



Routledge Advances in Television Studies

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND AMERICAN TELEVISION

Edited by
Adrian Schober and Debbie Olson



Children, Youth, and American Television

This volume explores how television has been a significant conduit for the changing ideas about children and childhood in the United States. Each chapter connects relevant events, attitudes, or anxieties in American culture to an analysis of children or childhood in select American television programs. The essays in this collection explore historical intersections of the family with expectations of childhood, particularly innocence, economic and material conditions, and emerging political and social realities that, at times, present unique challenges to America's children and the collective expectation of what childhood should be.

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Routledge Advances in Television Studies

- 3 The Antihero in American Television**
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- 10 Horror Television in the Age of Consumption**
Binging on Fear
Edited by Linda Belau and Kim Jackson
- 11 Reading Contemporary Serial Television Universes:**
A Narrative Ecosystem Framework
Edited by Paola Brembilla and Ilaria A. De Pascalis
- 12 Children, Youth, and American Television**
Edited by Adrian Schober and Debbie Olson

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	vii
Introduction	1
ADRIAN SCHOBER AND DEBBIE OLSON	
1 Recognizing the Children in <i>Alfred Hitchcock Presents</i> and the <i>Alfred Hitchcock Hour</i>	23
KEN MOGG	
2 Rod Serling's Damaged Children: <i>The Twilight Zone</i>	44
ADRIAN SCHOBER	
3 The Trouble with Teenagers and the Case of <i>Gidget</i>: ABC and the 1960s Youth Market	64
CARYN MURPHY	
4 "And Then There Were Three": Childhood, <i>Bewitched</i>, and 1960s America	83
FRAN PHEASANT-KELLY	
5 Like It or Not: How <i>Sesame Street</i> Influenced European Children's Television	102
HELLE STRANDGAARD JENSEN	
6 Krofft Kids: Saturday Morning Innocence and Counterculture TV	123
DEBBIE OLSON	
7 "Dance Your Cares Away": Fraggles Ethics, or Jim Henson's Response to Reaganism	142
YANNICK BELLENGER-MORVAN	

vi *Contents*

8	The End of Racism and the Last Family: <i>The Cosby Show's</i> Fukuyaman Neo-Liberal Children	161
	ROBERT GEAL	
9	Performing Adulthood: The Adult-Child and the Child-Adult in <i>Modern Family</i> and <i>Roseanne</i>	181
	MARK MACLEOD	
10	Are You Afraid of the Dark? Children's Horror Anthology Series in the 1990s	201
	JESSICA BALANZATEGUI	
11	On the Cusp: Exploring Male Adolescence and the Underbelly of High School in <i>Freaks and Geeks</i>	223
	KATIE BARNETT	
12	"Be careful!": Child Safety and Empowerment in <i>The Legend of Korra</i>	241
	BONNEE CRAWFORD AND SHIH-WEN SUE CHEN	
13	<i>Bob's Burgers</i>: Rewriting the Rules for Girlhood in American Television	260
	EMILY CHANDLER	
	<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	279
	<i>Index</i>	283

List of Figures

1.1	Ricky Sr. disapproves of how wife Lucy appears to be influencing their little son's career path in the <i>I Love Lucy</i> episode, "Little Ricky Learns to Play the Drums."	8
1.2	The era of Saturday morning TV. <i>The Banana Splits Adventure Hour</i> (1968–1970)	11
1.3	A positive role model for girls? She-Ra, who made her debut in 1985	16
1.1	The Tenth Avenue Kid covets the expensive model plane, in "Santa Claus and the Tenth Avenue Kid" (<i>Alfred Hitchcock Presents</i>)	28
1.2	Aunt Nell (Margaret Leighton) and an understanding family servant watch Eva play with her Creole doll, in "Where the Woodbine Twineth" (<i>Alfred Hitchcock Hour</i>)	37
2.1	Schoolteacher Helen Foley with her mysterious young guest in "Nightmare as a Child" (<i>The Twilight Zone</i>)	49
2.2	School as a site of institutional abuse. The ruler-wielding Miss Frank and her terrified young pupil Ilse in "Mute" (<i>The Twilight Zone</i>)	59
3.1	The opening credits of <i>Gidget</i> highlight the close relationship between father and daughter	74
4.1	<i>Bewitched</i> , Tabitha and Samantha	87
5.1	Organizations included in the analysis	105
5.2	<i>Sesame Street</i> merchandise item (Book and LP) sold in Germany in 1973	114
6.1	<i>Bugaloos</i> (1970–1972)	132
6.2	<i>Lidsville</i> (1971–1973)	135
7.1	The Fraggles from <i>Fraggle Rock</i>	147
7.2	Casimir in <i>L'Île aux enfants</i>	151
8.1	The post-racial, middle-class Huxtables living by Fukuyaman ideals in <i>The Cosby Show</i> (1984–1992)	174
9.1	Roseanne with her "sparring partner" Darlene in the family sitcom <i>Roseanne</i> (ABC 1989–1996)	185
10.1	The Midnight Society meet around the campfire in the framing device for <i>Are You Afraid of the Dark?</i>	210

viii *List of Figures*

10.2	The monster gameshow “Raw Deal” in the <i>Goosebumps</i> episode “One Day at Horrorland” (1997, Part 2)	216
11.1	Sam, Neal, and Bill, emerging from the boys’ bathroom, contemplate another anxious day at William McKinley High in <i>Freaks and Geeks</i>	226
11.2	In the episode “Tests and Breasts,” Sam is humiliated in sex education class as he struggles to label the female reproductive system	231
12.1	Tenzin’s family dresses in warm colors, showing they are a tight-knit family in <i>The Legend of Korra</i>	244
12.2	Ikki is held captive by enemy guards after wandering off on her own in <i>The Legend of Korra</i>	248
13.1	The Belchers are ordinary in appearance, if not in personality	265

