked Singleton if she was from San Francisco because his wife was positive that she knew her. Singleton responded that she had been to the city a few times, but did not know anybody there, though the man insisted that his wife knew her. “Finally it dawned on me,” Singleton said, “so I told him to ask her if she ever watched *I Love Lucy*. He went off and, a few seconds later, came back grinning, ‘Of course,’ he said, ‘you’re Caroline Appleby!’”¹⁵⁶ This idea that sitcom viewers think they personally know television characters—but not behind-the-scene creative people, is seen in a humorous anecdote from Oppenheimer, who conceded that since fans act strangely around celebrities he was grateful to not be easily recognizable. “Only one time in my career was I ever accosted by an autograph seeker,” Oppenheimer wrote. “I had just come out of the studio gate when an eager-looking middle-aged woman, complete with camera and autograph

¹⁵³ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 194.

¹⁵⁴ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 36.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 133-134.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

book, rushed up to me, her book and pen at the ready. I was unaccustomed to being recognized on the street and was thinking to myself that it was actually rather flattering, when the woman finally spoke. ‘Excuse me,’ she said, ‘are you anybody?’”¹⁵⁷

Ball also dealt with other forms of fandom that showed the craze the sitcom had created. A woman in a Manhattan hotel lobby wanted Ball and Arnaz to baptize her baby. This trip to New York included parties all over the city—parties that mobs of Lucy fans attended in order to get a look at the couple.¹⁵⁸ When Ball and Arnaz made the movie *The Long, Long Trailer*, record-breaking crowds lined the street of Radio City hoping to catch a showing of the film.¹⁵⁹ In February 1956 Ball returned to her hometown of Jamestown with Arnaz where she was met by 25,000 people. “They shouted enthusiastically in the cold, driving rain: mothers with babies, women in sodden fur coats, young and old,” Ball wrote. “Desi was so touched that he left the limousine and rode on top of the fire truck in the parade. He took his hat off to wave and smile, arriving at the hotel drenched and shivering but with the whole city in the palm of his hand.”¹⁶⁰ When Ball married Gary Morton after her divorce from Arnaz, she was greeted by about 50 fans at the church. After the ceremony, there were a thousand people on the Fifth Avenue sidewalk. “They were smiling and calling out, ‘Good luck, Lucy,’ and ‘We’re with you, Lucy,’” Ball recalled. “It made us feel very, very good—starting our life together with so many good wishes.”¹⁶¹ Ball noted that it was important for her and fellow celebrities to understand why people were so interested in learning about them and said, ““The *I Love Lucy* show was love

¹⁵⁷ Oppenheimer, *Laughs, Luck—and Lucy*, 196.

¹⁵⁸ Andrews, *Lucy & Ricky & Fred & Ethel*, 102.

¹⁵⁹ Ball with Hoffman, *Love, Lucy*, 106.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 225.

personified,” she wrote. “It was little domestic spats and upsets happily concluded, an exaggeration of American life that came out all right.”¹⁶²

“For the first time in the history of television, a regularly scheduled TV program has been seen in 10 million American homes,” a 1952 press release from the American Research Bureau read.¹⁶³ The national hysteria that *Lucy* created had arguably not existed since the start of the *Amos ‘n’ Andy* radio show.¹⁶⁴ “Its contributions to television history are legendary,” Steven D. Stark writes. “First sitcom to be a hit. First show to be Number 1 three years in a row. First show to reach an audience of 10 million households. First major hit show to be produced in Hollywood. First show to use the innovative three-camera technique. First show to be filmed live before a studio audience.”¹⁶⁵ *I Love Lucy*’s success and widespread popularity occurred not only because it was a funny show, but because it appealed to the masses at a time when Americans were fixated on this relatively new piece of furniture called a television. The sitcom represents the moment of television when the audience was viewed as one mass entity.

Broadcasting, Telecasting included the number of homes and viewers that tuned into *I Love Lucy*, and the increasing number of cities in which the sitcom was broadcast throughout the series’ run. Over time, the percentage of television sets tuned into *I Love Lucy* decreased as more television shows were created, while the show reached more cities.

¹⁶² Ibid, 196.

¹⁶³ Arnaz, *A Book*, 231.

¹⁶⁴ For more information on the national hysteria surrounding the radio show *Amos ‘n’ Andy*, see: Melvin Patrick Ely, *The Adventures of Amos ‘n’ Andy: A Social History of an American Phenomenon*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001).; A 1953 advertisement for the television show *Amos ‘n’ Andy*, in *Broadcasting, Telecasting* read, “Broadcasting’s longest-running hit (today leading all other network shows in its radio version). During its run on the CBS Television Network, *The Amos ‘n’ Andy Show* gathered more than half the total viewing audience! Fifty-two half-hours, 13 of them never before shown on television.” Advertisement for *Amos ‘n’ Andy*, *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, July-September 1953.

¹⁶⁵ Steven D. Stark, *Glued to the Set: The 60 Television Shows and Events That Made Us Who We Are Today*, (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 26.

Selected Sampling of *I Love Lucy* Data from *Broadcasting, Telecasting*

Date	Percentage of Homes Reached	Number of Cities Reached
Nielsen, two week-period ending on April 12, 1952	68.2% ¹⁶⁶	
Nielsen, two-week period ending on May 23, 1953	64.4% ¹⁶⁷	
ARB listings for the week of January 6 to 12 of 1953	68.2% ¹⁶⁸	
Videodex ratings, March 1-7 of 1953	60.7% ¹⁶⁹	68 cities
Videodex ratings, October 1-7, 1953	55.8% ¹⁷⁰	70 cities

Over the 1950s, a smaller percentage of televisions tuned into *Lucy*, as people started to watch different shows depending on personal preference

Date	Percentage of Homes Reached	Number of Cities Reached
Videodex ratings, April 1-7, 1954	45.5% ¹⁷¹	126 cities
Videodex ratings, May 1-7, 1954	40.7% ¹⁷²	126 cities
Nielsen, two-week period ending on October 23, 1954	52% ¹⁷³	
Videodex ratings, June 25-July 1, 1955		139 cities ¹⁷⁴
Nielsen, two-week period ending on June 29, 1955	40.9% ¹⁷⁵	
Videodex ratings, April 1-7, 1957	33.0% ¹⁷⁶	156 cities
Nielsen, two-week period ending on April 6, 1957	44.3% ¹⁷⁷	

¹⁶⁶ "Weekly Television Summary," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, May 12, 1952, 76.

¹⁶⁷ "Ditto for 'Lucy' in Nielsen TV Ratings for May Period," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, June 22, 1953, 46.

¹⁶⁸ ARB Ratings, *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, February 16, 1953, 44.

¹⁶⁹ "Videodex Rates 'Lucy' As March 1-7 Favorite," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, April 6, 1953, 40.

¹⁷⁰ "'Lucy,' 'Godfrey & Friends' Dominate Videodex Ratings," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, November 16, 1953, 32.

¹⁷¹ "'Dragnet' and 'Lucy' Head Videodex, ARB," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, May 3, 1954, 40.

¹⁷² "'Dragnet' Tops Videodex Ratings for May 1-7 Week," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, June 7, 1954, 40.

¹⁷³ "Latest Ratings," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, November 29, 1954, 62.

¹⁷⁴ "Latest Ratings," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, August 8, 1955, 32.

¹⁷⁵ "Latest Ratings," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, July 25, 1955, 44.

¹⁷⁶ "Latest Ratings," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, May 6, 1957, 51.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

“Take the so-called ‘mass-mass audience’ concept,” read a May 1961 article. “The study shows that selective and individual viewing, as distinguished from family or group viewing, is far more extensive than the experts who made the study had ever suspected. This personalized viewing trend is so far advanced that Philip L. McHugh, Campbell-Ewald vice president and radio-TV director, who conceived the study, thinks it entirely safe to assume that within two, three or four years virtually no television program will be attracting the sort of ‘mass-mass audience’ that is relatively common now.”¹⁷⁸ Toward the end of Lucy’s run, in the late 1950s, a Bronx-born writer had an idea for a more realistic depiction of family and work life, which eventually led to a sophisticated sitcom that premiered in 1961, and showed the beginning of the sectoring of the audience.

¹⁷⁸ Rufus Crater, “The Restless Viewer,” *Television Magazine*, May 1961, 38.

Chapter 2: *The Dick Van Dyke Show*: Intelligent Comedy for the Sophisticated Audience

It was the summer of 1958 when Carl Reiner sat down at his typewriter in his Fire Island home. He had an idea for a new sitcom based on his life. There would be a comedy-writer who worked in the big city and lived in the Westchester suburb of New Rochelle. There would be a wife, a young son, and some colleagues. Since Reiner, a writer and actor, was using his life as inspiration, it made sense to picture himself in the starring role of the series.

However, by the time the show aired in 1961, the title had been changed from *Head of the Family* to *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and now starred the quintessential WASP, Dick Van Dyke, instead of the Jewish, Borscht Belt veteran Reiner. Instead of being filmed on a soundstage with one camera like its pilot, *The Dick Van Dyke Show* was now filmed like *I Love Lucy*, with three cameras and a 300-person audience. However, since the show had a humor more sophisticated than *Lucy*, it was not popular at first. In fact, the series was almost canceled. This sitcom represents a transition period from the 1950s sitcoms made for the masses, and the later 1960s and 1970s sitcoms created for even more specific demographic groups as television executives viewed the audience as a combination of niche markets.

This chapter will discuss the beginnings of a fragmented viewing audience. First will be a discussion of the show's sophistication, and how this differed from other shows on the air. The chapter will then discuss the Jewish influences of the show, and how this harkened back to old ethnic radio and television shows, while moving away from the white-bread suburban sitcoms of the 1950s. A discussion of how the series' treatment of race, and the relationship between Rob and Laura Petrie, showing its moderate progressiveness, will follow. The social and political events of the 1960s, related to *The Dick Van Dyke Show* that will be discussed include the

Kennedy administration and The New Frontier, urbanization, suburbanization, and progressive race relations. All of the sections of this chapter will argue that *The Dick Van Dyke Show* represents a time in which television, and American society, in the early 1960s, was starting to become more politically and socially progressive.



Opening credits to Head of the Family, 1960.

A Realistic Premise, Sophisticated Outcome

The Dick Van Dyke Show was a sophisticated sitcom, with sophisticated viewers. A 1965 audience study found that the show “ranked high in popularity among people of higher education, though they did not show up among the favorites of those with less schooling.”¹⁸⁰ The show was centered on a young couple in suburban New Rochelle—who happened to have a son. Unlike sitcoms of the 1950s, like *Father Knows Best* and *Leave it Beaver*, the child in *The Dick Van Dyke Show* was not a main character of the show. The show was able to focus on the adult characters because Ritchie, the Petries’ son, is often off-camera, playing on the family’s

¹⁷⁹ “Dick Van Dyke THE ORIGINAL PILOT FOR THE SHOW PT 1,” *Youtube*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LI22fkWOhH4>. (Original Pilot: *Head of the Family*, “Pilot,” Episode 1, Directed by Don Weis, Written by Carl Reiner, CBS, July 19, 1960.)

¹⁸⁰ Bogart, *The Age of Television*, 382.

suburban lawn or backyard with his friend, next-door-neighbor Freddie Helper. Marc argues that “the lack of emphasis on parenting problems in *The Dick Van Dyke Show* was another factor that helped create the penumbra of sophistication that still surrounds the series twenty-five years later.”¹⁸¹ Waldron says that Reiner did not intentionally create a sophisticated sitcom, but rather just responded to what he thought was lacking on television—a realistic portrayal of an American family.¹⁸² Sam Denoff and Bill Persky, two of the writers of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, were the subjects of a 1965 *Television Magazine* article. “Denoff & Persky will laugh their way through another year of *Dick Van Dyke*,” read the article. “Situation comedy brings this comment: ‘It’s an entity the audience knows... You’re dealing with basics in truth... You play with attitudes, with relationships, and make it funny.’”¹⁸³ Besides creating realistic situations, a large part of the show’s sophistication comes from the fact that the show is more timeless, compared to other sitcoms. “Carl never let us use any slang of the day,” Van Dyke said of Reiner, “refer to anything in the news or the newspaper—he never did anything that would date the show, and even the clothes are coming back in style.”¹⁸⁴ The three-camera setup also allowed for longer scenes, so characters were able to speak in a realistic way, instead of jumping to different angles and scenes as in a one-camera show.¹⁸⁵ Like Arnaz did for *I Love Lucy*, Reiner and Morey Amsterdam, who played the character of Buddy Sorrell, entertained the audience before the tapings of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*.¹⁸⁶ “If you’re in front of an audience and you’ve written a line and you don’t hear laughs, you’re much more responsible to an audience and to the

¹⁸¹ Marc, *Comic Visions*, 107.

¹⁸² Vince Waldron, interview with Mollie Galchus, February 27, 2015, phone interview.

¹⁸³ Deborah Haber, “The Television Writer,” *Television Magazine*, May 1965, 42.

¹⁸⁴ “Museum of Television & Radio: William S. Paley Television Festival 1999: A Salute to Carl Reiner,” 1999, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

¹⁸⁵ “A Salute to Carl Reiner,” 1999.

¹⁸⁶ Dick Van Dyke, *My Lucky Life in and Out of Show Business: A Memoir*, (New York: Crown Archetype, 2011), 86.

actor to make that line as good as you can,” Reiner said. In fact, the laughs recorded during the series’ tapings were used later for other sitcoms’ laugh tracks.¹⁸⁷

The sitcom’s early ratings show that the audience was not asking for an intelligent comedy. In fact, the alternating versions of the opening sequence—the one in which Rob trips over the ottoman, and the one in which he does not—came about as a way to attract a larger audience. “We wanted the audience to stay tuned from the very beginning,” Reiner said, “so we took two takes—one where he trips over and one where he doesn’t, so people would say, ‘Is he going to trip today?’ We were trying so hard to make sure that the audience stayed with us.”¹⁸⁸

The show was almost canceled until its timeslot changed and followed *The Beverly Hillbillies*—a show as far from Reiner’s creation as one could possibly get, yet one of the most popular television shows in history.¹⁸⁹ “Few pairings could have been more incompatible in style and intent,” Josh Ozersky writes, “and yet the vast audience garnered by the latter show built up exposure and familiarity enough among viewers to make the Van Dyke show a hit.”¹⁹⁰ Journalist Rufus Crater also referenced the show’s musical acts as a key to the show’s success: “Location also had benefited *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, immediately following the *Beverly Hillbillies*, but Van Dyke seemed to have additional advantages,” Crater wrote in a 1963 article. “Viewers saw his as a sort of ‘variety show within the framework of a situation comedy.’ Although its audience built slowly, it was given a good chance to “retain a stable audience and perhaps increase its appeal.”¹⁹¹ Van Dyke credits summer reruns that aired after the first season, writing that “the

¹⁸⁷ “A Salute to Carl Reiner,” 1999.

¹⁸⁸ “Museum of Broadcasting’s 5th Annual Television Festival in Los Angeles: The Dick Van Dyke Show,” 1988, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

¹⁸⁹ For more information on the popularity of *The Beverly Hillbillies*, see: Deborah Haber, “Television’s First Family,” *Television Magazine*, May 1963, 43-45, 93-95. This switch in the television schedule can be seen in a chart of the fall 1962 television lineup. See: “*Television Magazine*: Telecast 1962-1963,” *Television Magazine*, June 1962.

¹⁹⁰ Josh Ozersky, *Archie Bunker’s America: TV in an Era of Change, 1968-1978*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), 8.

¹⁹¹ Rufus Crater, “Says the Viewer...” *Television Magazine*, April 1963, 86.

audience found the show.”¹⁹² By 1965, *The Beverly Hillbillies* was on one half hour earlier, and so *Dick Van Dyke* was preceded by *Green Acres*—another unsophisticated show.¹⁹³ A broadcast researcher told *Television Magazine* that he believed *Dick Van Dyke* would still be able to attract viewers even though it no longer followed *The Beverly Hillbillies*. “*Dick Van Dyke* is strong enough to take this time period, even if its *Green Acres* lead-in turns up below estimate,” the article read, adding, “Van Dyke’s following is by now large and well established.”¹⁹⁴



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The sophisticated Petries...