Introduction

Adrian Schober and Debbie Olson

The Children are Watching

When episodes of the adventures of Davy Crockett first aired on ABC's *Disneyland* (1954–1958) between December 1954 and February 1955, its effect on children was immediate and extraordinary. After being watched by an estimated 90 million television viewers, which notably increased on the rerun, the episodes created an insatiable appetite for all things Crockett: coonskin caps, blue jeans, toy rifles, bows and arrows, as well as bubblegum, lunch boxes, and other merchandise. Almost overnight, children became their “favorite” American folk hero by acting out what they had seen on the small screen. The Crockett craze, as it was called, was the subject of an industry worth \$300 million,¹ or more than 2 billion dollars today, adjusted for inflation. And woe to children who were not part of the craze, as Steven Spielberg found out as an out-of-touch third-grader: “[B]ecause I didn’t have my coonskin cap and my powder horn, or Old Betsy, my rifle, and the chaps, I was deemed the Mexican leader, Santa Anna. And everybody came after me with the butt ends of their flintlock rifles. And they chased me home from school until I got my parents to buy me a coonskin cap.”² The impact of these hour-long programs even caught its creator Walt Disney unawares, who didn’t think of drawing out the hero’s small-screen adventures: “It became one of the biggest overnight hits in TV history, and there we were with just three films and a dead hero.”³ But as cultural critic Margaret J. King points out, the craze “died as quickly and unexpectedly as it had begun,”⁴ just as Disney was about to launch another series, *The Mickey Mouse Club* (1955–1996). Although “kiddy Westerns” like *The Lone Ranger* (1949–1957), *Hopalong Cassidy* (1949–1952), and *The Roy Rogers Show* (1951–1957) were already popular among children, King sees the Crockett craze as richly instructive, offering an insight into a particular moment in American culture.

First, King argues that the phenomenon demonstrated the power of the nascent medium of television and its capacity to influence and shape behavior, dramatically illustrated in the case of children or “subteens” but encompassing adults as well.⁵ Second, it signaled the emergence of a

2 *Adrian Schober and Debbie Olson*

new consumer category – the child – to the delight of TV programmers and advertisers. “Never before had a single generation found itself with so much leverage as consumers [...] The craze generation, spanning the ages of two to twelve, had power of the purse, and the Crockett craze was its first proving ground and coming of age.”⁶ Or as media scholar Gary J. Edgerton has put the Crockett phenomenon into socio-historical context:

Before TV, children received presents on their birthdays and special holidays, but now, after a decade of postwar prosperity, baby boomers and their teenage counterparts from the silent generation were expressing their collective identities on a regular basis through the merchandise they were buying and the products their parents were purchasing for them. The whole notion of a youth culture is in large part a media and marketing creation [...] For its part, the Davy Crockett craze confirmed that America’s new emerging postwar culture was increasingly both youth oriented and media centric.⁷

The craze, then, would mark the beginnings of the commodification – and Disneyfication – of childhood.⁸

Postwar prosperity led not only to an upsurge in birth rates in the US but also to an upsurge in sales of TV sets. Indeed, parents often bought TV sets at the insistence of their children, and much of the early advertising from manufacturers and retailers was designed to exploit parental guilt if they did not buy one for the sake of their children.⁹ In 1950, almost 4 million American households owned TV sets, which accounted for about nine percent of homes; by 1963, just over 50 million sets were sold, accounting for about 91.3 percent of homes.¹⁰ From its inception as a mass medium, television was welcomed as a “natural babysitter.”¹¹ But at the same time, parents, critics, and researchers worried about its effects on impressionable young minds. Would TV make children passive and listless, unable to sleep, eat, and focus on their homework? Would it lead to a generation of bug-eyed children? Or worse, would the violent content of Westerns and cartoons make them act out what they saw on screen?¹² Periodic hearings and probes into the effects of TV on children’s values and behavior, including juvenile delinquency, widely seen to have reached epidemic proportions in the 1950s and 1960s, helped categorize television as a dangerous medium, in need of regulation.