...and the not-so-sophisticated Clampetts

When in 1963-1964 *Television Magazine* asked readers to send in the optimal schedule of television shows, choosing from all prime time television shows ever created from the beginning of the medium—a total of 1,092 shows—*The Dick Van Dyke Show* was one of the top 17 mentioned, appearing on at least 75% of the ballots, but *I Love Lucy* was not, even though *Lucy*’s

¹⁹² Van Dyke, *My Lucky Life*, 104.

¹⁹³ “Forecast 65-66,” *Television Magazine*, September 1965, Albert R. Kroeger, 28.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁹⁵ “Why *The Dick Van Dyke Show* was one of the ‘60s’ most sophisticated sitcoms, in 10 great episodes,” *A.V. Club*, September 12, 2012, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://theavc.tumblr.com/post/31416933491/why-the-dick-van-dyke-show-was-one-of-the-60s>.

¹⁹⁶ “Actress Donna Douglas Dies at 71,” *CBS News*, January 2, 2015, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/actress-donna-douglas-dies-at-81/>.

ratings were better. This supports the argument that *Dick Van Dyke* had a following of more educated viewers—viewers who would subscribe to a television trade journal.¹⁹⁷

Jewish Influences and the Significance of Recasting Rob Petrie

The casting change of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* indicates an audience's influence. Much of the scholarly work surrounding the show argues that replacing Reiner meant that the American television audience was not ready to watch a leading Jewish man on a weekly basis. However, this is not a strong argument as the show kept a Jewish flavor, taking place in the entertainment industry of New York City, and starring a Jewish character in a significant supporting role. Gerard Jones writes that the casting change altered “the show's flavor from matzoh to mayonnaise,” adding that “Van Dyke's Petrie was leaving behind the white bread Midwest and learning to speed up into the multiethnic, smart-ass, conniving urban world.”¹⁹⁸ *The Dick Van Dyke Show* was the start of a transition away from the suburban, entirely Anglo-Saxon 1950s sitcoms that had become popular with the downfall of ethnic television shows of the early 1950s. These early ethnic network shows were dominated by performers with ties to New York, specifically Jewish entertainers, at a time when most people in the country who owned a television lived in the northeast.¹⁹⁹ After World War II, American popular culture was filled with Jewish entertainers such as Milton Berle, Sid Caesar, Groucho Marx, Red Buttons, George Burns, Jack Benny, Phil Silvers, and George Jessel—all of whom had their own primetime network comedy series in the early 1950s. Comedians like Berle and Caesar included “Yiddishisms,” both verbal and physical, in their comedy. “Though it baffles the imagination,” Marc notes, “the ratings coolly substantiate an image of a lone TV antenna standing against the

¹⁹⁷ “Readers' Choices: The Top 359 of TV's 18 Seasons,” *Television Magazine*, February 1964, 38.

¹⁹⁸ Gerard Jones, *Honey, I'm Home!: Sitcom, Selling the American Dream*, (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1992), 143.

¹⁹⁹ Joshua B. Freeman, *Working Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II*, (New York: The New Press, 2000), 174.

stark Nebraska prairie pulling down a snowy black-and-white image of Sid Caesar performing in a spoof of Japanese art films, written by Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks, which included characters with names such as Gantze Mishpuckeh, Gehackte Leber, and Shmateh (in Yiddish, respectively, ‘the whole big family,’ ‘chopped liver,’ and ‘rag’).”²⁰⁰

Jewish culture was very much a part of the mainstream entertainment industry up until the era of suburbanization in the 1950s, when more families across the country purchased televisions—not just the sophisticates of the northeast. “As television grew into a truly national medium,” Freeman writes, “the urban, ethnic sensibility Berle embodied became less acceptable to audiences and sponsors.”²⁰¹ Berle toned down his routines; sitcoms centered in New York left the city. “By the end of the 1950s, all the ‘normal’ families had moved to the suburbs,” Marc writes.²⁰² The city became a place for bachelors or working girls. By 1957, “working-class New Yorkers, once seen in *The Goldbergs*, *The Life Of Reilly* (about a Brooklyn family resettled in Los Angeles), *Amos ‘n’ Andy*, *Hey Jeannie*, and *The Honeymooners*, had disappeared from TV-land” while the shows of comedians Jackie Gleason, Sid Caesar, and Milton Berle were canceled. While these television characters were leaving New York, so was the television industry. This change on television mirrored what was happening in the country during this period, as the suburban population of the United States grew from 36 to 74 million between 1950 and 1970.²⁰³ “In 1971 a suburban rabbi,” Kenneth Jackson writes, “confessed that when he was growing up in Brooklyn, the posh Five Towns area of Long Island, even more than Israel,

²⁰⁰ Marc, *Comic Visions*, 43.

²⁰¹ Freeman, *Working Class New York*, 175.

²⁰² Marc, *Comic Visions*, 81.

²⁰³ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 283.

represented ‘the promised land.’”²⁰⁴ Jackson refers to a “national distrust of urban life”—an important factor in the mass suburbanization of the postwar era.²⁰⁵

The Goldbergs (1929-1946 on radio, 1949-1956 on television) featured an explicitly Jewish family, and like *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, showed a contradiction between the acceptability of portraying Jews on television. “Though they had lived on Tremont Avenue in the Bronx for twenty years on radio,” Marc writes, “the TV Goldbergs eventually moved to Haverville, a suburb somewhere out there in Middle America.”²⁰⁶ This television family lived in a clearly Jewish neighborhood, in a small East Tremont apartment. They celebrated Jewish holidays, and the series even included a six minute-long scene of a Yom Kippur service.²⁰⁷ Similar to the Ricardos in *I Love Lucy*, toward the end of the series, the television family moved to the suburbs, leaving their New York City apartment behind and moving up in the world. “The show’s ethnic flavor and working-class milieu were instantly homogenized by bland, prosperous Haverville,” Vincent Brook writes.²⁰⁸ An advertisement for Guild Films included a photograph from the sitcom and read “On their 25th anniversary The Goldbergs have moved to Haverville, U.S.A. and Molly’s having the time of her life...with new friends, a new home, and fresh new adventures. Now, all America will love Molly, (the country’s greatest saleswoman, too!) more than ever.”²⁰⁹ *The Goldbergs* represents the transformation of what was acceptable to show the television viewing audience in the 1950s. Karen Brodtkin cites Donald Weber’s argument that “much of the show’s popularity lay in its valorization of mainstream middle-class values.”²¹⁰ Only in the suburbs could one raise wholesome children. “The relative economic deprivation of

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 274.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 288.

²⁰⁶ Marc, *Comic Visions*, 44.

²⁰⁷ David Zurawik, *Jews of Prime Time*, (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2003), 54.

²⁰⁸ Vincent Brook, *Something Ain’t Kosher Here: The Rise of the “Jewish” Sitcom*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 22.

²⁰⁹ Advertisement for Guild Films, *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, July 5, 1954, 38.

²¹⁰ Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks & What that Says About Race in America*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 157.

ethnic working-class households would seem to provide an inappropriate setting for the display and promotion of commodities as desired by the networks and their commercial sponsors,” George Lipsitz writes. “Furthermore, the mass audience required to repay the expense of network programming encourages the depiction of a homogenized mass society, not the particularities and peculiarities of working-class communities.”²¹¹



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Molly Goldberg, played by Gertrude Berg, is known for her catchphrase yelled when leaning out of her kitchen window: “Yoo-hoo, Mrs. Bloom!”

As *The Goldbergs* Americanized a Jewish family by moving to the suburbs, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, which premiered seven years after the end of *The Goldbergs*, represented the beginning of a return to the urban and Jewish-friendly national entertainment of the Milton Berle

²¹¹ George Lipsitz, “The Meaning of Memory: Family, Class, and Ethnicity in Early Network Television Programs,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 1, (November 1986): 355.

²¹² “Aviva Kemper Says ‘Yoo-Hoo’ To Unsung Heroine,” *NPR*, July 10, 2009, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106482968>.

era. Marc writes about *The Dick Van Dyke Show* as a bridge between two eras of the portrayal of American life and culture on television:

Any discussion of the American transmogrification of *la condition humaine* into consumer lifestyle could do worse than to begin with an examination of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. In terms of the evolution of prime time, the show's portrayal of suburban life in the Northeast Corridor bridges the gap between the idealized We like Ike nuclear family home-ownership epics of the fifties (*Father Knows Best*, *The Stu Erwin Show*, *Leave it to Beaver*) and the stagflation-era designer social comedies of the seventies, such as the Norman Lear and MTM production.²¹³

Though the Petries live in suburban New York, Marc contrasts this series with earlier suburban sitcoms: “instead of just dad, mom, and offspring, the picture is extended beyond blood members to include Rob's office co-workers, Buddy and Sally—a Jew and an unmarried career woman.”²¹⁴ The executives of the show decided that America was ready for a show slightly less white-bread than the *Cleavers*.



Publicity shot of Rob Petrie with his co-workers, Sally Rogers and Buddy Sorrell

²¹³ Marc, *Comic Visions*, 84.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 100.

²¹⁵ Ron Simon, “Happy Birthday Rose Marie!” *The Paley Center for Media*, August 9, 2011, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.paleycenter.org/b-simon-happy-birthday-rose-marie>.



Buddy (with cello), Sally, and Rob (in front of door) at one of the Petries' many parties thrown in their elegant, suburban living room

It was important for the actor playing Rob Petrie to be likable to the American television audience. “Van Dyke belonged on television,” executive producer Sheldon Leonard wrote. “His jaw was a little too long, his rawboned body a little too angular, his walk a little too gangly. All of this made him, in my opinion, just right for television, which had shown a marked distaste for glamorous boys who didn’t fit comfortably into nonglamorous American living rooms.”²¹⁷ Executives thought about how the American audience would react to the actor who appeared on their television screen. Leonard specifically writes that Van Dyke was perfect for the American living rooms—ones that were not glamorous. The executive producer also refers to Van Dyke as “a nice looking, sturdy, sane, boy-next-door type,”—the boy-next-door type perhaps because he looked like a white-bread character with whom the majority of Americans could identify. “Over the years, I have heard and read about other actors they considered, including Johnny Carson,” Van Dyke wrote. “I have also heard and read various accounts of why they liked me. My favorites? I wasn’t too good-looking, I walked a little funny, and I was basically kind of average

²¹⁶ “The Dick Van Dyke Show, The Sleeping Brother,” *Hulu*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.hulu.com/watch/14879>. (“The Sleeping Brother”: *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, “The Sleeping Brother,” Episode 27, Directed by John Rich, Written by Carl Reiner, CBS, March 28, 1962.

²¹⁷ Sheldon Leonard, *And the Show Goes On: Broadway and Hollywood Adventures*, (New York: Proscenium, Inc., 1995), 118.

and ordinary.” He added, “I guess my lack of perfection turned out to be a winning hand. Let that be a lesson for future generations.”²¹⁸



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Dick Van Dyke as Rob Petrie

Mary Tyler Moore speculated that the American audience was not ready for a Jewish man in a leading role for primetime. “At that time it was also thought that being Jewish, and expecting the greater TV audience to identify with that family, was asking too much,” Moore wrote. “In 1961, everyone at CBS was challenged enough just dealing with the unexpected exploration of Rob’s office life, without having to deal with cultural experimentation as well.”²²⁰ Even nine years after the end of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, CBS worried about how Jewish Lou Grant and Rhoda Morgenstern should be when creating *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.²²¹

²¹⁸ Van Dyke, *My Lucky Life*, 73.

²¹⁹ “Robert ‘Rob’ Petrie,” *IMDB*, Accessed April 18, 2015, http://www.imdb.com/media/rm360224768/ch0027776?ref_=chmi_mi_all_pbl_9.

²²⁰ Mary Tyler Moore, *After All*, (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1995), 85.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

Though scholars like Brook refer to *The Dick Van Dyke Show* as one that was “de-Semitize[d]” and “de-Judaize[d]” so as to appeal to the American audience, the show did retain a substantial Jewish influence, showing that executives expected viewers to at least somewhat accept a show influenced by Jewish culture. According to Brook, film scholar Erik Breitbar has deemed, “even the de-Judaized *Dick Van Dyke Show*—with endorsement from Dick Van Dyke himself—as essentially (if secretly) Jewish.”²²² Perhaps the American audience would not accept a leading Jewish man, but they would accept a show that took place in New York’s entertainment industry—one filled with Jewish writes, producers, and actors—symbolized by the character of Buddy Sorrell. In other words, David Zurawik writes, “by the 1920s, New York had become shorthand for—if not synonymous with, in show business circles, at least—Jewish.”²²³ Though Zurawik writes that between 1954 and 1972, no primetime show on network television starred a clearly Jewish character, the significance of Jewish culture in *The Dick Van Dyke Show* shows that executives subtly reintroduced Jewishness to audiences through sitcoms. In an early episode of the series, Rob, Buddy, and Sally get lunch delivered to their office.²²⁴ A delivery boy with a thick New York accent delivers the writers’ prune yogurt, Danish, and coffee—a quintessentially New York array of food.²²⁵ In the same episode, Rob speaks to the man next to him on the airplane, who, in a strong New York accent says he’s “in ladies’ underwear.” In other words, like thousands of Jewish New Yorkers at the time, he works in the garment industry.²²⁶

Besides these extra characters and props that give the show a Jewish flavor, the character of Buddy Sorrell is more important to the show than historians have argued. Buddy appears in every episode of the series, and there is no mistaking that his character is influenced by the

²²² Brook, *Something Ain’t Kosher Here*, 63.

²²³ Zurawik, *Jews of Prime Time*, 61.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

²²⁵ *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, “Washington vs. The Bunny,” Episode 5, Directed by John Rich, Written by Carl Reiner, CBS, October 24, 1961.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

Jewish comics of the Borscht Belt—which Amsterdam and Reiner, at one time were. In the Borscht Belt hotels of the early to mid-twentieth century, a *toomler* was the director of activities—usually a young man—who made sure all the guests were having an enjoyable time by telling jokes and leading games. Marc argues that “Amsterdam’s organic *toomler* delivery makes him the surviving vessel of Jewishness in the otherwise mainstreamed narrative.”²²⁷ In addition to his New York “Jewish” accent, Buddy delivers one-liners—a comedic style that originated in the Borscht Belt with comedians like Henny Youngman whose most famous line was “Take my wife—please.” On *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, Buddy’s one-liners are usually directed at the character Mel Cooley, and follows the Borscht Belt comedic style of being deprecating. Buddy also makes many jokes about his wife—another topic associated with Jewish Borscht Belt comedy. This comedic style is also integrated into the series as Rob, Sally, and Buddy perform music and comedy routines at dinner parties.

It is also difficult to accept the de-Semitized argument surrounding the show when the only blatantly religious scene of the series is of Buddy’s Bar Mitzvah. In this episode, “Buddy Sorrell, Man and Boy,” Buddy has a Bar Mitzvah, and the final scene is of the ceremony in the synagogue. The cantor chants a prayer in Hebrew, and Buddy gives a speech including the cliché, “Today I am a man.” Rob Petrie, wearing a yarmulke, Laura, Sally, and Mel are all present at their friend’s Bar Mitzvah.²²⁸ The only Christian episode of the series is the Christmas episode, “*The Alan Brady Show Presents*,” in which the cast performs in a variety show. The only religious song of the show is “Little Drummer Boy.” Even in this episode, Buddy plays a

²²⁷ Marc, *Comic Visions*, 111.

²²⁸ *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, “Buddy Sorrell, Man and Boy,” Episode 148, Directed by Richard Erdman, Written by Ben Joelson and Art Baer, CBS, March 2, 1966.

few measures of a Jewish-inspired classical piece on the cello, and a reference is made to the Lithuanian-Jewish violinist Jascha Heifetz.²²⁹ Jewish culture infiltrates the series' scripts.



*Scenes from “Buddy Sorrell, Man and Boy”*²³⁰

Taking on Social Issues—Subtly

The Dick Van Dyke Show showed that the American audience could accept black characters, though not with leading parts. Marc writes that the series was politically progressive with its inclusion of black characters as extras in public and private scenes, and that since the show was about suburban family life “even token integration stood out as extraordinary.”²³¹ *The Dick Van Dyke Show* reflected the progressiveness of the Kennedy administration, and the subsequent Civil Rights Act of 1964.²³² The appearance of black extras in both public and private scenes is significant when juxtaposed to what was happening in the real world, with the mass movement of families from the cities to suburbs due to white-flight.²³³ As mentioned before, even the Petries’ appearance mirrored that of the Kennedys, as Marc calls John F. Kennedy “the handsome instant New World aristocrat.”²³⁴ In fact, when Reiner had the idea for

²²⁹ *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, “The Alan Brady Show Presents,” Episode 75, Directed by Jerry Paris, Written by Sam Denoff and Bill Persky, CBS, December 18, 1963.

²³⁰ “The Dick Van Dyke Show, Buddy Sorrell, Man and Boy,” *Hulu*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.hulu.com/watch/114007>. (“Buddy Sorrell, Man and Boy,” March 2, 1966.

²³¹ Marc, *Comic Visions*, 102.

²³² Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time*, 117.

²³³ In Steiner’s 1963 audience study, in response to the question “If you personally were in charge of a leading television network, what changes would you like to make?” one participant answered, “I’d put more Negroes on the shows.” Steiner, *The People Look at Television*, 237.

²³⁴ Marc, *Comic Visions*, 84.

the show, his agent, Harry Kalchem took the material to Peter Lawford, the husband of Patricia Kennedy, sister of John F. Kennedy.²³⁵ Marc adds, “Joseph P. Kennedy demanded to look at the scripts before sanctioning Kennedy involvement; he granted the go-ahead to Lawford and personally financed the production of the pilot.”²³⁶ The episode of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* that was taped days after JFK’s assassination is one of the few episodes taped without a live studio audience, since executives thought that people would not feel like laughing.²³⁷

Two episodes that directly address the issue of race are “A Show of Hands,” and “That’s My Boy??” In “A Show of Hands,” Rob and Laura accidentally dye their hands black on the evening they are expected to appear at a banquet hosted by the CIU—the Committee for Interracial Understanding—a fictional take on the NAACP.²³⁸ The Petries wear gloves to the event to hide their hands, but eventually Rob takes off his gloves while giving a speech, and tells the guests what had happened. The banquet’s attendees are amused and sympathetic, and Rob and Laura learn that they had no reason to be embarrassed. Reiner later said that the sponsors readily agreed to air the show.²³⁹

²³⁵ Ibid, 94.

²³⁶ Ibid, 94.

²³⁷ Vince Waldron, *The Official Dick Van Dyke Show Book*, (New York: Hyperion, 1994), 230.

²³⁸ “The Alan Brady Show Presents,” April 14, 1965.

²³⁹ “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” 1988.



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Rob Petrie showing his accidentally-dyed hands at a banquet for the Committee for Racial Understanding

The episode “That’s My Boy??” was more controversial. The race-centered episode shows Rob’s flashbacks to his first days of being a father, when he did not think the hospital gave him and Laura the correct baby. Rob arranges a meeting with the couple who he thinks has his actual son. When the other couple comes to the Petries’ house, Rob, and the audience, learn that the couple is black. The live audience’s laughter ended up going on for so long that it required editing for television, though getting the episode to air at all was a tedious process. When asked about the controversy, director John Rich said, “You must remember, it was 1963. There was great unrest in the South and there had been a Civil Rights uproar.”²⁴¹ In a 1988 panel discussion of the show, Reiner references the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, and notes that the scene of “That’s My Boy??,” was “probably the first racial joke in good taste on television.”²⁴²

²⁴⁰ “The Dick Van Dyke Show, A Show of Hands,” *Hulu*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.hulu.com/watch/114032>. (“A Show of Hands”: *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, “A Show of Hands,” Episode 122, Directed by Theodore J. Flicker, Written by Joseph C. Cavella, CBS, April 15, 1965.)

²⁴¹ Ginny Weissman and Coyne Steven Sanders, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983), 63.

²⁴² “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” 1988.



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Rob Petrie is surprised when he finds out that the couple who he thinks took home the wrong baby is black

Executives sent the script for “That’s My Boy??” to CBS and the sponsor Benton & Bowles, as usual, but also to the NAACP, which approved the episode.²⁴⁴ Reiner said, “the network didn’t want to hurt the black psyche. We said that this is a good-humored show and our heart is in the right place and the only way you can find that out is to put it on the air and let them tell us. And when we laid it for an audience, that explosion when Greg Morris came in...they were worried that we might offend black people.”²⁴⁵ Leonard campaigned for the episode, approaching Producer Lee Rich. Leonard told Rich that if anybody in the 350-person audience thought the episode was offensive, he would replace the black couple at his own expense.²⁴⁶ Rich agreed to Leonard’s suggestion, but Leonard received a phone call from CBS rejecting the episode. So, Leonard, Reiner, and Rich met with Van Dyke over the summer while he was filming *Mary Poppins*. In an interview, Rich said, “We felt the only way the show would work was having Rob give control of the situation to the black man. What scared us was having Rob ask the black man, ‘Why didn’t you tell me on the phone?’—the exact question the audience

²⁴³ “The Dick Van Dyke Show, That’s My Boy?” *Hulu*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.hulu.com/watch/113980>. (“That’s My Boy?”: *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, “That’s My Boy?” Episode 63, Directed John Rich, Written by Bill Persky and Sam Denoff, CBS, September 25, 1963.)

²⁴⁴ Weissman and Sanders, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, 63.

²⁴⁵ “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” 1988.

²⁴⁶ Weissman and Sanders, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, 64.

would ask. The answer was, ‘And miss the expression on your face?’ That was the key. It gave control to the black man.”²⁴⁷ Ginny Weissman and Coyne Steven Sanders write that the episode “was a milestone in television history and led to Leonard being able to cast Bill Cosby in *I Spy*, a series far removed from the stereotypes in *Amos ‘n’ Andy*.”²⁴⁸

The audience’s laughter, once the black couple enters the Petrie house and Rob realizes the situation he has created, is considered one of the longest recorded laughs of a television audience. “First there was a gasp. Then there was a laugh. And then protracted applause,” Rich said in a 1988 panel discussion, while Van Dyke noted that he felt like he stood in place forever to wait for the laughter to die down.²⁴⁹ Rich added, “And that applause was the most gratifying sound I’d ever heard in my life. It was just wonderful. It was quite a piece of vindication,” showing that the audience fully accepted the episode’s historic ending, even though the comedy was based on the topic of race.²⁵⁰

Throughout the series, the Petries’ New Rochelle neighborhood is characterized as being diverse, with multiple references to their neighbors, the Steins, showing that there are Jewish families in their suburban neighborhood. Even more progressive was the ending of “That’s My Boy??” in which Rob says that the black couple’s baby is now a top student in Ritchie’s class, showing that the black couple lives in the Petries’ neighborhood. “It was the first time, it was very subliminal” Reiner said, “we actually suggested that a black child could be smarter than a white child.”²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 64.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 65.

²⁴⁹ “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” 1988.

²⁵⁰ Waldron, *The Official Dick Van Dyke Show Book*, 219.

²⁵¹ “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” 1988.

Domestic Life on the Sitcom

In addition to the portrayal of race and ethnicity in *The Dick Van Dyke Show* bridging the gap between sitcoms of the 1950s and 1970s, the relationship between Rob and Laura Petrie shows that the series was also a bridge between the portrayal of husband and wife roles. While Laura Petrie is still a stay-at-home mom like every sitcom mother before her, Rob and Laura show romantic feelings toward each other—even though they still sleep in separate beds. Rob and Laura have more of an equal partnership than earlier television couples, though Rob probably does have the final word, showing that the television audience was ready for some change, but not a drastic one.



Rob and Laura Petrie on set with the audience watching

Instead of the husband dominating his wife in all circumstances, Laura has almost as much say in decisions as Rob. In “Sally and the Lab Technician” Rob tells Laura, “Ninety-five percent of the time you’re right. When you’re wrong, can I say it?” which shows that Rob does

²⁵² “Rob and Laura: 1963,” *Shorpy*, April 30, 2013, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.shorpy.com/node/15190>.

not fulfill the role of living room lecturer like husbands of 1950s domestic sitcoms.²⁵³ “Sol and the Sponsor” begins with Rob vacuuming the living room, cleaning the house for a dinner party.²⁵⁴ The romantic relationship between Rob and Laura shows that executives were willing to show a young couple in love, but not one that slept in the same bed. In addition to making the couple sleep in twin beds, the censors did not approve some jokes. Rich remembers one of these jokes from 1963, spoken by Laura to Rob in a flashback as she is leaving the hospital with her newborn son: “I carried him for nine months, I think I can carry him out of the building.”²⁵⁵ In addition, the episode “Where Did I Come From?” in which Rob and Laura tell Ritchie about the events leading up to his birth, included controversial material that the network censors rejected.

Though some aspects of the show were censored, certain qualities of the couple’s relationship were progressive. To the audience, Rob and Laurie Petrie seemed to actually be in love. In fact, Van Dyke and Moore won the contest of “Television’s Most Glamorous Couple” in a national poll of TV editors, receiving 75 percent of the votes.²⁵⁶ Weissman and Sanders argue that “Laura had a high level of intelligence and was Rob’s worthy adversary—which hadn’t been done before.”²⁵⁷ Moore wrote about her choice of clothing on the series, noting “Television hadn’t quite caught up with the times. And so it was, at my own suggestion, that in a long line of situation-comedy wives, I would be the first to disdain the costume of old and opt for what were then called Capris pants and flats.”²⁵⁸ However, this decision was not without controversy, as the American audience was used to June Cleaver vacuuming in a dress and pearls. Moore noted that “In the second year, they did a survey and found that most women couldn’t identify with that and made me go back to wearing dresses—which I did, gritting my teeth. That lasted about three

²⁵³ *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, “Sally and the Lab Technician,” Episode 3, Directed by John Rich, Written by Carl Reiner, CBS, October 17, 1961.

²⁵⁴ *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, “Sol and the Sponsor,” Episode 29, Directed by John Rich, Written by Walter Kempley, CBS, April 11, 1962.

²⁵⁵ Waldron, *The Official Dick Van Dyke Show Book*, 219.

²⁵⁶ Weissman and Sanders, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, 43.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁵⁸ Moore, *After All*, 86.

months. Then they started getting a lot of mail saying, ‘Wait a minute! We liked her better in pants. Put them back!’”²⁵⁹ So, executives limited Moore’s wearing of capris to only one scene per episode, showing that the audience had a say when it came to what they saw on television. “I am sure Mary helped to sell Capri pants across the country,” Van Dyke wrote.”²⁶⁰

Moore makes the point that for all of the show’s progressiveness, Laura was still a housewife who gave up her dancing career to become a wife and mother; her life revolved around preparing dinner and picking up her son from school. She summed up her character: “‘I wanted to establish her as a woman who had her own point of view and who would fight with her husband—a good fight, if necessary. She wasn’t a ‘yes’ wife, nor did she focus everything on him. But that’s about as liberated as Laura Petrie was. I think she truly believed that her only choice was to be a wife and mother and couldn’t combine [that with] a career.’”²⁶¹ Marc writes about Moore’s later role in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, “a mere four seasons later, a new Mary—Mary-Mary—was having none of that. No longer stuck with Dick Van Dyke in static suburban New Rochelle, Mary resurfaced as an ambitious, eligible, girl-on-the-make in neogenteel Minneapolis, lifestyle capital of the northern Midwest,” showing that the liberalism of the Petries was just an introduction to the American audience to future groundbreaking sitcoms that would star single women and minorities.²⁶²

The Dick Van Dyke Show symbolizes the era in which the American television audience, and American politics under the Kennedy administration, was at a crossroads. In some ways, the series was progressive in its portrayal of ethnicity, race, and husband and wife relations. The executives of the show created content based on what they thought the television audience would accept—a show with heavy Jewish influences, but with a WASP as its leading man; black

²⁵⁹ Weissman and Sanders, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, 40.

²⁶⁰ Van Dyke, *My Lucky Life*, 86.

²⁶¹ Weissman and Sanders, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, 45.

²⁶² Marc, *Comic Visions*, 168.

characters as extras in scenes, but none in a starring role; and a wife who was intelligent and whose husband respected her, but who gave up her career to be a suburban housewife. With its intelligent comedy and realistic situations, the show did not attract as wide an audience as *I Love Lucy*, and so it represents the beginning of segmentation among the American television audience in the early to mid-1960s.

Chapter 3: *All in the Family*: The Season of Relevance and Targeted Audiences

On January 12, 1971, CBS stationed extra operators while *All in the Family* premiered, fearful of the potential number of calls from viewers complaining about the controversial and shocking subject matter.²⁶³ The 1970-1971 television season, which Bodroghkozy refers to as the “Season of Relevance,” was an attempt by CBS, NBC, and ABC to create television content geared toward a younger audience, after an era of sitcoms focused on genies, talking horses, and witches.²⁶⁴ In contrast to *The Dick Van Dyke Show* with its moderately progressive social themes, there was nothing subtle about this new show that starred a working-class bigot who lived with his wife, and his liberal daughter and son-in-law.



Warning that preceded the airing of the first episode of All in the Family

All in the Family was of the period of television in which shows were created with a hyper-specific niche market in mind—namely Baby Boomer twenty-somethings. Throughout the series’ run, episodes covered almost every controversial social matter one could think of, yet

²⁶³ Donna McCrohan, *Archie & Edith, Mike & Gloria: The Tumultuous History of All in the Family*, (New York: Workman Publishing, 1987), 33.

²⁶⁴ Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube*, 227.

²⁶⁵ “AITF Warning Aired in 1971,” All in the Family Sitcom, *Facebook*, February 21, 2010, Accessed April 18, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=1340317595499>. (Pilot: *All in the Family*, “Meet the Bunkers,” Episode 1, Directed by John Rich, Written by Norman Lear, CBS, January 12, 1971.)

remained at the top of the Nielsen ratings. Though intended for a specific audience, the sitcom appealed to a wide spectrum of Americans. Studies show that people of different political backgrounds watched the show, as some identified with Archie Bunker and some identified with his liberal son-in-law, Meathead. The sitcom, which emphasized the friction between conservatives and liberals, mirrored the segmentation of the American audience during the counterculture period and the Nixon administration.

This chapter will show how by the late 1960s, television executives wanted to create shows for a young adult audience. Issues of *Advertising Age* will show how audience studies in the late 1960s and 1970s used more specific demographics than before. A discussion of the significance of using a sitcom as a means of social commentary will follow. The chapter will then discuss the audience's reaction to *All in the Family*, followed by a discussion of how the series mirrored the fragmentation of American society in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The social and political events of the 1970s, related to *All in the Family* that will be discussed include the tension among Americans of different political backgrounds during the Nixon years. All of the sections of this chapter will argue that *All in the Family* represents a time, in the late 1960s and 1970s, in which the country's society was socially and politically divided.

The Disconnect of "The Fortress"

Television historian Erik Barnouw refers to the disconnect of 1960s television as "the fortress."²⁶⁶ "Exception for the occasionally disturbing documentaries, evening television confirmed the average man's view of the world," Barnouw writes. "It presented the America he wanted and believe in and had labored to be part of. It was alive with handsome men and women, and symbols of the good life. It invited and drew him into its charmed circle. If the

²⁶⁶ Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty*, 403.

circle was threatened, it was surely not by flaws within itself but by outside evildoers.”²⁶⁷

Ozersky writes of the situation, “One didn’t need sales reports to tell that CBS was becoming ludicrously disconnected, “even more so than it had been a few years earlier.” He points to a specific night of programming to highlight the difference between television and reality:

On the evening of 4 May 1970, the day the Ohio National Guard opened fire on student protestors at Kent State University, CBS aired the following lineup: at 7:30, *Gunsmoke*; at 8:00, a middle-aged Lucille Ball wearing a blonde wig over her ruby-dyed hair, as yet another layer of artifice was laid over the ossified *Here’s Lucy* series with a plot about Lucy having to impersonate a gum-chewing secretary; at 9:00, the cast of *Mayberry R.F.D.* visiting Palm Spring, in one of those ‘vacations’ with which dying sitcoms dried to milk a few more ratings; and at 9:30, Doris Day having a comical encounter with a computer on *The Doris Day Show*. Wood called for change.²⁶⁸

Robert Wood, President of CBS starting in 1969, was responsible for the move to relevant programming. He, along with advertisers and television executives, wanted to attract the young adults of the counterculture generation. “Truly sophisticated, *modern* comedy is the tv tone of tomorrow rather than yet another widower raising kids the way Andy Hardy’s family did it eons ago? The people are indeed changing and marketers will have to change *their* tune in order to gather in these new customers,” writes Herb Maneloveg of *Advertising Age*, adding that the projected population of the 1970s was that “*adults under 35* will be half again more numerous; yet those in the 35-to-54 age bracket will not expand at all.”²⁶⁹ A 1971 article projected a more sophisticated audience in the near future and included the subtitles: “Activists Will Wield Market Power,” and “Challenge: Consumer’s Rising IQ.”²⁷⁰ “TV Must Become Exciting Again if It’s to Survive Today’s Crisis: Dann” read the title of another article.²⁷¹ The late 1960s saw the peak of the counterculture, as the children born right after World War II, who were children in

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 403.