Lynn Spigel’s analysis of audience research and popular opinion has revealed the highly ambivalent construction of postwar television apropos of the family. While many thought television was having deleterious effects on the family, causing division and conflict, passivity, and a range of disorders in vulnerable children, it was also seen as a medium that could bring the family together, replacing the radio as the family hearth.¹³ But despite best efforts to enforce a separation between adult and children’s

entertainment, and to create children's programming satisfying parental standards, Spigel notes how problematic this separation was in practice. "Adults seemed to enjoy what children should have liked, and children seemed to like the very things that adults deemed inappropriate juvenile entertainment."¹⁴ Audience research at the time shows that children enjoyed watching *The Adventures of Superman* (1952–1958), *Howdy Doody* (1947–1960), *The Roy Rogers Show*, *Captain Video and His Video Rangers* (1949–1954), but also *The Twilight Zone* (1959–1964), *I Love Lucy* (1957–1960), and even *Texaco Star Theatre* (1948–1956).¹⁵ "Milton Berle's *Texaco Star Theatre* [...] became so popular with children that 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."¹⁶ At the forefront of debates about TV's influence was its ease of access and seeming inability to distinguish between adults and children, arguably causing children to grow up too fast. Notes Spigel: "Critics of the medium feared that television might abolish such distinctions by making children privy to adult secrets."¹⁷

Armed with this perspective, we can see how social critic Neil Postman's widely-rehearsed arguments about TV's so-called effects were a throwback to earlier anxieties. In *The Disappearance of Childhood*, Postman lamented the lack of distinctions between child and adult in TV's hold on its audience, with its awesome capacity to mesmerize and amuse as well as its "undifferentiated accessibility,"¹⁸ which exposes children to all manner of adult secrets including marital conflict, alcoholism, sexual matters, and serious illness. For Postman, who argued that the concept of the child is largely the artifact of a literate, print-based culture, such "informed" children "have become adults, or, at least, adult-like. It means [...] that in having access to the previously hidden fruit of adult information, they are expelled from the garden of childhood."¹⁹ In *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, he forcefully launched his attack on children's television, and *Sesame Street* (1969–) in particular, as "an expensive demonstration of the idea that education is indistinguishable from entertainment."²⁰ For Joshua Meyrowitz, who has put forward likeminded arguments regarding television's impact on childhood, the non-complexity of the audio-visual code of television and the lack of an adequate filter for adult content means that "there is no children's television and adult television. In terms of what people can and do watch, there is simply 'television.'"²¹ If these wholesale attacks on television seem over-cynical today, rooted in a generational conservatism and suspicion of new technology and media, then Ellen Seiter has helpfully challenged the construction of the child as a passive, uncritical viewer, which she notes runs counter to the body of mass communications research, stressing the role of viewers as active rather than passive, based on uses and gratifications.²² In the case of the Crockett phenomenon

and other Western series, it could be argued that children *were* active, ready and willing to adopt Crockett play and costume in playgrounds and backyards across the country.²³

Doing It for the Kids

From the moment television started to usurp American households, savvy television executives and producers specifically targeted the younger set. The early, “halcyon” days of children’s programming were populated by puppets and marionettes, and by far the most popular was *Howdy Doody*, which debuted on NBC Friday 5:30 pm, December 27, 1947 as *Puppet Playhouse Theatre*. It quickly underwent a name-change to reflect the magnitude of its rising “star”: a wooden marionette who in its best-remembered incarnation was a cowboy-style figure with “a pixie, freckled face (one freckle for each state of the union), a red bandana, a checked shirt, and a pair of cowboy boots; this puppet became an American fixture, closely associated with television’s first generation of viewers.”²⁴ In the show, the marionette was accompanied by the flesh-and-blood “Buffalo” Bob Smith, who performed songs and pre-recorded the voice of Howdy Doody, and a mute clown named Clarabell Hornblow. Howdy Doody was later joined by other marionettes. The show always featured a small studio audience of children, called the Peanut Gallery, and always opened with the question, “Hey, kids what time is it?” which got the rousing reply, “It’s Howdy Doody time!” Although primarily conceived as entertainment for children, the show often contained lessons for them, such as the importance of road safety or telling the truth.²⁵ It also attracted multiple sponsors and, prefiguring the Davy Crockett craze, led to sales of Howdy Doody lunch boxes, comic books, t-shirts, and Western garb.²⁶ When *Howdy Doody* was taken off air September 30, 1960, it was up against stiff competition from the likes of *The Mickey Mouse Club* and *Captain Kangaroo* (1955–1984), created and hosted by the great Bob Keeshan, who had played Clarabell the clown. The sponsors for *Howdy Dowdy* would eventually defect to the Disney ratings juggernaut. And so for many first-generation TV viewers, it was the end of an era.

Throughout the 1950s, there was no shortage of entertainment for children, including action-adventure shows like *The Adventures of Superman*, juvenile Westerns, variety shows, and cartoons. There was also more educational fare such as *Ding Dong School* (1952–1956), *Romper Room* (1953–1994), and *Winky Dink and You* (1953–1957), which duly earned the approval of parents. Mothers could seek comfort in the knowledge that their children were watching “quality” television, growing their minds, while they busily went about their housework. *Winky Dink and You* uniquely promoted interaction among its child viewers, by calling on them to buy a Winky Dink kit, a “magic drawing

screen” that could be superimposed over the TV screen via static electricity. Children could then draw on to the screen and fill in missing details to finish the story. Of course, as Spigel points out, this interaction came at a price – in having them buy the kit, “it taught children how to be good consumers.”²⁷