²⁶⁸ Ozersky, *Archie Bunker’s America*, 51.

²⁶⁹ Herb Maneloveg, “Small Marketing Booklet Presents Big Media Questions,” *Advertising Age*, October 6, 1969, 78.

²⁷⁰ E.B. Weiss, “Today’s consumer (and tomorrow’s) gets a new look in our new society,” *Advertising Age*, February 8, 1971, 35-40.

²⁷¹ “TV Must Become Exciting Again if It’s to Survive Today’s Crisis: Dann,” *Advertising Age*, October 19, 1970, 4, 88.

the 1950s and watched *I Love Lucy*, now were young adults focused on activism.²⁷² “The kids had rejected the content of television,” Bodroghkozy writes, adding that this group of viewers watched the least amount of television.²⁷³ “They had been brought up on television,” Ozersky writes, “and would return to it when they had children of their own; but in the meantime, the 18-24 age range (particularly the ‘young marrieds’) were the most sought-after audience on Madison Avenue, and they had little use for television—at least by television advertising’s demanding standards.”²⁷⁴ The counterculture generation was interested in art films and rock music, not television. “Any self-respecting head or campus politico,” Bodroghkozy writes, “would be looked at askance were she or he to exhibit a too-hardy interest in the products of the Vast Wasteland. Hip and activist young people rejected television as a commercial, network-dominated industry hopelessly corrupted by the values of the establishment.”²⁷⁵

While television trade journals of the 1950s and early 1960s studied audiences in order to look at general demographics for television shows created for the masses, *Advertising Age* articles of the late 1960s and 1970s show a purposeful switch on the part of advertisers to target specific audiences.²⁷⁶ One article reported on a panel discussion of African-Americans who wanted “to make radio and tv more relevant to the black community.”²⁷⁷ A January 6, 1969 article referenced new Nielsen demographics, including specific categories such as 18-49-year-old men and women, as 12-17-year old males.²⁷⁸ Another issue listed the top ten shows according to the demographic categories of total people, women 18-49, men 18-49, men 50-Plus,

²⁷² However, E.B. Weiss notes, “It is therefore not at all astonishing to find that the campus causes of fall, 1971, are not only quite different, but also less violent (with fewer activists) than was true in most of the years between 1964 and 1969.” E.B. Weiss, “Surprising youth market isn’t all counter-culture,” *Advertising Age*, November 22, 1971, 36.

²⁷³ Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube*, 47.

²⁷⁴ Ozersky, *Archie Bunker’s America*, 43.

²⁷⁵ Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube*, 47.

²⁷⁶ See: “Industrial Advertising, Too, Must Switch to Youth Movement, AIA Told,” *Advertising Age*, April 21, 1969, 3, 70;

“Gilbert Urges ‘Honest Power’ in Ads; Youngsters to Shake Up Ad Field: Marker,” *Advertising Age*, February 10, 1969, 2, 8.

²⁷⁷ Maurine Christopher, “Make TV Relevant to Blacks, BPA is Urged,” *Advertising Age*, November 17, 1969, 1, 150.

²⁷⁸ “‘Laugh-In’ Scores in New Nielsen Demographics,” *Advertising Age*, January 6, 1969, 2.

women 50-Plus, Male Teens, Female Teens, Children 6-11, and Children 2-5.²⁷⁹ (See image on page 75) “Nowadays tv performers not only have to worry about how they are doing with total U.S. households and a raft of age and sex subdivisions, they also have to shape up with sharply segmented groups based on education, income and profession,” wrote Maurine Christopher, before listing specific subdivisions.²⁸⁰ The same article included the results of the Nielsen ratings categorized by income, occupation, and education.²⁸¹ “This year the program competition in tv has been enlivened by the introduction of five new age breakouts for men and women,” Christopher wrote in 1970. “As a result, advertisers, agencies, packagers, stars and networks who wish to do so can gauge their shows on the basis of comparative performance with men and women 18-24, 25-34, 35-49, 50-64 and 65 and over,” showing the hyper-specific demographics.²⁸² A chart listed the top ten shows according to the Nielsen ratings, by the categories: High School, 1+ Years College, 4+ Years College, Clerical or Salesman Household Head, Professional or Manager Household Head, \$10,000+, and \$15,000.²⁸³ (See image on page 75) Another chart showed even more specific categories: Adults 18-49, Women 18-49, and Men 18-49, but also Adults 18-34, Women 18-34, men 18-34, Men 18-34, Adults 25-49, Women 25-49, and Men 25-49.²⁸⁴ A chart from December 1970 showed the top shows of the categories: Homes, Men 18-24, Men 25-34, Men 35-49, Men 50-64, Men 65-plus, Women 18-24, Women 25-34, Women 35-49, Women 50-64, Women 65-plus.²⁸⁵ Another article emphasized the amount of money the youth market spent.²⁸⁶ On the same page was an advertisement for a radio show

²⁷⁹ “Network TV Program Popularity Season to Date—Specials and Series,” *Advertising Age*, January 13, 1969, 70.

²⁸⁰ “Rowan & Martin Are Tops with Elite in New-Style Demographics,” *Advertising Age*, March 24, 1969, 1.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1, 110.

²⁸² Maurine Christopher, “New Nielsen Demographics Refine Age Breakouts; Dr. Welby Looks Healthy,” *Advertising Age*, December 14, 1970, 2, 14.

²⁸³ “Network TV Program Popularity for 1970-’71 Returnees: By Education, Profession, Income,” *Advertising Age*, July 27, 1970, 66.

²⁸⁴ “First Rating Returns of New Network TV Season: Demographic Breakdowns (AA, Oct. 12),” *Advertising Age*, October 19, 1970, 91.

²⁸⁵ “Nielsen Seasonal Ratings for Network TV: By Homes and New Age and Sex Sub-Divisions,” *Advertising Age*, December 21, 1970, 39.

²⁸⁶ “Ignoring Youth is Marketing Error, Edwards Tells S&ME-I Conference,” *Advertising Age*, May 25, 1970, 4.

with the headline “With women 18-49 Nice Guy Finishes First,” emphasizing the importance of the age demographic at this time period.²⁸⁷

Trade magazines had articles suggesting ways to attract this youth market.²⁸⁸ “Teenagers, numerically, are television’s smallest audience,” read a *Television Magazine* article about the youth culture. “They carry a big stick, however, and are coming into their own as a power in marketing.”²⁸⁹ Advice included limiting “hip talk,” and promoting honesty. “Too many companies apparently still think the necessary approach to the under-25 market is hip talk; too many appear to be too involved with pitching their wares to stop, listen and be relevant in an era where truth and honesty are by-words for respect,” read a 1969 article.²⁹⁰ At a seminar, a marketing professional said, “You can’t sell today’s youth. They are too smart, too experienced and too disillusioned by the total bombardment of sell.” He promoted honesty, and said that worlds like “great” and “fabulous” in advertisements should be avoided.²⁹¹ This idea was repeated in the 1970 article, “Youth Panel Says Ads Don’t Ring Up Sales in Youth Market; Honesty Does.”²⁹²

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Articles also addressed the lack of minorities on television. See “Admen Failing to Communicate with Minority Groups, Four A’s Told,” *Advertising Age*, March 23, 1970, 118.

²⁸⁹ “Television A Go Go,” *Television Magazine*, June 1965, 38-39.

²⁹⁰ “Youth Market Reached by Honesty: Barnard,” *Advertising Age*, October 27, 1969, 1.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Tom Donion, “Youth Panel Says Ads Don’t Ring Up Sales in Youth Market; Honesty Does,” *Advertising Age*, January 26, 1970, 4, 84.



YOUTH MOVEMENT.

The simmering sixties fostered the new life-style of the seventies. Youth. It's a state of mind as well as a statistic. Young ideas are dominating the marketplace.

And we couldn't be happier.

The new generation has been raised on television. And they've grown up with TV Guide.

Which means if going to a contemporary market is important to you, TV Guide should be too.

Editorially we appeal to the 18 to 35's who set today's pace. And to the young-thinking 35 to 50's who spend most of the money.

We reach these groups more efficiently than any other mass magazine and get the best ad readership per dollar while we're at it.

That's a selling climate as interesting as the times we live in.



A seller's market. Every week.

Sources: Blank, Brand Rating Index.

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Advertisement for TV Guide, 1970

²⁹³ Advertisement for *TV Guide*, *Advertising Age*, February 2, 1970, 7.

Advertising Age, January 12, 1969

Network TV Program Popularity Season to Date—Specials and Series

Series Total People	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	39,170
2. Gunter Pyle (CBS)	34,000
3. Julia (NBC)	33,490
4. Bonanza (NBC)	32,260
5. Mayberry R.F.D. (CBS)	32,120
6. Ghos & Mrs. Muir (NBC)	30,470
7. Bewitched (ABC)	30,270
8. Here's Lucy (CBS)	30,000
9. The F.B.I. (ABC)	29,220
10. Family Affair (CBS)	28,570

Specials Total People	
1. Heidi 11/17 (NBC)	49,240
2. Charlie Brown's Christmas 12/8 (CBS)	44,720
3. Green Fingert 10/24 (CBS)	41,530
4. Rudolph 12/8 (NBC)	40,580
5. Dick Tracy 12/3 (NBC)	39,840
6. Reptile 12/3 (CBS)	37,610
7. Bob Hope 10/14 (NBC)	37,140
8. Ann Margret 12/1 (CBS)	35,280
9. Bob Hope 11/6 (NBC)	34,940
10. Howie the Howler 11/23 (NBC)	31,490

Women 18-49	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	9,520
2. Julia (NBC)	8,200
3. Gunter Pyle (CBS)	7,690
4. Monday Movie (NBC)	7,210
5. Tuesday Movie (NBC)	7,160
6. Sunday Movie (ABC)	7,150
7. The F.B.I. (ABC)	7,090
8. Thursday Movie (CBS)	7,020
9. Ghos & Mrs. Muir (NBC)	6,740
10. Bonanza (NBC)	6,700

Men 18-49	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	7,880
2. Mission: Impossible (CBS)	7,380
3. The F.B.I. (ABC)	6,470
4. Sunday Movie (NBC)	6,460
5. Saturday Evening (CBS)	6,270
6. Land of the Giants (ABC)	6,170
7. Thursday Movie (NBC)	6,160
8. Bonanza (NBC)	6,120
9. Monday Movie (NBC)	5,770
10. Tuesday Movie (NBC)	5,110

Men 50-Plus	
1. Bonanza (NBC)	6,770
2. Bob Hope (NBC)	6,610
3. Gunter Pyle (CBS)	6,600
4. Bonanza (NBC)	6,300
5. The Virginian (NBC)	6,190
6. Mayberry R.F.D. (CBS)	6,250
7. Here's Lucy (CBS)	6,540
8. Jackie Gleason (CBS)	6,490
9. Ed Sullivan (CBS)	6,440
10. Donald Rosen (NBC)	6,290

Women 50-Plus	
1. Lawrence Walk (ABC)	6,870
2. Mayberry R.F.D. (CBS)	6,870
3. Gunter Pyle (CBS)	6,860
4. Bonanza (NBC)	6,520
5. Family Affair (CBS)	6,270
6. Here's Lucy (CBS)	6,210
7. Bob Hope (CBS)	6,210
8. Ed Sullivan (CBS)	6,070
9. The Virginian (NBC)	5,970
10. Don Martin (NBC)	5,870

Male Teens	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	2,618
2. Ghos & Mrs. Muir (NBC)	2,320
3. Get Smart (NBC)	2,280
4. Land of the Giants (ABC)	2,170
5. Beverly Hills Cop (CBS)	2,040
6. Mad Secret (ABC)	2,040
7. Invaders From Mars (CBS)	1,910
8. Bonanza (NBC)	1,890
9. The F.B.I. (ABC)	1,880
10. John (NBC)	1,840

Female Teens	
1. Mad Secret (ABC)	5,230
2. Julia (NBC)	5,040
3. Bewitched (ABC)	5,020
4. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	4,280
5. Here's Lucy (CBS)	4,270
6. Mayberry R.F.D. (CBS)	4,240
7. Family Affair (CBS)	4,230
8. Ghos & Mrs. Muir (NBC)	4,190
9. The F.B.I. (ABC)	4,180
10. My Three Sons (CBS)	4,180

Children 8-11	
1. Bewitched (ABC)	7,340
2. Julia (NBC)	6,520
3. Gunter Pyle (CBS)	6,510
4. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	6,500
5. Ghos & Mrs. Muir (NBC)	6,000
6. Land of the Giants (ABC)	5,900
7. Walt Disney (NBC)	5,890
8. Flying Nun (ABC)	5,880
9. Good Guy (CBS)	5,540
10. Gunter Pyle (CBS)	5,530

Children 12-17	
1. Bewitched (ABC)	3,360
2. Gunter Pyle (CBS)	3,190
3. Walt Disney (NBC)	3,110

Network TV Program Popularity for 1970-'71 Returnees By Education, Profession, Income

High School	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	30.5
2. Bill Cosby (NBC)	29.0
3. Hawaii Five-O (CBS)	26.2
4. My Three Sons (CBS)	26.0
5. Bill Cosby (NBC)	25.7
6. Family Affair (CBS)	25.6
7. Gunsmoke (CBS)	25.1
8. Ironside (NBC)	25.0
9. Dean Martin (NBC)	25.0
10. Here's Lucy (CBS)	24.9

Professional or Manager Household Head	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	34.6
2. Bill Cosby (NBC)	26.4
3. Bewitched (ABC)	25.7
4. Courtship of Eddie's Father (ABC)	25.4
5. NBC Sunday Movie	24.0
6. ABC Sunday Movie	24.0
7. Marcus Welby (ABC)	23.9
8. NBC Saturday Movie	23.7
9. Walt Disney (NBC)	23.5
10. NBC Tuesday Movie	23.4

I + Years College	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	33.9
2. Bill Cosby (NBC)	24.2
3. Courtship of Eddie's Father (ABC)	23.2
4. Bewitched (ABC)	22.2
5. NBC Monday Movie	22.1
6. Walt Disney (NBC)	21.8
7. ABC Sunday Movie	21.8
8. NBC Saturday Movie	21.6
9. My Three Sons (CBS)	21.6
10. Ironside (NBC)	21.3

\$10,000+	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	33.5
2. Bill Cosby (NBC)	25.7
3. Courtship of Eddie's Father (ABC)	23.8
4. Walt Disney (NBC)	22.8
5. My Three Sons (CBS)	22.4
6. Bewitched (ABC)	21.9
7. Ironside (NBC)	21.4
8. NBC Saturday Movie	21.3
9. ABC Sunday Movie	21.3
10. NBC Tuesday Movie	20.9

4 + Years College	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	35.5
2. Bill Cosby (NBC)	25.7
3. Courtship of Eddie's Father (ABC)	23.8
4. Walt Disney (NBC)	22.8
5. My Three Sons (CBS)	22.4
6. Bewitched (ABC)	21.9
7. Ironside (NBC)	21.4
8. NBC Saturday Movie	21.3
9. ABC Sunday Movie	21.3
10. NBC Tuesday Movie	20.9

\$15,000+	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	35.1
2. ABC Sunday Movie	26.7
3. Bill Cosby (NBC)	26.2
4. Bewitched (ABC)	25.6
5. NBC Tuesday Movie	25.4
6. Courtship of Eddie's Father (ABC)	25.4
7. NBC Saturday Movie	25.4
8. Ironside (NBC)	25.3
9. Walt Disney (NBC)	24.9
10. Hawaii Five-O (CBS)	24.9

Clerical or Salesman Household Head	
1. Rowan & Martin (NBC)	28.4
2. Marcus Welby (ABC)	28.1
3. Dean Martin (NBC)	25.7
4. Carol Burnett (CBS)	24.6
5. My Three Sons (CBS)	24.3
6. Hawaii Five-O (CBS)	23.8
7. NBC Monday Movie	23.5
8. Mayberry R.F.D. (CBS)	23.2
9. Here's Lucy (CBS)	23.1
10. Ironside (NBC)	22.9
11. Bonanza (NBC)	22.9
12. Ed Sullivan (CBS)	22.9

Source: A. C. Nielsen Co. audience demographics report, covering Jan. 12-Feb. 22 tune-in. These top tens, prepared for Advertising Age by a broadcast researcher, show the program leaders in percentage of homes reached per average minute in various income, educational and professional subdivisions as determined by Nielsen through audimetered or diary findings in approximately 1,500 households. Regular weekly prime time series, running in January and February and returning in the fall, were the only shows considered in these rankings.

“Network TV Program Popularity Season Returnees: to Date—Specials and Series,” 1969

“Network TV Program Popularity for 1970-'71 By Education, Profession, Income,” 1970

294 “Network TV Program Popularity Season to Date—Specials and Series,” 70.
 295 “Network TV Program Popularity for 1970-'71 Returnees: By Education, Profession, Income,” 66.

Using Comedy as Social Commentary

All in the Family was part of this move to social relevance. Creator Norman Lear wanted to use a domestic sitcom as a vehicle for social commentary. Though all three major networks shifted to relevant television shows, CBS completed this change by shifting from drama to comedy.²⁹⁶ Bodroghkozy writes that Lear “discovered with hits like *All in the Family*, audiences were much more likely to embrace entertainment programming that dealt with such subject matter within the context of comedy.”²⁹⁷ Michael Arlen argues that Lear had “namely, a ‘feel’ for what the public wants before it knows it want it, and the ability to deliver it.”²⁹⁸ “It was very important to me that Archie have a likable face,” Lear wrote, “because the point of the character was to show that if bigotry and intolerance didn’t exist in the hearts and minds of the good people, the average people, it would not be the endemic problem it is in our society.”²⁹⁹ He emphasized that the show’s most important goal was to entertain.³⁰⁰ “I think *All in the Family* is a celebration of family life,” Lear said, “or I wouldn’t have done it.”³⁰¹

Two pilots of *All in the Family* were originally taped for ABC, though the station ended up passing on the show. Carroll O’Connor, the actor who portrayed Archie Bunker, recounted the time when he first learned of the role and told his agent, “This thing is a sure disaster, but the explosion will get us a lot of attention.”³⁰² Before casting O’Connor, Lear had first asked Mickey Rooney about the role, to which Rooney said, “Norman, they’re going to kill you in the streets.”³⁰³ “Its raw honesty seemed exceedingly daring to the audience that saw it taped,”

²⁹⁶ Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube*, 228.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁹⁸ Michael Arlen, “The Media Dramas of Norman Lear,” in Michael J. Arlen, ed., *The View from Highway One: Essays on Television*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), 53-54.

²⁹⁹ Norman Lear, *Even This I Get to Experience*, (New York: The Penguin Press, 2014), 223.

³⁰⁰ Horace Newcomb and Robert S. Alley, *The Producer’s Medium: Conversations with Creators of American Television*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 191.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 194.

³⁰² Carroll O’Connor, *I Think I’m Outta Here: A Memoir of All My Families*, (New York: Pocket Books, 1998), 150.

³⁰³ “Museum of Television & Radio Seminar Series: Those Were the Days: Norman Lear Looks Back at ‘All in the Family,’” 1998, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

O'Connor wrote of when the first pilot was shown to an audience. "Some found it almost intolerable—but all were wonderfully entertained in spite of themselves and laughed longer and louder than any audience I had ever played to."³⁰⁴ Though the content was shocking, audiences still enjoyed the show.³⁰⁵



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Archie and Edith Bunker in the opening credits



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The family gathered around Archie's armchair, with Meathead, sitting on Edith's chair

³⁰⁴ O'Connor, *I Think I'm Outta Here*, 152.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ "All in the Family, Meet the Bunkers," *Hulu*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.hulu.com/watch/262044>. ("Meet the Bunkers," January 12, 1971.)

³⁰⁷ Alison Nastasi, "Television's Most Memorable Living Rooms," *Flavorwire*, October 12, 2011, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://flavorwire.com/219565/television-s-most-memorable-living-rooms/view-all>.

The Audience's Reaction to *All in the Family*

Though the show got off to a slow start, by the beginning of 1972, an unprecedented 50 million people tuned in each week.³⁰⁸ This audience did not include only the young adults for whom the show was intended, but people of all ages. Timothy Meyer's 1976 study looked at the show's impact on children, and found that many watched the show, but did not understand the adult themes and social commentary. "Most of the audience for '*All in the Family*' is adult, and it is adults toward whom the show's content is directed," Meyer concluded. "Because the audience is essentially adult, the show would lose millions of viewers if it changed its focus to children. But, although in a minority, the child audience of nine million still watches the program regularly and is being affected by it in different ways than adults."³⁰⁹ Television critics and editorialists wrote about the show.³¹⁰ Laura Hobson wrote one of the most famous opinion pieces, arguing that the show did not portray Archie's bigotry as realistically as possible, and that portraying him as a "loveable bigot" would tell the audience that it was acceptable to act like him.³¹¹ Lear responded in an opinion piece of his own: "My hope is that they won't feel so superior to him, so removed from him."³¹²

Each episode of *All in the Family* was filmed twice, in front audiences of about 250 people. "The executives could come down," O'Connor said, "and watch the audience reaction to some sensitive thing. If it was bad, they'd take it out," noting that the first audience was used to

³⁰⁸ McCrohan, *Archie & Edith, Mike & Gloria*, 36.

³⁰⁹ Timothy P. Meyer, "The Impact of All in the Family on Children," *Journal of Broadcasting*, Winter 1976, in *All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Richard P. Adler (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 169.

³¹⁰ For more reactions to the show see:

John Slawson, "How Funny Can Bigotry Be?" *Educational Broadcasting Review*, April 1972, in *All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Richard P. Adler (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 114-120.;

Arnold Hano, "Can Archie Bunker Give Bigotry a Bad Name?," *The Washington Post*, October 30, 1978, p. A1.;

Stuart H. Surlin, "Bigotry on the Air and in Life: The Archie Bunker Case," *Public Telecommunications Review*, 2 (April 1974): 34-41.

³¹¹ Laura Hobson, "As I Listened to Archie Say 'Hebe' . . .," *New York Times*, September 12, 1972, in *All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Richard P. Adler (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 97-106.

³¹² Norman Lear, "As I Read How Laura Saw Archie . . .," *New York Times*, October 10, 1972, in *All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Richard P. Adler (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 106-111.

gauge what the public's reaction would be.³¹³ While the show was extremely popular despite its content, the FCC did see a 1200 percent increase in viewer complaints from about 2,500 in 1972 to 33,000 in 1973.³¹⁴ So, with support from Congress, the National Association of Broadcasters instated "family hour," in 1975, keeping controversial shows like *All in the Family* off the air between 7 and 9 p.m.³¹⁵ After Lear and others sued, in November 1976 district judge Warren J. Ferguson ruled that "family hour" was a violation of freedom of speech.³¹⁶

There was a similar, though not as widespread consumer reaction to the sitcom as there had been for *I Love Lucy*. Throughout the 1970s, bumper stickers, T-shirts, beer mugs, posters, and political buttons that read "Archie Bunker for President," in addition to "Archie Bunker Campaign Headquarters" were created.³¹⁷ Archie even received a vote for the vice-presidency of the Democratic Convention.³¹⁸ "The degree to which the Bunkers touched their audience was revealed by the products that sprang up in their name," Jones writes. "A tongue-in-cheek but affectionate book called *The Wit and Wisdom of Archie Bunker*. A more serious collection of Edith's little homilies, compiled by a Christian publisher. A record of O'Connor and Stapleton singing the show's theme, which asserted that in the good old days we 'didn't need no welfare state, everybody pulled his weight....Mister, we could use a man like Herbert Hoover again.'"³¹⁹ In addition to consumer products, some schoolteachers assigned their students to watch the show and requested study guides from CBS.³²⁰

³¹³ "The Museum of Television & Radio Seminar Series: An Evening With Carroll O'Connor," 1992, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

³¹⁴ McCrohan, *Archie & Edith, Mike & Gloria*, 151.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

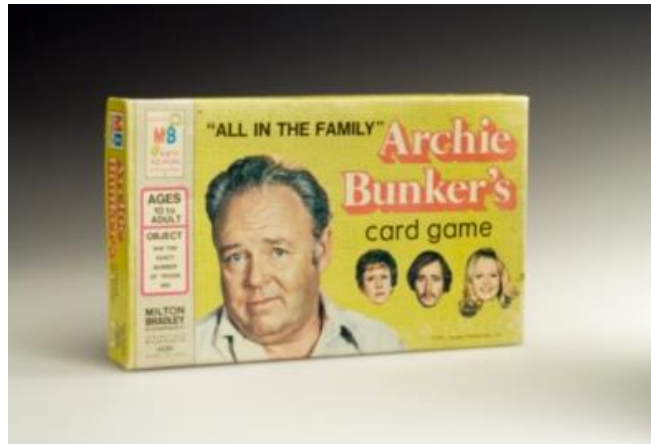
³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 153.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 190.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ Jones, *Honey, I'm Home!*, 212.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 206.



*An Archie Bunker card game created in 1972.*³²¹



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Campaign Buttons for Archie Bunker

Also similar to *I Love Lucy* was the fact that some viewers had difficulty separating the actors of the show from their characters. “Most of the American television viewing public is just a bit confused about Archie and Edith Bunker as differentiated from Carroll O’Connor and Jean Stapleton,” a 1974 article read. “With the premiere of the fifth season of America’s top-rated

³²¹ “Archie Bunker’s Card Game, 1972.” *Museum of the Moving Image*. Accessed April 10, 2015. http://collection.movingimage.us/index.php?g=detail&object_id=75913.

³²² Darren Garnick, “Archie Bunker, Mr. Clean, and More of History’s Greatest Fictional Presidential Candidates,” *Slate*, Accessed April 18, 2015, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2008/11/barbie_08.html.

comedy series ‘*All in the Family*,’ the Bunkers have been so integrated into the Saturday-night lifestyle of our living rooms that there has developed a popular misconception that the actors who play those roles are, in reality, those characters. They are not.”³²³ Archie and Edith, like Lucy and Ricky, were so engrained in American society, appearing on millions of televisions each week, that viewers who had been watching television for 20 years still had trouble separating fact from fiction.

Lear has made it clear that he does not think the show transformed American society. “I don’t believe at all that it reinforces *anything* bad in society,” Lear said. “But, again, I don’t see that it has changed anything for the good, either. *I* would be a horse’s ass if I thought that one little situation comedy would accomplish something that the entire Judeo-Christian ethic hasn’t managed in two thousand years. But there have been some specific results, results that were measurable. This usually occurred when we did a show on such a subject as clear and specific as health.”³²⁴ O’Connor credited Edith Bunker with helping women in the country. “What we then called ‘the women’s movement’ (or sometimes snidely ‘women’s liberation’) was getting into stride,” O’Connor wrote, “and Jean, besides being herself involved in it, and being a pace setter in the real world, saw to it that Edith, observed by twenty-five million people every week, was a courageous women’s champion in her own imaginary family.”³²⁵ He argued a clear difference in women’s attitudes, due directly to Edith, writing, “Before Edith came and endeared herself to America, women who lived with fellows like Archie were usually submissive and suffering in the face of roaring nonthink; after Edith, they confronted nonthink a little more sternly and stiffly, and gave hint of a serious readiness to rebel, just as Edith rebelled from time to time.”³²⁶

³²³ Arthur Unger, “Those Bunkers of ‘*All in the Family*,’” *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 9, 1974, p. 12, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³²⁴ Newcomb and Alley, *The Producer’s Medium*, 193.

³²⁵ O’Connor, *I Think I’m Outta Here*, 153.

³²⁶ *Ibid*, 153-4.

O'Connor cited conversations he had and letters he received—similar to the letters Desilu received regarding Lucy's pregnancy.³²⁷ McCrohan writes that the episode in which Edith is diagnosed with breast cancer, includes words of advice from Edith's neighbor directed toward Edith, but also toward the viewers.³²⁸ After the episode, more women made appointments for mammograms, and community service societies asked for tapes of the episode.³²⁹

Archie vs. Meathead and the Fragmentation of American Society

All in the Family mirrored the political and social tensions among Americans as Archie Bunker's son-in-law, who he called Meathead, represents the counterculture movement that rejected suburbia, conformity, and consumerism, and opposed the Vietnam War.³³⁰ The show mirrors the dissent and tension of American society, especially during the Nixon administration, and was watched by Americans of all political backgrounds—for different reasons.³³¹ In a question-and-answer session with fans, an audience member asked Lear if he ever felt pressure from Richard Nixon's administration. Lear said he did not, but mentioned that Nixon, in response to the portrayal of Archie Bunker, asked his political aide, H.R. Halderman, "Why did they make such a fool out of a good man?" showing the polarization of society.³³² In the second episode of the series, "Writing the President," Meathead writes a letter to Nixon, criticizing his policies, and so Archie writes a letter to the president, praising him.³³³ One Harris poll found that *All in the Family* was among the top favorite shows of Republicans, not Democrats.³³⁴

"Television has fantastic impact—not necessarily the content, but the medium itself. It's tending

³²⁷ O'Connor, *I Think I'm Outta Here*, 154.

³²⁸ McCrohan, *Archie & Edith, Mike & Gloria*, 73.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s*, (New York: Routledge, 2002).

³³¹ Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time*, 204.

³³² "Norman Lear Looks Back at 'All in the Family,'" 1998.

³³³ *All in the Family*, "Writing the President," Episode 2, Directed by John Rich, Teleplay by Paul Harrison, Lennie Weinrib, and Norman Lear, Story by Lee Erwin and Fred Freiberger, CBS, January 19, 1971.

³³⁴ McCrohan, *Archie & Edith, Mike & Gloria*, 196.

to polarize our society,” Henry Turnbull, Vice-President Supervisor at Clinton E. Frank Inc., told an advertising club in Dayton. “Newspapers and magazines don’t have the shock value, because there is time to reflect. But they do have more influence on the better educated and more affluent,” adding, “It’s been pretty well documented that the lower the education, the more the person watches television.”³³⁵



One of Archie and Meathead’s many arguments

Even though the show was intended to target socially liberal young audience members, it was a phenomenon that people of all different ages and political backgrounds watched the show. Neil Vidmar and Milton Rokeach’s commonly-cited 1974 study found that viewers of *All in the Family* watched the show for different reasons. Vidmar and Rokeach showed that viewers used different characters to affirm their beliefs. “Such an hypothesis,” they wrote, “seems to be supported by the fact that some viewers write letters (to newspaper editors, to CBS officials, and to people associated with the program) which applaud Archie for his racist viewpoint, while others applaud the show for effectively making fun of bigotry.”³³⁷ O’Connor said that he thought most of the people he spoke to understood that Archie was not supposed to be a role model, but

³³⁵“Youth Market is ‘Bill of Goods,’ Not Where Money Is, Turnbull Says,” *Advertising Age*, March 16, 1970, 3, 124.

³³⁶ “All in the Family, Writing the President,” *Hulu*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.hulu.com/watch/262045>. (“Writing the President,” January 19, 1971.)

³³⁷ Neil Vidmar and Milton Rokeach, “Archie Bunker’s Bigotry: A Study in Selective Perception and Exposure,” *Journal of Communication*, Winter 1974, in *All in the Family: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Richard P. Adler (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 125.

that some bigots did misunderstand the show's intent, and sided with Archie. "The public understood that we were making fun of a guy, that we weren't putting this fellow forward as a model of what the American male household should be. Everybody laughed watching the guy because he was so familiar," O'Connor said, but added, "Some people misinterpreted that and thought that we were just using this racist and this bigot to do a little comedy."³³⁸ He continued:

I've met thousands of people from all walks of life and I mean the highest and the lowest, the richest, the poorest, big American industrialists who are a few cuts above Archie, believe me—but they had Archie's views and the old anti-Semitism and the bigotry. A guy from Texas—"You sure got after those Jews last night Arch." So they misunderstood, but the ordinary people didn't misunderstand, they knew what we were up to and that was great satisfaction. We were doing what we set out to do.³³⁹

Lear set out to spotlight social and political issues in America's fragmented society of the late 1960s and 1970s. These social and political controversies were argued about by mainly two characters, each from a different side of the political spectrum. Though it is a sitcom, *All in the Family* is not a show remembered for its feel-good comedy, but rather for its groundbreaking content, which the next chapter will argue has affected its current-day perception.