When *Disneyland* and *The Mickey Mouse Club* screened on ABC in the mid-1950s, the time had arrived for the no-holds-barred commercialization of childhood and play. *Disneyland* was used by Disney to finance his theme park. It was a hit both critically and commercially, picking up the Peabody Award in 1954 for Outstanding Youth and Children’s program that “has changed the bedtime habits of the nation’s children.”²⁸ The Crockett episodes were also awarded an Emmy for “Best Action or Adventure Series.” As the host of *Disneyland*, Uncle Walt played a key role in aligning his company with American family values and in promoting television as a family medium.²⁹

Unlike previously popular programs such as *The Howdy Doody Show*, which catered to a younger audience, and *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* [1947–1957], which amused older viewers as well as children, *The Mickey Mouse Club* featured young performers [called the ‘Mouseketeers’] and tried to connect with the twelve-and-younger group.³⁰

This variety show for children drew 10 million viewers a day and became a marketing bonanza, allowing Mattel to emerge as a toy-making giant, with sales of mouseke-ears, mouseke-T-shirts, and Mickey jack-in-the boxes.³¹ As one of the sponsors of *The Mickey Mouse Club*, Mattel had free rein to advertise their toy products daily during the show. In the inevitable backlash concerning a “commodification of childhood,” there would be calls for the regulation of advertising during children’s programs over the coming decades.

In the 1960s, “improving” programs for children (as judged by adults) could be found in the long-running *Captain Kangaroo*, *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood* (1963–2001), and *Discovery* (1962–1971). But in his much-quoted “vast wasteland” speech of May 9, 1961, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairman Newton N. Minow decried the lack of quality programming for children and implored networks and executives to produce something better:

Is there no room on television to teach, to inform, to uplift, to stretch, to enlarge the capacities of our children? Is there no room for programs deepening their understanding of children in other lands? Is there no room for a children’s news show explaining something to them about the world at their level of understanding? [...] There are some fine children’s shows, but they are drowned out in the massive

doses of cartoons, violence, and more violence. Must these be your trademarks? Search your consciences and see if you cannot offer more to your young beneficiaries whose future you guide so many hours each and every day.³²

In response to the call for a better television for children, in 1969 a children's series made its debut on the Public Broadcasting Service and made television history, offering an alternative to self-regulated, profit-driven programming and a more positive model for broadcasters to emulate.³³ It was made by the newly formed Children's Television Workshop and featured Jim Henson's muppets. It was of course *Sesame Street*, and although it had precursors in the puppet and marionette shows of the 1950s, the series was very different from other children's fare at the time. As Sterling and Kittross explain in their mammoth history of American broadcasting:

It used modern commercial television techniques for education, having programs 'sponsored' by different letters of the alphabet or numbers each day, having the show set on a city street, relying on very short animated cartoons with live and puppet segments, and breaking the show into short rapidly moving parts to keep the interest of preschool children. The show was an instant outstanding success, to the chagrin of the commercial networks that had turned down the idea before it had been offered to public television. *Sesame Street* was supported by a continuing research program, and changes were made in the format from time to time reflecting the results of that research.³⁴

But still decrying the state of television in 1995, Minow asked, "Why aren't there more *Sesame Streets*?"³⁵ Although the show was not without controversy, it would soon become a children's staple, inspiring international versions and a voluminous amount of research on the show.

Playing at Happy Families

Children have long been a mainstay of American television in that most adaptable of TV genres: the family sitcom. And as William Douglas writes in *Television Families: Is Something Wrong in Suburbia?*, the "significance of the television family derives, in part, from the importance of the family in America and, in part, from the popular and ubiquitous nature of television."³⁶ For many, the two-parent, middleclass, suburban family of the postwar sitcom – the Nelsons in *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* (1952–1966), the Andersons in *Father Knows Best* (1954–1960), the Cleavers in *Leave it to Beaver* (1957–1963), and the Stones *The Donna Reed Show* (1958–1966) – remains the model for the prototype

American family. But for others this is an impossible dream, representing a false nostalgia for a family that never really existed. Nonetheless, as Douglas persuasively argues, the families in these sitcoms were still broadly reflective of American families in the postwar era. For instance, while such portrayals of family have been criticized for being classist and racist, they were still “demographically authentic [...] the postwar population, especially the White, middle-class population, did move to the suburbs and, when they did, many became parents; that is, the suburban experience was, itself, racist and classist and was commonly constructed so as to accommodate children.”³⁷ In short, these portrayals accurately reproduced the postwar family ideology, highlighting “a sense of conjunction between real and fictional families.”³⁸

As “America’s favorite family,” the Nelsons in *Ozzie and Harriet* set the pattern for other television families of the postwar era. As writer, director, and star, Ozzie Nelson patterned the family after his own experiences growing up in 1920s New Jersey. Indeed, much of the show’s appeal seemed to stem from the “portrayal of a family situation more likely to be found in pre-World War II America than in the anxious 1950s.”³⁹ *Ozzie and Harriet* received thousands of letters commending them for upholding the faltering institution of family.⁴⁰ But in having his own wife and two sons portray versions of themselves on the small screen, Ozzie drew on real-life family incidents for material for the show. The interior sets of the Nelsons’ house were even made to look like their real-life home. In this regard, the Nelsons’ long-running adventures seem like a precursor to reality TV, but with the “objectionable” bits likely to offend networks and sponsors cut out. Ozzie, in exploiting what is usually private, would be accused of exploiting his own children for commercial gain. The Ricardos (real-life, “interracial” couple Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz) from *I Love Lucy* (1951–1957) also blurred the public with the private. When Ball fell pregnant, this was written into the second season – the first portrayal of a real-time pregnancy on television, when the subject was a censorship taboo (the word itself was never uttered). In the episode “Lucy Goes to Hospital,” aired January 19, 1953, “forty-four million Americans watched Lucy Ricardo give birth to Little Ricky, in one of the most widely viewed broadcasts in television history.”⁴¹

In postwar sitcom families, “conflict involving children, although common, is short-lived and resolved by parents, most often the husband-father, in ways that provide children important personal, relational, and/or civic insights.”⁴² But in the 1953 episode “Parental Guidance” from *Ozzie and Harriet*, we see the father’s role as “sage” humorously subverted. Here, the younger of the Nelsons’ sons, “little Ricky” (future pop sensation Ricky Nelson), complains to his parents that he doesn’t get treated like a grown-up. For one, why can’t he stay up to watch the late show on television? When dad Ozzie relents, he has to explain to mom Harriet his

modern approach to child-rearing based on reverse psychology: “Well, he may miss a few hours, but one or two nights of going to bed late and getting up early the next morning will cure him.” Meanwhile, the elder son David asks his father if he can help him to work out with barbells in the morning. Although Harriet worries that David might over-exert himself, Ozzie again relents, confident that the “boys will have to find out for themselves,” even if it means that “we will have a couple of tired boys.” Ozzie even boasts to his neighbor, Thorny (Don DeFore), about his fathering skills. On the first night, Ozzie, Ricky, and Harriet watch the late show and Ricky is unyielding to sleep. Early next morning David wakes up his father and reminds him of his promise to help him train. The cycle repeats over several nights, and both Ricky and David show no signs of letting up. Instead, it’s Ozzie who is burning the proverbial candlestick at both ends. Who is going to break first, Ozzie or the children?

Meyrowitz believes that these “conservative” family programs served to undermine adult authority by exposing children to the hitherto secret doubts and concerns of parents deliberating over how to correctly bring up their children.⁴³ In “Parental Guidance,” we see how Ozzie’s attempts at reverse psychology fail, with the usual comic results. In the 1956–1957 season of *I Love Lucy* (Figure I.1), Lucy and Ricky disagree over Little Ricky’s proper career path – a doctor or a drummer (“Little Ricky Learns to Play the Drums”) – or how to cure his stage fright for a school recital (“Little Ricky Gets Stage Fright”). In “Little Ricky’s School Pageant,” Ricky Sr. teaches his wife and son a valuable lesson in community over individualism when little Ricky takes part in the school play. As he explains to “stage mother” Lucy: “It is much more important that he learns how to cooperate, to become part of a group, than it is to be the center of attention.” For this insight, Lucy calls her husband a “regular Cuban Dr. Spock.” This wasn’t the only time the show invoked



Figure I.1 Ricky Sr. disapproves of how wife Lucy appears to be influencing their little son’s career path in the *I Love Lucy* episode, “Little Ricky Learns to Play the Drums.”

the famed American pediatrician, whose bestselling “bible” *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (first published in 1946 and going through numerous reprints and editions) taught parents to trust their instincts and be attentive to their children.⁴⁴ When bandleader Ricky feels slighted that he has been given the part of a hollow tree, instead of the role of producer, little Ricky turns his father’s lesson against himself: “It’s more fun to cooperate than to be the center of attention.”

If family-themed shows like *Ozzie and Harriet* “centered on the challenges of parents relating to their children [...], by 1957, comparable shows such as *Leave it to Beaver* routinely focused on the corollary: the problems of children relating to their parents.”⁴⁵ In the premiere episode, “Beaver Gets ‘Spelled,’” Theodore “the Beaver” Cleaver (Jerry Mathers) thinks he has been expelled when he is sent home with a note from his second-grade teacher. He tells all manner of lies to hide the note from his parents. Eventually his lies catch up with him and he runs away. When father Ward (Hugh Beaumont), mother June (June Billingsley), and brother Wally (Tony Dow) find him in a tree and entreat him to come down, Beaver refuses, “I can’t – he’ll hit me,” referring of course to the threat of his father’s discipline. Ward, more for the benefit of the bystanders, tells his son he doesn’t hit him, and Beaver cites the occasion he spilled ink on the rug. We’ve heard enough to know that Ward Cleaver’s more “traditional” approach to child-rearing smacks more of John Calvin than Benjamin Spock! In her nuanced reading of the domestic sitcom, Erin Lee Mock has argued that the threat of corporal punishment in the *Leave it to Beaver* episode – literally taking place behind closed doors, or off-screen – points to cracks and complications beneath the sanitized portrayal of home life, exposing the happiness of the sitcom family as a “performance.”⁴⁶