³³⁸ "An Evening With Carroll O'Connor," 1992.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

Conclusion: Fan Memories of the Sitcoms Since Their Original Runs

More than sixty years after the premiere of *I Love Lucy*, fans still celebrate the beloved redhead in her hometown of Jamestown, New York, which holds annual festivals and conventions. There are online fan clubs and product lines devoted to the television sitcom. While the present day fan community for *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and *All in the Family* may not be as large or apparent, the legacies of these shows are still a part of American culture, and there are devoted fan groups—due in large part to reruns—that continue to watch, analyze, and create.

The study and perception of fandom and fans has evolved. Fans are viewed with more respect than in the past. “This depiction of fandom,” Cornel Sandvoss writes, “as a consequence of psychological or cultural dysfunction constitutes the background against which fans first attracted attention from media and cultural studies scholars in the 1980s.”³⁴⁰ Ronald Primeau’s 1979 book, *The Rhetoric of Television*, focuses on the harmful effects of television on health. He includes question prompts and charts that viewers can fill in while watching television, to add an intellectual aspect to the passive activity.³⁴¹ In Henry Jenkins’ updated introduction to his study of fandom, originally published in 1992, he writes, “Like many first wave fan studies, *Textual Poachers* spoke back to dominant representations of fans as ‘brainless consumers,’” adding, “Fans have moved from the margins to the mainstream within convergence culture and, echoing this shift, we’ve seen a proliferation of fan and geek characters within popular culture.”³⁴²

This chapter will discuss the fans of these three sitcoms since the endings of their original runs. First will be a discussion of the physical spaces dedicated to the shows. Following this will be discussions of communities in which fans speak to other fans, the act of fan collecting, and cases in which fans speak to celebrities and creative teams. The chapter will argue that of the

³⁴⁰ Cornel Sandvoss, *Fans: The Mirror of Consumption*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 2.

³⁴¹ Primeau, *The Rhetoric of Television*.

³⁴² Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* [1992], (New York: Routledge, 2013), xiv-xv.

three shows, *I Love Lucy* has the broadest and most visible fan base because the show was initially created, in the 1950s, to appeal to the widest audience.

Fan places

In an often-cited study of fan culture Matt Hills writes about Graceland, Elvis' former home which is now open to the public for tours. "Through Graceland," Hills writes, "the significance of Elvis—something which would otherwise tend to be free-floating, and incidental to processes of signification—can be contained or 'anchored' in a visible, physical and public fashion."³⁴³ Elvis fans have Memphis' Graceland, and Lucy fans have Jamestown. In addition to consuming their beloved television shows in living rooms through a television, having a place of homage in a physical sense is important for fans. "This process of anchorage," Hills writes, "is important since it provides a form of permanence to what would otherwise be a potentially fleeting pre-verbal experience," which is what the Lucy-Desi Center, and Jamestown in general, does.³⁴⁴ However, the museum has made recent efforts to make the town a place for future comics, after its unsuccessful plan to do so in the early 1990s. In 1991, the town held its first annual Lucille Ball New Comedy Festival, but it was not successful as it emphasized nostalgia. Lucie Arnaz compared it to a Star Trek convention: "It was fun. But in reality, my mother wouldn't have liked it."³⁴⁵ Reporter Paul Post wrote, "Ms. Ball's daughter, Lucie Arnaz, said her mother had always wanted to do something for Jamestown. But rather than statues and a parade, her vision was a place where future generations of comics would come to develop their skills. Jamestown officials agreed, but Ms. Arnaz said the promise was not kept."³⁴⁶ Now, the Center

³⁴³ Matt Hills, *Fan Cultures*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 154.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ Paul Post, "Seeking Economic Lift, Not Just Laughs, in Tie to Comedy," *New York Times*, 5 August 2012, p. A13, Accessed April 18, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/nyregion/in-lucille-balls-hometown-looking-for-more-than-laughs.html?_r=1.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

has a “Legacy of Laughter Plan,” hoping to make Jamestown the comedy capital of the country. Still, the Center has a museum which houses replicas of *I Love Lucy* sets, and appeals to fans who want to celebrate their favorite comedienne. Michael Stern, Lucy’s “number one fan,” even placed his hands in cement at a ceremony at the Center, showing the celebration of fans.³⁴⁷

Lucy Studd, a hospice care nurse who volunteers at the museum, leading bus tours, emphasizes the impact of *I Love Lucy* on people’s frames of mind. “I wonder if the stars on television realize how much they can really impact somebody’s life because I watch Lucille Ball to this day,” Studd said, who wears *I Love Lucy* smocks and scrubs at work, as some of her patients respond to the nostalgic clothing. “I catch it on the Hallmark Channel before I go to work and I just leave the house in such a good frame of mind.”³⁴⁸ Studd said that the Heritage Green nursing home, near Jamestown, has a wall devoted to Lucy, comprised of trading cards. A few years ago, when Studd found out there would be a 24-hour *Lucy* marathon on television, she told the nursing home ahead of time, knowing that patients—even those with Alzheimer’s—responded to the sitcom. The nursing home tuned in all the televisions to the marathon.³⁴⁹ “Humor is wonderful for people,” Studd said. “I have so many people tell me ‘I don’t feel like I’m dying.’ I use a lot of humor in my work with patients.” She also said that people say to her, “‘Lucy, you got some splainin’ to do,’” quoting Ricky Ricardo’s famous line.³⁵⁰

Special guests have accompanied Studd on her bus tours, including Wanda Clark, Ball’s secretary; Frank Gorey, Ball’s chauffeur; and Dann Cahn, a film editor for *I Love Lucy*.³⁵¹ Studd recounted a particularly touching moment that showed the effect of the series’ fans on members of the creative team. Larry Orenstein, who portrayed the mayor in the *I Love Lucy* episode “Lucy

³⁴⁷ Stern, *I Had a Ball*, 211.

³⁴⁸ Lucy Studd, interview with Mollie Galchus, February 26, 2015, phone interview.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

Goes to Scotland,” and wrote jingles throughout the series, including “Nobody Loves the Ump,” from the episode “Lucy Meets Bob Hope,” once joined Studd on a tour.³⁵² During the tour, Studd asked Orenstein, a quiet and humble gentleman, if he would speak on the microphone to the people on the bus. Orenstein said that nobody would know him, but Studd reassured him that *Lucy* fans would, especially for the baseball song. “He was bowled over that they even knew that song,” Studd said.³⁵³ She recalled that when she watched her son’s baseball games, she sometimes sang the song. On the bus, Orenstein asked Studd if she would sing the song for him. Everybody on the bus started clapping, but Studd said she sang even worse than Ball did. “He said, ‘Oh please,’” Studd said. “And everyone on the bus was clapping. He started crying. It was just such a touching moment. That was something to me—to have him realize that everybody on that bus knew his work, was overpowering, overwhelming to him.”³⁵⁴

Gregg McCullough, a member of the museum explained Jamestown’s role in letting *Lucy* fans connect and network:

I think it really does become a great place to interact and to network with other fans from around the country and it really has grown over the years too—not just fans of *Lucy* and her body of work and all of her comedy, but with the festivals having grown to encompass more other comedians. And I really think these festivals become a great place to network and to explore and enjoy other comedians and venues of comedy as well. *Lucy* is still the focal point and is very much the bedrock of everything but it really kind of grows to that end and it really in many ways is like an extended family. Many of the other *Lucy* fans, we really become a family—we keep in touch throughout the year with social media and other forms, and a lot of times we’re spread out throughout the United States and Canada, but coming to Jamestown to celebrate *Lucy* is like a homecoming of sorts, and it’s very much a social occasion, whether it’s going out to eat to catch up with near and dear friends, it really grows into a family of sorts.³⁵⁵

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Gregg McCullough, interview with Mollie Galchus, February 26, 2015, phone interview.

There is no museum for *All in the Family*, but the installation of Archie and Edith Bunker's chairs in Washington, D.C.'s Smithsonian Institution, though not currently on view, shows the sitcom's legacy in American culture. Fans of *All in the Family* may not plan a trip to the Smithsonian to see only the chairs, but the installation has acted as an anchor, as visitors pass the glass-encased chairs. "Archie's chair, Edith's chair, and Archie's beer can occupy a place of honor on display at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.," McCrohan writes, "as much a part of our national heritage as Abe Lincoln's stovepipe hat and George Washington's wooden teeth."³⁵⁶ The Bunkers' Queens house at 89-70 Cooper Avenue still looks very much the same as it did in the establishing shot of *All in the Family*, at the end of the opening credits. However, the house has seen fewer fans in recent years, and does not act as place of pilgrimage of fans as does Ball's Jamestown.³⁵⁷ There is no such physical space for fans of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, though the New Rochelle Walk of Fame honors Carl Reiner and his son, Rob Reiner, who played Meathead.³⁵⁸



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Left: the Bunker house as seen in the opening credits; Right: the house in 2013

³⁵⁶ McCrohan, *Archie & Edith, Mike & Gloria*, 198.

³⁵⁷ Vivian Yee, "Stifled by Time's Passage, Fewer Fans Visit the Bunkers' TV Home," *New York Times*, 2 June 2013, p. A16, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/03/nyregion/fewer-fans-visit-all-in-the-family-tv-home.html>.

³⁵⁸ Michael Woyton, "2013 New Rochelle Walk of Fame Inductees Named," *New Rochelle Patch*, May 7, 2013, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://patch.com/new-york/newrochelle/2013-new-rochelle-walk-of-fame-inductees-named>.

³⁵⁹ "Meet the Bunkers," *Hulu*, ("Meet the Bunkers," January 12, 1971.)


³⁶⁰ Scout, "Stopping By Archie Bunker's House in Queens," *Scouting NY*, February 5, 2013, Accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.scoutingny.com/stopping-by-archie-bunkers-house-in-queens/>.



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The Bunkers' chairs in the Smithsonian Institution

Carl & Rob Reiner... All in the Family




In 1953, Carl and Estelle Reiner moved from the Bronx with their 6 year-old son Rob to 48 Boeuse Meadow Road in New Rochelle. Carl recalls that, at the time, this section of New Rochelle was still not developed and you could buy fresh corn from a local farm.

This was a fortuitous move for the Reiners, as Bonnie Meadow Road would also become the fictitious address of Rob and Laura Petrie who were featured in the hit TV series *The Dick Van Dyke Show* starring Dick Van Dyke and Mary Tyler Moore (1961 to 1966). Reiner created, wrote and acted in the show, which was based on his relationship with his wife Estelle, an artist, actress – best known for her famous line “I’ll have what she’s having” in son Rob’s 1989 movie *When Harry met Sally*.



Carl Reiner first made a name for himself in *Sat Caesar’s Your Show of Shows* (1950-54) and *Caesar’s Hour* (1954-57), where he won two Emmy awards. He directed *Enter*

Lighting (1967), *Oh, God* (1977), *The Jerk* (1979), *Dead Men Don’t Wear Plaid* (1982), *The Man With Two Brains* (1983) and *All of Me* (1984). He is also known for his comedy routine with Mel Brooks, “The 2,000 Year-Old Man” for which he won a Grammy Award.





Rob Reiner began his television career writing for *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* (1967-1969). He came to prominence as Michael “Meathead” Stivic on the sit-com *All in the Family* (1971-1979). In 1987, he co-founded Castle Rock Entertainment that produced the TV series *Scrubs* and such classic films as *When Harry Met Sally* (1989) and *A Few Good Men* (1992), which he directed as well. Other directing credits include *Stand by Me* (1986) and *The Princess Bride* (1987). Much like his *All in the Family* character, he is active in liberal politics and has championed numerous environmental causes.

His star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is next to his father’s. “25 years ago I would not have liked it” he said “now my reaction is completely different.”

NEW ROCHELLE WALK OF FAME

The New Rochelle Walk of Fame was created and donated by Robbink-Kennedy Inc. in memory of his New Rochelle ancestry.

In a ceremony on April 27, 2013, city officials unveiled a plaque honoring Carl and Rob Reiner for the New Rochelle Walk of Fame. Image courtesy of New Rochelle Public Library.

³⁶¹ Leah Binkowitz, “Entertainment Curator Remembers ‘All in the Family’ Star Jean Stapleton,” *Smithsonian*, June 3, 2013, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/entertainment-curator-remembers-all-in-the-family-star-jean-stapleton-88978893/?no-ist>.

Fans Speaking to Other Fans

The interaction among fans—what Jenkins refers to as “collective intelligence”—is an important aspect of fandom. “Fan communities,” Jenkins writes, “were among the first to experiment with ways they could pool knowledge, build on each other’s expertise, and trade insights within networked communities.”³⁶² In contrast to the earlier “stereotypes of fans as cultural dupes, social misfits, and mindless consumers,” Jenkins writes:

Drawing on the work of Michel de Certeau, it proposes an alternative conception of fans as readers who appropriate popular texts and reread them in a fashion that serves different interests, as spectators who transform the experience of watching television into a rich and complex participatory culture. Viewed in this fashion, fans become a model of the type of textual ‘poaching’ de Certeau associates with popular reading. Their activities pose important questions about the ability of media producers to constrain the creation and circulation of meanings. Fans construct their cultural and social identity through borrowing and inflecting mass culture images, articulating concerns which often go unvoiced within the dominant media.³⁶³

Jamestown is a physical place for Lucy fans to speak about their favorite sitcom and comedienne, but online fan clubs are another way to share thoughts, opinions, and rare footage. The internet has given fans a new forum to connect and share personal stories, as well as rare archival material. “Since 1994, allinthefamilysitcom’s been providing fans of the popular 1970’s TV show, a place to connect, reminisce, and relive *All in the Family* favorite moments,” reads the homepage of an *All in the Family* website.³⁶⁴ However, this website, along with many fan websites for *I Love Lucy*, is outdated, and now many fans connect to each other through Facebook groups. Recently, a Facebook group started by Lucy fans, dedicated to the removal of an unflattering statue of the actress in Jamestown, has made national headlines.³⁶⁵ Waldron,

³⁶² Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*, xxv.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁶⁴ Home page, *All In The Family Sitcom*, Accessed April 21, 2015, <http://allinthefamilysit.com/>.

³⁶⁵ “We Love Lucy! Get Rid of this Statue,” *Facebook*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/s/We-Love-Lucy-Get-Rid-of-this-Statue/337376016351514>.

author of *The Official Dick Van Dyke Show Book*, runs a Facebook group for fans of the 1960s sitcom, where he posts rare photographs and links to other websites about the show. This group's members are skewed toward those of middle age, and Waldron said the most vocal people are those who remember the original airings from childhood. However, he notes that there are members from all over, including Brazil, in addition to younger members.³⁶⁶ *Lucylounge.com* is a website of message boards where fans talk about anything related to Lucy. "The online experience has made it a lot easier to connect to people," administrator Brock Weir said. "It's also made the group in turn be tight-knit. Since the internet really took off people began to share videos from the Lucy's other series—*The Lucy Show* or *Here's Lucy*—and it really stimulated the discussion and broadened the appreciation."³⁶⁷ He added that the website's members range in age from 11 or 12 to their mid-70s.³⁶⁸ "I've met a lot of people who I've become close friends with throughout the years on *Lucy Lounge*," co-administrator James Sheridan said, "and it's great to have people to talk to about Lucy."³⁶⁹

The Facebook group communities for the three sitcoms help show that *Lucy* currently has the widest fan base. Looking at the most popular Facebook groups for each show, *I Love Lucy* is the only show of the three that has a verified Facebook account, with many more members than the other two groups.

³⁶⁶ Waldron, interview, February 27, 2015.

³⁶⁷ Brock Weir, interview with Mollie Galchus, February 27, 2015, phone interview.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁹ James Sheridan, interview with Mollie Galchus, February 27, 2015, phone interview.