By the early 1960s, these cracks were beginning to show. Despite the tried-and-true appeal of sitcoms like *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave it to Beaver*, and *Father Knows Best*, Spigel notes that “by the fall of the 1966 season, all had been taken off the air [...]; between 1966 and 1969 only three of the thirty-two domestic comedies aired on prime-time were suburban family sitcoms.”⁴⁷ Emerging in response to rising divorce rates and transformations in family structure in the 1960s was the “broken family sitcom,” which depicted an absent parent – except the parent was not absent “because of divorce (which was a network censorship taboo) but because he or she had died.”⁴⁸ Thus *My Three Sons* (1960–1972), *The Andy Griffith Show* (1960–1968) and *Flipper* (1964–1967) all featured widowers who were left to raise a son or two (or three). The continued emphasis on sons here suggests a privileging of the male line. In *Family Affair* (1966–1971), eligible bachelor and engineer Bill Davis (Brian Keith) assumed responsibility for raising his brother’s three orphaned children. He received unlikely assistance from an English manservant named Mr. French (Sebastian Cabot), who often seemed more like a nanny.⁴⁹

In creating *The Brady Bunch* (1969–1974), producer Sherwood Schwartz was inspired by the real-life increase in step-parent or blended families.⁵⁰ The success of this family experiment owed much to the fact that both Carol’s and Mike’s (Florence Henderson and Robert Reed) partners were out of the picture, leaving no messy custody battles. But whereas architect Mike was depicted as a widower with three sons, Carol’s marital status was left vague. Tellingly, ABC objected to Schwartz’s idea of her being a divorcee. The old-style Bradys were an anachronism with all the appeal of a 1950s family sitcom, hence curiously out of step with the era. Carol and Mike seemed cut from the same cloth as Ozzie and Harriet or Ward and June. As for the wholesome progeny, they experienced the usual sibling rivalries, teen troubles, and parent-child misunderstandings. In the 1969 episode, “Every Boy Does it Once,” Bobby (Mike Lookinland) resolves to run away from home, after he thinks Carol is the evil step-mother from “Cinderella” he has seen on TV. Carol reminds Bobby that she cares about him regardless of his “step” status and that “the only steps are those, the ones that lead up to your bedroom.” Seldom, however, was the step-family issue raised in the series. In retrospect, we may question whether audiences truly subscribed to its “traditional” family values.⁵¹

A New Era

The decade of the 1970s ushered in, for a brief time, a cultural appreciation for polyester, vivid color, disco, the Ford Pinto, sequins, streaking, the rise of country music and southern rock, and a political landscape that struggled to reconcile the “utopian blather” of creating the Great Society envisioned by Lyndon B. Johnson during the early 1960s with a “declining faith in government programs” throughout the 1970s.⁵² The global economic high (manufacturing, home ownership, stable wages) that the post-World War II U.S. had been enjoying was crumbling in the face of “foreign investors [who] dumped dollars, driving down its value,” resulting in accelerated inflation.⁵³ Throughout the 1970s, Americans struggled with “stagflation—the seemingly impossible combination of rising prices with high unemployment, slow growth, and declining increases in productivity.”⁵⁴ Young Americans abandoned their faith in an idealistic liberalism they hoped would create a better, more equitable society. The 1960s hippie resistance mantras of “Don’t let ‘the man’ keep you down” and “Turn on, tune in, and drop out” rang hollow by the early 1970s as the ugly realities of the Vietnam War, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bobby Kennedy, the Democratic Convention riot in Chicago, and the shootings at Kent State University led America’s youth to reject the “values, beliefs, and priorities of mainstream America.”⁵⁵

As Marilyn B. Young characterizes this historical-cultural shift, “the antibourgeois utopian movements of the 1960s destroyed themselves through excess and violence, only to be born again in the 1970s in individualistic liberation movements.”⁵⁶ If the youth could not create a better society, then they could at least embrace individualism and create a new self by rejecting the “political culture of the nuclear family, corporate capitalism, and military aggression, [which they] expressed through an embrace of sex, drugs, and rock and roll.”⁵⁷ This period reflected two wildly disparate perspectives – youth and authority – tugging American culture in opposite directions. And so America’s children and youth were experiencing corresponding frictions in identity as they witnessed both social unrest and a growing enthusiasm for perpetual youthfulness. These countervailing cultural and generational tensions intersected in many households across the country through television programming.

Against the upheaval of the era, 1968 saw the series premieres of ABC’s *The Adventures of Gulliver* (1968) and *Fantastic Voyage* (1968–1969), CBS’s *Wacky Races* (1968–1969) and *The Archie Show* (1968–1969), and NBC’s *The Banana Splits Adventure Hour* (1968–1970), with psychedelic rock music by the eponymous band and sets and costumes by sibling collaborators Sid and Marty Krofft (Figure I.2). The late 1960s and 1970s was the era of “Saturday morning TV”: programming for children that came to dominate network television on Saturdays from “dawn to noon.”⁵⁸ But the juxtaposition of the realities of war, riots, and assassinations with children’s programming scrubbed of violent content underscores the era’s wild oscillation between utopian idealism and hard reality. For kids in the 1960s, innocence was lost through war, drugs, social unrest, and violence, but for kids in the 1970s, innocence was culturally reinforced and idealized in a movement to sanitize children’s TV, strangely juxtaposed against the violence of war and social unrest viewed on the evening news.



Figure I.2 The era of Saturday morning TV. *The Banana Splits Adventure Hour* (1968–1970).

Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, parents were increasingly concerned about the role of television in children's lives. Composed of parents, the Action for Children's Television (ACT) lobby group, formed by the late Peggy Charren, has been credited with helping to transform the "vast wasteland" for children. As well as targeting the use of advertising during children's programs such as *Romper Room*, the group took a strong stand against the level of violence in Saturday-morning cartoons of the 1960s from Hanna-Barbera productions like *The Herculoids* (1967–1968), *Birdman and the Galaxy Trio* (1967–1969), and *Fantastic Four* (1967–1970).⁵⁹ Owing to their efforts, these were replaced with innocuous comedy fare such as *Scooby-Doo, Where are You!* (1969–1970), *Dastardly and Muttley* (1969–1970), and *Josie and the Pussycats* (1970–1971), which have since become "classics" of children's programming and examples of the kind of saccharine view of childhood innocence adults sought to impose. Numerous studies on media affects were undertaken in the 1970s. On the purported link between television violence and children's aggressive behaviour, the conclusions of the 1972 Surgeon General's report were qualified.⁶⁰ In 1969, the FCC concluded that "*Hot Wheels* (ABC 1969–1971) was an unacceptable program-length commercial," and in 1970 ACT took on the fight to keep children's programming free from aggressive advertising.⁶¹ By 1977 ACT had convinced the FCC to adopt rules to restrict advertising shown during Saturday morning television aimed at children. But the ban did not last long, and as Ronald Reagan took the White House in 1981, the tide was about to significantly turn on ACT's achievements in regulating children's programming.

Family in 'Decline'

In May 1971, television cameras went into the household of an upper middle-class American family from Santa Barbara, California, and filmed them over several months going about their daily lives. The twelve-part series aired on PBS two years later as *An American Family* and was an unexpected ratings winner. Not only did the cameras record the more mundane aspects of life with the Louds, but also its more private – and often dramatic – moments, including the separation and eventual divorce of parents Bill and Pat, the eldest son's coming out as gay, and the emerging sexuality of the teenage daughter. In choosing his subject, producer Craig Gilbert wanted an appealing upper-middle-class family in the vein of the Nelsons, Cleavers, or Bradys.⁶² But the sitcom ideal crumbled in front of the cameras as this became a documentary about the disintegration of a family. As the first reality TV program on US television, the Louds' dirty laundry may seem quaint alongside the outlandish antics of contemporary reality celeb families like the Osbournes or Kardashians. However, in the 1970s the Loud saga was oft-cited in debates about the so-called decline of the American family.

As Arlene Skolnick chronicles, the response to the TV documentary was symptomatic of a national preoccupation with the institution of family by policy makers, researchers, and social critics, serving a range of competing agendas.⁶³ Alarmist rhetoric on the state of family was fueled by mounting concerns about rising divorce rates, the Women's Movement, youth rebellion, and the emerging gay liberation movement: "Much of the anxiety and uncertainty about the family focused on children. Within the family, many parents of young offspring struggled with new complications of child rearing bought about by divorce, single parenthood, and two-job parenting in a society unprepared for these changes."⁶⁴ Almost inevitably, there was a backlash to these social changes from conservative elements in the US, most notably the religious New Right. Indeed, Reagan came to office on a politics of nostalgia that promised to resuscitate the male breadwinner/female homemaker family of the 1950s.⁶⁵

In reflecting these new realities, sitcom families from the 1970s onwards have become "fashionably" dysfunctional, particularly blue-collar families like the Bunkers in *All in the Family* (1971–1979), the Bundys in *Married with Children* (1987–1997), the Conners in *Roseanne* (1988–1997, 2018), and the eponymous family of *The Simpsons* (1989–). The offspring in these families are often depicted as rebellious, contemptuous of adult authority. Yet a countervailing tendency in programming is found in this nostalgia for the traditional family, epitomized in *The Waltons* (1972–1981), *Little House on the Prairie* (1974–1983), *Happy Days* (1974–1984), and, latterly, *7th Heaven* (1996–2007). In his 1992 Republication Convention speech, Reagan's successor, George Bush Sr., vowed: "We're going to keep trying to strengthen the American family. To make them more like the Waltons and less like the Simpsons."

Intertextuality and Product TV

The 1980s ushered in the era of transmedia intertextuality in television that forever changed the landscape of childhood in America. As Marsha Kinder explains, "intertextuality has come to mean that any individual text ... is part of a larger cultural discourse and therefore must be read in relationship to other texts and their diverse textual strategies and ideological assumptions."⁶⁶ During the 1980s, this intertextuality took the form of television programs (mostly animated) that featured toys children could buy. While violent programming for children had decreased considerably, a new form of television entertainment arose that much more explicitly positioned the child as a consumer. With the relaxing of restrictions on television advertising, TV shows could now be created based solely on toys. Before the Reagan era, products were inspired by television show characters or the stars that hosted them, as witnessed with the merchandising of Davy Crockett and Howdy Doody, discussed earlier. In the 1980s, "other toys were based on 'real-life' characters like

Michael Jackson and Cher and also sold well.”⁶⁷ But in this model, the shows were created *first*, and, if popular, would birth tie-in products featuring the characters or elements from that show. Reagan’s new FCC, led by Mark S. Fowler, rolled back all of the progress ACT had made towards conscious and careful programming for children. Reagan and Fowler felt the FCC’s decision against *Hot Wheels* and regulatory measures for children’s programming “to be in violation of advertisers’ and broadcasters’ First Amendment rights and argued that the ‘free market’ (child viewers) could adequately regulate the quality of children’s programming.”⁶⁸ This deregulation of advertising had a dramatic impact on the relationship between childhood and media in America, introducing/inducting children into the era of free-market consumerism.