Name of Facebook page	Number of Members/“Likes” (as of 4/16/2015)
“I Love Lucy”	1,849,801 ³⁷⁰
“The Dick Van Dyke Show”	133,796 ³⁷¹
“All in the Family”	177,774 ³⁷²

Within online communities, fans share fan texts—creations based on the show—that include art or writing. “Fan art,” Jenkins writes, “also plays a central role in solidifying and maintaining the fan community; the creation, exhibition, and exchange of videos creates the conditions for a communal artform, one contrasting with the commercial culture from which it is derived in its refusal to make a profit and its desire to share its products with others who will value them.”³⁷³ Fans have made models of the fictional families’ houses. One fan of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* published a blogpost with a sketch of a layout of the Petries’ home based on what was seen on television.³⁷⁴

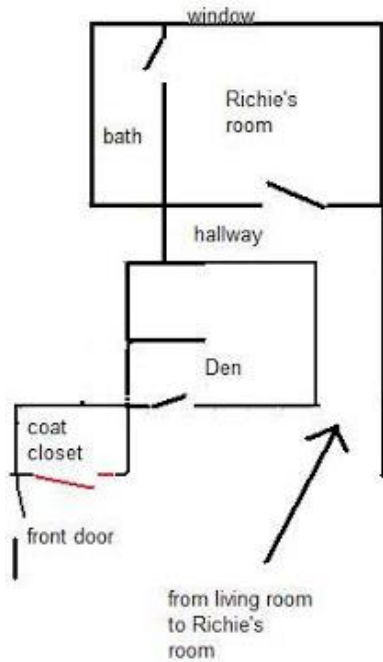
³⁷⁰ “I Love Lucy,” *Facebook*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <https://www.Facebook/ILove.Lucy?fref=ts>.

³⁷¹ “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” *Facebook*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <https://www.Facebook/s/The-Dick-Van-Dyke-Show/297508447013181?fref=ts>

³⁷² “All in the Family,” *Facebook*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/s/All-in-the-Family/112078725470379?fref=ts&rf=107959389237204>.

³⁷³ Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*, 248.

³⁷⁴ “The Curious Geometry of the Petrie House—Part 2,” *The Dick Van Dyke Show: Episode Reviews, Quotes, Observations and Essays*, July 16, 2011, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://dickvandykeshow.blogspot.com/2011/07/curious-geometry-of-petrie-house-part-2.html>.



³⁷⁵ *Fan's sketch of the Petrie household*

The fan had looked at an aerial view of the Petrie's New Rochelle street, Bonnie Meadow Road, to look at the street's curvature and better understand the house's layout.³⁷⁶ In the comment section, a fellow fan shared the link to a 3D computer-animated model she created of the home that included every room ever shown or mentioned, and additional aspects of the house.³⁷⁷ "Although fan communities are not, therefore always stable or harmonious," Mark Duffett writes, "their primary function is to act as a support network and manifest the unity of the fan base."³⁷⁸ A fellow fan praised the 3D model's intricacy but criticized some of the creator's interpretations. "Fan communities have both internal and external kinds of functions," Duffett

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ "148 Bonnie Meadow Road," *The Dick Van Dyke Show: Episode Reviews, Quotes, Observations and Essays*, June 5, 2011, Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://dickvandykeshow.blogspot.com/2011/06/148-bonnie-meadow-road.html>.

³⁷⁷ Lora Chadbourne, "The Dick Van Dyke Show House—a Second Life Build," *Flickr*, Accessed April 18, 2015, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/24706947@N05/sets/72157629069510836/>.

³⁷⁸ Mark Duffett, *Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the Study of Media Fan Culture*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 249.

adds. “Internally, they welcome, support and socialize individuals. Externally, they organize to act as a collective bodies that represent both the fans and their heroes.”³⁷⁹



*Fan's 3D computer-animated creation of the Petrie house*³⁸⁰

Before the internet was popular, David Van Deusen, a fan of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, created a newsletter in 1995 called *The Walnut Times*—a reference to the sci-fi episode of the series, “It May Look Like a Walnut.”³⁸¹ Van Deusen credits reruns for his renewed appreciation of the show. He then wrote letters to the cast, thanking them for still entertaining, 30 years later.³⁸² “It really became to me a dream of a fan come true,” Van Deusen said, “because I managed to start to garner interviews with the cast but then through a few trips to California I really became friends with the cast and I do consider Carl Reiner a friend and Dick Van Dyke a friend and Rose Marie a friend and Larry Mathews a friend. Every year or so I go out to L.A. and visit Rose Marie in her house, and have lunch with Dick Van Dyke.” Over the course of his newsletter’s 20-year run, which just recently ended, Van Deusen interviewed every living person with a connection to the show—regular cast members, crew members, and actors who appeared

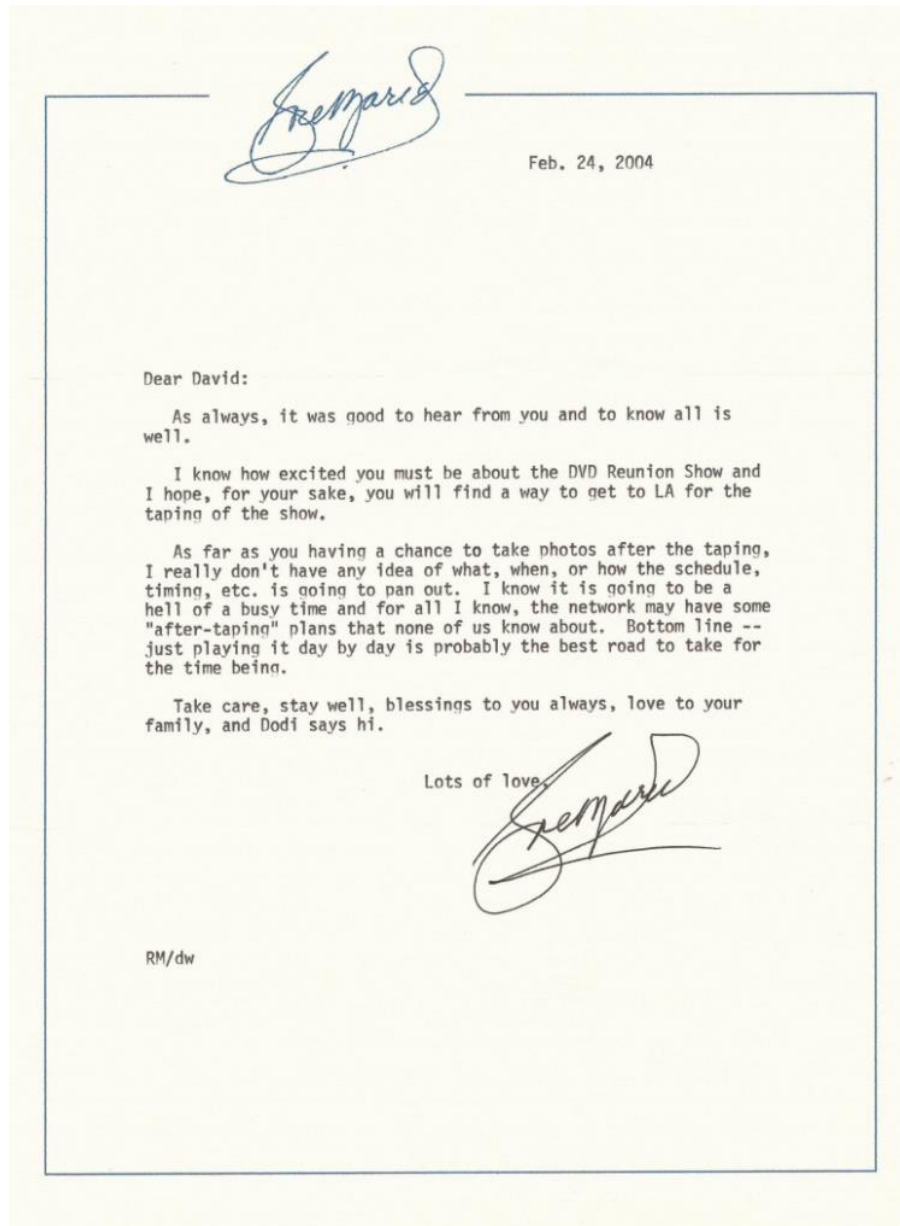
³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Chadbourne, “The Dick Van Dyke Show House—a Second Life Build.”

³⁸¹ David Van Deusen, interview with Mollie Galchus, February 28, 2015, phone interview.

³⁸² Ibid.

on only one episode.³⁸³ Van Deusen has also contributed to television specials related to *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and has helped at award ceremonies for the show. He even wrote the arrangement of the show's theme song for Van Dyke's a cappella group.³⁸⁴



A letter from Rose Marie, the actress who played Sally Rogers on The Dick Van Dyke Show, to David Van Deusen. Van Deusen's story is one example of how fans can create personal relationships with celebrities, through their fandom. Image courtesy of David Van Deusen.³⁸⁵

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Rose Marie, *Letter from Rose Marie to David Van Deusen*, Letter, February 24, 2004, Courtesy of David Van Deusen.

Fans and Collecting

Fans also partake in is the act of collecting. Duffett recognizes three types of collecting. The first is the “accumulation of *mimetic traces of the performance itself*.” The second is “*merchandise*: mass-produced material associated with the original text, series, author or performer.” The third is “*memorabilia*: unique and personal material that is intimately linked to the original object of interest.”³⁸⁶ Stern wrote about his extensive collection of Lucy merchandise. Amazon sells a replica of the poster that was on the wall of Rob Petrie’s office, and there are plenty of *All in the Family* items for sale as well.³⁸⁷ “Fans are increasingly becoming recognized in their role as historians, curators of material and spokespeople for generational memory,” Duffett writes.³⁸⁸

Just as *I Love Lucy* mirrored the average American family, the fourth and fifth seasons of the show saw Lucy imitate the experience of fans and celebrities, and the act of collecting, as the Ricardos and Mertzes drove to Hollywood for Ricky to appear in a movie. “One distinction between fan-celebrity relationships and ‘ordinary’ social relationships,” Kerry Ferris and Scott Harris write, “involves the element of trophy seeking: fans seek to take away a souvenir of sorts from their encounters with stars.” This is best seen in the episodes “Lucy Visits Grauman’s” and “The Tour.”³⁸⁹ In “Lucy Visits Grauman’s” Lucy and Ethel visit the famous theater, find that the concrete slab with John Wayne’s footprints is loose, and scheme to steal the slab.³⁹⁰ In “The Tour,” Lucy and Ethel take a bus tour of famous Beverly Hills homes. When the bus stops at the

³⁸⁶ Duffett, *Understanding Fandom*, 180.

³⁸⁷ “The Dairymaids [Dairy Maids] 11” X 14” Print of Art Made Famous on “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” *Amazon*, Accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.amazon.com/Dairymaids-Dairy-Maids-Print-Famous/dp/B00CL19RKK>;

A fan asked Van Dyke about the significance of this poster. Van Dyke said there was no particular significance—it was just the cover to a piece of sheet music. See: “A Conversation With Dick Van Dyke,” 1998, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

³⁸⁸ Duffett, *Understanding Fandom*, 253.

³⁸⁹ Ferris and Harris, *Stargazing*, 14.

³⁹⁰ *I Love Lucy*, “Lucy Visits Grauman’s,” Episode 128, Directed by James V. Kern, Written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh, Bob Carroll, Jr., Bob Schiller and Bob Weiskopf, CBS, October 3, 1955.

home of Richard Widmark, Lucy schemes to steal a grapefruit from his backyard tree—a trophy from her adventure in the star-studded neighborhood—the neighborhood in which Lucille Ball actually lived.³⁹¹ “Maps of the stars’ homes are sold on almost every Hollywood street corner, and their continued popularity indicates that fans have always sought the information necessary to track down celebrities in their private lives,” Ferris and Harris write, paralleling the Hollywood episodes of *Lucy*.³⁹² The authors refer to a “‘moral order’ of celebrity sightings, as people try to figure out who celebrities are to them (strange or known other?) and how to respond (ignore them or approach them?)” another concept exemplified by a Hollywood episode, “L.A., At Last.”³⁹³ In this episode, Lucy is star struck by William Holden eating at the next table at the Brown Derby restaurant. Instead of saying hello, she stares at him while he eats.³⁹⁴ The sitcom was reflexive in its dealing with fan-celebrity interaction even in episodes not set in Hollywood, such as in the episode “Fan Magazine Interview,” when a reporter of a fan magazine interviews Ricky and Lucy, showing the importance of the fan and related industries.³⁹⁵ Similar to Lucy Ricardo’s actions toward celebrities in the Hollywood episodes, Ball told an audience in 1984 that one fan trespassed onto her property and snuck into her guesthouse overnight. Ball told this story in response to an audience member asking about the famous grapefruit episode. She added that she wished she had never done the episode, because when Ball finally confronted the trespassing fan, the fan used Lucy and Ethel’s crazy schemes to defend his act.³⁹⁶

³⁹¹ *I Love Lucy*, “The Tour,” Episode 127, Directed by William Asher, Written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh, and Bob Carroll, Jr., CBS, May 30, 1955.

³⁹² Ferris and Harris, *Stargazing*, 22.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁹⁴ *I Love Lucy*, “L.A., At Last,” Episode 114, Directed by William Asher, Written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh, and Bob Carroll, Jr., CBS, February 7, 1955.

³⁹⁵ *I Love Lucy*, “Fan Magazine Interview,” Episode 83, Directed by William Asher, Written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh, and Bob Carroll, Jr., CBS, February 8, 1954.

³⁹⁶ “Museum of Broadcasting Seminar Series: Lucille Ball: Seminar at Citibank Auditorium 1984,” 1984, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.



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Lucy and Ethel stealing John Wayne's footprints



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William Holden catches Lucy starting at him while eating at the Brown Derby

Fans Speaking to the Celebrities and Creative Teams

Fans also meet celebrities in person, by chance or at seminars with question-and-answer sessions.³⁹⁹ “Face-to-face meetings are seen as better than moments of media consumption,” Duffett writes, “because they enable fans to expand their knowledge of the performer into new areas and also to redress some of the asymmetries typical to the fan-celebrity relationship.”⁴⁰⁰

A 1998 video shows a question-and-answer segment between the audience and panel, comprised of Ball and Arnaz's children, Lucie Arnaz and Desi Arnaz Jr., and the creative team

³⁹⁷ “Lucy and Ethel stealing John Wayne's footprints from Grauman's Chinese Theatre In Hollywood,” *Pinterest*, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/191754896608514939/>. (“Lucy Visits Grauman's,” October 3, 1955.)

³⁹⁸ Hal Boedeker, “CBS offers colorized Lucy, William Holden, Superman,” April 16, 2015, Accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/entertainment/tv/tv-guy/os-cbs-i-love-lucy-william-holden-superman-20150416-post.html>.

³⁹⁹ For more information on audience studies regarding fan communities, see Lisa A. Lewis, *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, (New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁴⁰⁰ Duffett, *Understanding Fandom*, 167.

of *I Love Lucy*, after the audience viewed a never-before-seen extended version of an *I Love Lucy* special.⁴⁰¹ In this video, the fans asked questions about behind-the-scene aspects of the show, and Arnaz told the audience that the laughter of her grandmother, DeDe—Ball’s mother—was audible on the episode. The panel also noted that the laughter of production member Jim Paisley was audible, as was Desi Arnaz’s laughter. Writer Bob Carroll told the audience that his father started the applause of every episode, and writer Madelyn Pugh Davis, said that her mother, along with Desi Arnaz’s mother, Ball’s mother, and Carroll’s parents sat together at every taping of the series.⁴⁰²

When Ball was a guest on the Phil Donahue Show on March 15, 1974, the audience had a chance to ask her questions.⁴⁰³ The audience was most interested in Ball’s personal life—where she lived, what she liked to do for fun, and how her former co-stars were doing. “As an audience, we are drawn to deconstruct the star,” Marshall writes, “and in that process of reading the elaborate text that goes beyond the screen image, we are compelled to debate the nature of the star’s public and private selves.”⁴⁰⁴ Also prevalent in this video was the audience’s admiration for Ball. “Thank you so much for all the years of happiness you’ve given me and my family,” one audience member told Ball.⁴⁰⁵ A caller on speaker-phone told Ball, “I just wanted to tell you what a great comedienne we think you are and to thank you for the many fantastic clean entertainment hours you’ve given my family and myself, and we’re really going to miss you in the future welcoming you into our home,” showing the staple that Ball was in households.⁴⁰⁶ Another fan said, “You seem so much that you enjoy life—and I’m so nervous—my mother just loved you and she had such a special way of saying it, during the day she told me what you did,

⁴⁰¹ “Museum of Television & Radio: 15th Annual William S. Paley Television Festival: Lucy Takes a Cruise to Havana 1998 [Panel discussion with the writers and crew of the show and Lucie and Desi Arnaz Jr.],” 1998, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ “The Phil Donahue Show: Lucille Ball 1974,” 1974, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

⁴⁰⁴ Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 18.

⁴⁰⁵ “The Phil Donahue Show: Lucille Ball 1974,” 1974.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

you seem to enjoy life,” showing that the fan was so nervous to be in the presence of someone she admired so much. The fan’s reference to her mother shows that Ball’s comedy appealed to multiple generations.⁴⁰⁷

Through these panel discussions fans told their favorite television stars and creators how much their shows meant to them. “I hope that all you gentlemen realize what a big part you have played in a lot of us growing up,” one fan told the creative team of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, after which the rest of the audience applauded in agreement.⁴⁰⁸ The man then told the panel that he was in the audience of the controversial “That’s My Boy???” episode.⁴⁰⁹ So, though audience studies showed that *The Dick Van Dyke Show* especially appealed to adult audiences, children also watched. In a salute to Carl Reiner, one fan told the panel, “this is a very special night for me,” explaining that the event ticket was a birthday present. “The absolute best show in the entire world is *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and I think Sheldon Leonard’s spirit is with us tonight,” the fan continued before asking the panel what their favorite memory of working on the show was.⁴¹⁰ “*The Dick Van Dyke Show* was a wonderful opportunity for all of us to laugh,” a fan said adding that he did not see the first runs of the show, but grew up watching the show’s reruns along with *I Love Lucy*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, and *The Real McCoys*.⁴¹¹ The same fan said, “It was a pleasure to be sick from school to stay home and watch great entertainment.”⁴¹² One audience member asked the panel where they saw the Petries today, to which someone jokingly answered, “divorced.” The crowd booed, showing the bond between the fans and the show’s characters.⁴¹³ One fan told O’Connor during a question-and-answer session, “When

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” 1988.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ “A Salute to Carl Reiner,” 1999.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” 1988.

people dismiss television as meaningless entertainment, I think they have to look at your creation of Archie Bunker as what TV can do that theater can't. You can achieve dimension on TV. Thank you for that.”⁴¹⁴ One audience member told Stapleton, “You actually became a relative, I saw you so much.”⁴¹⁵

Members of the creative teams also shared their inspiration for certain aspects of the shows during panel discussions. “Carl told us never let Rob do anything you wouldn't do,” Denoff said of Reiner. “You're never a smartass to a cop. Plumbers weren't funny—you never had a funny plumber come into your house—he never does jokes.”⁴¹⁶ They were also venues for audience members to ask specific questions about the show's sets or props. One fan asked Lear whether the toilet heard on the show was the recording of an actual toilet—it was.⁴¹⁷ Another fan asked whether the sets of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* still existed. Van Dyke said that they did not, and Reiner chimed in, saying, “The Smithsonian didn't want them,” referencing the installation of the Bunker's furniture into the museum.⁴¹⁸

The fans showed the artists how passionate they were about their work. One woman showed Van Dyke her “Nick At Nite wristwatch,” and asked him to sign it for her, explaining that she already got Reiner's signature the year before. Van Dyke told the audience that the most difficult object he ever had to sign was a white chicken.⁴¹⁹ Another fan asked Van Dyke if he remembered what each letter of the middle name of his television son represented—the topic of an episode of the series. Van Dyke said he did not remember, after which the fan recited the correct names and the audience applauded, showing the knowledge of passionate fans.⁴²⁰ In

⁴¹⁴ “An Evening With Carroll O'Connor,” 1992.

⁴¹⁵ “The Museum of Television & Radio: An Evening With Jean Stapleton,” 2002, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

⁴¹⁶ “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” 1988.

⁴¹⁷ “Norman Lear Looks Back at ‘All in the Family,’” 1998.

⁴¹⁸ “A Salute to Carl Reiner,” 1999.

⁴¹⁹ “A Conversation With Dick Van Dyke,” 1998.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

another panel discussion with the cast and crew of *I Love Lucy*, the moderator even introduced a Lucy impersonator.⁴²¹ Audience members also wanted the actors to say their famous catchphrases. In one video, a fan asked Ball about the origin of her famous “spider” face that was a sign of disgust. When Lucy made the famous face, the fans in the audience clapped.⁴²² Similarly, the audience clapped after Moore gave a rendition of her famous “Oh Rob” cry.⁴²³ The audience even clapped at the mere mention of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* when Denoff recalled a moment from the show, while on a panel with many actors, actresses, and behind-the-scenes personnel of Cahuenga Studios, the studio of *The Dick Van Dyke Show*.⁴²⁴

Outside formal occasions like these, fans have continued to show their love for their favorite sitcoms by interacting with the actors in person or through fan mail. Arnaz wrote that even twenty-four years after *I Love Lucy*, kids came up to him to ask him to say Ricky Ricardo’s famous phrase, “miraquetienecosalamujeresta,” showing that fans strongly identify with characters, not necessarily the actors.⁴²⁵ Stern kept in touch with Ball through letters and holiday cards as they eventually became close friends. When he was 13, he invited her to his Bar Mitzvah. Ball responded to the invitation:

Dear Michael, We have just returned from Palm Springs to find your lovely handwritten invitation to your Bar Mitzvah on January 12. Apparently it was mixed in with a batch of fan mail which waited for my attention. Gary and I are very sorry to have missed this event which is so important to a young man’s life. I am sure your parents are very proud of you. I know we are. I appreciate the fact I have fans like you and look forward to your next visit to my show. Please give my best wishes to your mother and father and tell them we are sorry to have missed this special occasion. Love, Lucy.⁴²⁶

⁴²¹ “Museum of Television & Radio Seminar Series: The Unseen Lucy and Desi: Working with Lucy and Desi 2000 [Panel discussion with the writers and crew of the show],” 2000, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

⁴²² “Lucille Ball: Seminar at Citibank Auditorium 1984,” 1984.

⁴²³ “An Evening With Mary Tyler Moore,” 1993, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

⁴²⁴ “Museum of Broadcasting’s 7th Annual Television Festival in Los Angeles: Danny Thomas and Sheldon Leonard: The Cahuenga Studios Legacy 1990 [Panel discussion with the cast and creative team],” 1990, Video, Accessed at The Paley Center for Media.

⁴²⁵ Arnaz, *A Book*, 160.

⁴²⁶ Stern, *I Had a Ball*, 34.

Dick Van Dyke has said that he has received fan mail from all over the world, specifically mentioning Africa.⁴²⁷ In response to a fan who asked Van Dyke what his reaction is that children still watch the show, Van Dyke said:

I love it. You should see the mail I get—it's just wonderful. I'm starting to get mail from young people, mostly teenagers who watch the show that we're doing right now which is not necessarily aimed at them. There is no explicit sex, no graphic violence, and these are young people saying that, and I think that networks are making a terrible mistake in not realizing that they've gone as far out as they can go, as hip as they can get. People are beginning to need a little bit of substance in their entertainment. I think people are looking for a little spirituality, I really believe that. Young people. I've had letters from young people who said 'what happened? You were there, what happened to this?' Young people are really worried.⁴²⁸

Why Are There Different Legacies?

There are still passionate fan communities for each of these three sitcoms, though the fandom for *I Love Lucy* is much more prevalent than the others'. Lucy had "a face seen by more people, more often, than the face of any [other] human being who ever lived," according to a *TV Guide* article.⁴²⁹ After the historic popularity of *I Love Lucy*, Ball continued to attract fans. Shortly before Ball died, Los Angeles' Cedars-Sinai hospital received the largest amount of mail than ever before.⁴³⁰ After her death, flags flew at half-mast and billboards in Los Angeles read, "Rest in peace, Lucy."⁴³¹ "We all had just lost a good friend," Stern wrote. "One who had been in our homes every day for nearly four decades."⁴³² Lucie Arnaz planned three memorial services in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. All were held on a Monday night at 8 p.m.⁴³³

⁴²⁷ "The Dick Van Dyke Show," 1988.

⁴²⁸ "A Conversation With Dick Van Dyke," 1998.

⁴²⁹ Stark, *Glued to the Set*, 26.

⁴³⁰ Stern, *I Had a Ball*, 200.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 205.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 206.



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Front page of the New York Post from the day after Ball died read, “Lucille Ball in a classic pose from ‘I Love Lucy,’ the most popular TV situation comedy in history

Nostalgia plays a key role in how present-day viewers perceive the shows. “Ah, nostalgia,” one visitor of the Lucy-Desi Center wrote in the guestbook. ““She was a sweetie! When we live it, do we ever realize that it’s history in the making?”⁴³⁵ Through reruns, generations of viewers have grown up watching these classic shows.⁴³⁶ Sandvoss writes that many fandoms begin in childhood.⁴³⁷ This could be one reason for the wider fandom of *Lucy*, as it was a sitcom for all ages. Lucy’s schemes involve slapstick comedy—low comedy, attractive to not only adults but also children. In contrast, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, known for its smart and sophisticated writing, may be too elitist in attracting a large group of fans. The controversial issues of *All in the Family*’s episodes are also not the most attractive to a younger viewer—

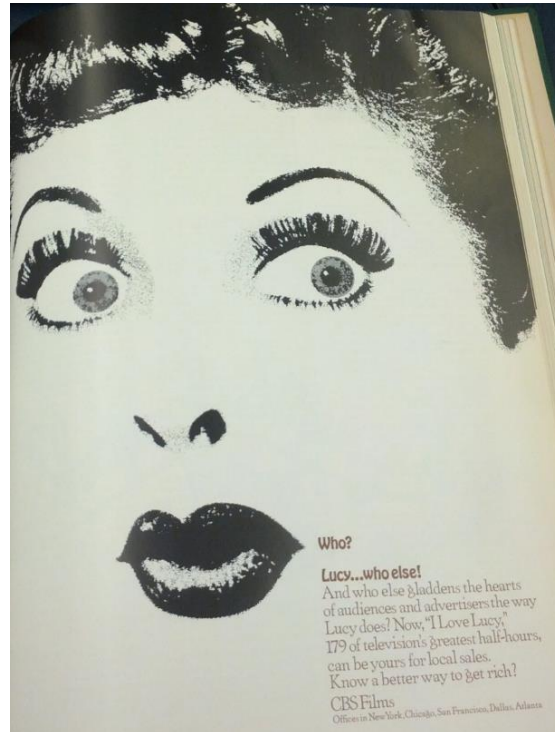
⁴³⁴ Cover of *New York Post*, April 27, 1989. My mother, a Lucy fan, saved this newspaper

⁴³⁵ Randal C. Archibold, “In a Small Upstate City, They Love Lucy Anew,” *New York Times*, March 23, 2002, p. B4.

⁴³⁶ For more information on reruns, see: Derek Kompare, *Rerun Nation: How Repeats Invented American Television*, (New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁴³⁷ Sandvoss, *Fans*, 91.

though children did watch the show, but as studies have shown the children did not fully understand the show's content. "*I Love Lucy* is really a superbly done comfort food and summons nostalgia and is so much of its era," Waldron said.⁴³⁸ *Lucy's* current popularity may show that viewers prefer to watch a show that can return them to the 1950s, perceived as a time more innocent than the late 1960s or 1970s with its more fragmented society.⁴³⁹



"Lucy...who else! And who else gladdens the hearts of audiences and advertisers the way Lucy does!" read a 1967 advertisement.⁴⁴⁰

When looking at the lasting legacy of the main characters, Lucy Ricardo is categorized as an icon, as is Archie Bunker. Rob Petrie, though, gets lost in the mix. Ball's face, though elegant, was also clown-like. Her orange-red hair, big blue eyes, and painted red lips created an image destined to become an icon. "Miss Ball has the most plastic face of any pretty comedienne," read

⁴³⁸ Waldron, interview, February 27, 2015.

⁴³⁹ However, nostalgic broadcasts and television specials have also honored *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and *All in the Family*. See: Tom Shales, "The Influential Archie Bunker," *Washington Post*, February 16, 1991, p. C1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.; Brian Lowry, "Review: 'The Dick Van Dyke Show' Revisited," *Variety*, May 9, 2004, Accessed April 19, 2015, <http://variety.com/2004/scene/markets-festivals/the-dick-van-dyke-show-revisited-1200533580/>.

⁴⁴⁰ Advertisement for CBS Films, *Television Magazine*, April 1967.

a 1953 article. “What is more important, she knows how to keep it under absolute control. She may mug outrageously, but she is equally capable of subtle expression. It is Miss Ball who raises *Lucy* above the level of ordinary, slickly-written farce.”⁴⁴¹ Though the audience connected to the basic human emotions of *I Love Lucy*, the crazy slapstick scenes have created timeless snapshots of over-the-top situations. Lucille Ball was related to her character, Lucy Ricardo, in ways not true for Dick Van Dyke and Rob Petrie, or for Carroll O’Connor and Archie Bunker. America’s love affair with Lucy was the first of its kind. Ball was one of the first comediennes to gain so much popularity. Ball, the actress and pioneer for women, and Lucy the fictional character and housewife who tries to branch out of her environment, were a perfect combination in creating a legend.⁴⁴² Though Van Dyke performed impressive slapstick routines in *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, his character was a gentle husband, co-worker, and father. He followed the rules and was nervous around authorities figures—characteristics that are realistic, but that do not make a television icon. In addition, *The Dick Van Dyke Show* ended in 1966, just before the height of the counterculture period, so it is possible that the young adults of the time rejected the show, grouping it with earlier bland suburban shows such as *Leave it to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*. Archie Bunker is an icon in American cultural history because of his outspokenness, though what he stands for is not something positive. The humor that Archie and his sitcom created was not carefree, but always politically divisive. “Lucille Ball,” McCrohan writes, “saw parallels between *All in the Family* and the days when ‘the Romans let human beings be eaten by lions, while they laughed and drank—that was entertainment. But I’m tired of the ugly.’”⁴⁴³ The love of *Lucy* shows that pure and simple entertainment may be the most enduring. On April 16, 2015,

⁴⁴¹ “*I Love Lucy*,” 15.

⁴⁴² Waldron argues that Andy Griffith has an even more significant fan base than Lucy, calling Griffith an “almost Christ-like figure” who is bigger than life and can do no wrong. Waldron, interview, February 27, 2015.

⁴⁴³ Donna McCrohan, *Prime Time, Our Time: America’s Life and Times Through the Prism of Television*, (Rocklin: Prima Publishing & Communications, 1990), 22.

CBS announced the upcoming broadcast of two colorized versions of *I Love Lucy*, showing that there continues to be an audience for this series.⁴⁴⁴ Studd echoed this. “It was the sense of child’s play,” Studd said. “There’s nothing in an episode of *I Love Lucy* that anybody of any age can watch and be offended by.”⁴⁴⁵

Viewing the relationship between the audience and sitcoms, through the lens of *I Love Lucy*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and *All in the Family*, shows the progression of the perception of audiences, and shows how these sitcoms mirrored the social and political events of the country at the time. These sitcoms also show how television executives and creators used fictional situations to comment on American society. During the 1950s, the audience was viewed as one homogenous entity, and *I Love Lucy*, related to suburbanization, consumerism, conformity, and McCarthyism, created a mass hysteria involving people of all ages. By the next decade, the audience was slightly more segmented, and *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, related to The New Frontier, introduced a more intelligent comedy and progressive themes. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, advertisers and television executives marketed television shows for hyper-specific groups of people—young adults—as seen by *All in the Family*, related to the counterculture generation and fragmentation of American society. However, this intent backfired, as the show not only appealed to young, liberal viewers, but to those who identified with Archie Bunker.

The current-day status of these sitcoms’ fan communities show that all three shows are still remembered, whether by fans or cultural institutions. Each show has its own devoted fan base, though *I Love Lucy*, which of the three sitcoms had historically originally appealed to the largest group of people and was the least controversial, and summons the most nostalgia, has the most visible and publicly active fan base today.

⁴⁴⁴ Press Release, “I LOVE LUCY SUPERSTAR SPECIAL,” A NEW ONE-HOUR SPECIAL FEATURING TWO CLASSIC EPISODES, TO BE BROADCAST SUNDAY, MAY 17 ON CBS, *CBS Entertainment*, April 16, 2015, Accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.cbspressexpress.com/cbs-entertainment/releases/view?id=42416/>

⁴⁴⁵ Studd, interview, February 26, 2015.

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