The *Strawberry Shortcake* specials were the first shows for children based solely on a product – the Strawberry Shortcake doll, which appeared on store shelves in 1979. She and her friends (all named after desserts) were ultra-feminine dolls who loved domesticity and cooking. From 1980 to 1985 Strawberry Shortcake was featured in yearly television “specials” – show-length commercials for the Shortcake products. This was the very advertising that had been banned earlier by the FCC. The first special garnered \$100 million in product sales, and so began the wave of television for children as a means to sell toys, supplemented with an ideological return to classic sex-role stereotypes. In 1983 the FCC lifted regulations on children’s programming, allowing for a return to more violent programming, and in 1984 the restriction on advertising time during children’s programming was also lifted, opening the door for full-length cartoons created simply to advertise toys. *He-Man: Masters of the Universe* (1983–1985) “became the first product-based regular series to skyrocket to success.”⁶⁹ He-Man was a regular super-hero, ultra-masculine and exclusively targeted towards boys. Commercials for the toys did not feature any girls; conversely, girl-targeted commercials did not feature boys. The 1980s also marked the return of the violent super-hero character marketed to young boys. Shows like *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero* (1983–1986), *The Transformers* (1984–1987), *Thundercats* (1985–1989), and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1987–1990) peppered the animation landscape, paralleling the Reagan era’s “dominant group-fantasy” that advocated a “rearticulation of masculine strength and power through internal, personal, and family oriented values.”⁷⁰ And so Reagan-era conservatives masterfully fought the 1960s and 1970s culture wars on the new front of children’s television programming.

Many cartoons during the early 1980s marketed to girls adhered to traditional gender stereotypes, most notably *The Smurfs* (NBC 1981–1989), based on a 1958 Belgian comic strip by Pierre Culliford. The original comic strip featured only one female, Smurfette, who was created by Gargamel to seduce and help capture the all-male Smurfs, limiting her role to that of a seducer. Wanting to be a full-fledged Smurf, a la

Pinocchio, she is transformed by Papa Smurf into a beautiful blonde, whereby she melts the hearts of the other Smurfs and becomes the epitome of the “girlie girl,” who loves to pick flowers, wear high heels, and preen herself in front of the mirror.⁷¹ The cartoon series added two other females to the all-male Smurf world: Sassette Smurf (a sister to Smurfette) and Nanny Smurf, a grandmotherly character. Both additions did nothing to expand the female roles in *The Smurfs* and functioned instead to reinforce traditional domestic female roles in a male-dominated society. Feminist critic Katha Pollitt has dubbed this phenomenon the “Smurfette Principle,” a common trope in 1980s cartoons for children in which “a group of male buddies will be accented by a lone female, stereotypically defined. In the worst cartoons – the ones that blend seamlessly into the animated cereal commercials – the female is usually a little-sister type, a bunny in a pink dress and hair ribbons who tags along with the adventurous bears and badgers.”⁷² Thus, for Pollitt, the message was unequivocal: “Boys are the norm, girls the variation; boys are central, girls peripheral; boys are individuals, girls types. Boys define the group, its story and its code of values. Girls exist only in relation to boys.”⁷³

A number of toy-based programs directed at girls throughout the 1980s reinforced and naturalized traditional roles for girls: *Care Bears* (1985–1988), *My Little Pony* (1984–1987), *Pound Puppies* (ABC 1986–1987), and *Rainbow Brite* (1984–1986). Even the ways boy versus girl cartoons solved problems was sharply gendered: “When a villain confronted a character, the boy cartoons’ plot often revolved around combative battle and violent conquest ... The girl cartoons’ villains were more often captured than attacked, and the characters used teamwork and encouragement instead of weapons or violence.”⁷⁴ In contrast, films in the 1980s reflected the move towards greater female autonomy and power: for example, *9 to 5* (1980), *The Burning Bed* (1984), *The Accused* (1988), *Working Girls* (1986), and *Desperately Seeking Susan* (1985). This was the age of super-girls Madonna, Janet Jackson, and Brooke Shields; the latter leaving her Hollywood lifestyle for a Princeton education. Madonna flaunted her sexuality and non-conformity all over 1980s pop culture and influenced girls to embrace their sexuality and budding femininity. But, while children were bathed in 1980s pop-feminism – big, bold hairstyles; crazy, mismatched clothes; creative color palettes; the power of consumerism; and the “Material Girl” – the cartoons they watched presented passive, kind, soft-spoken, patient females who were decades away from second-wave feminism.

However, one animated program appeared that upended traditional gender roles: *She-Ra: Princess of Power* (1985–1989), a spinoff from the *He-Man* series (Figure I.3). She-Ra, He-Man’s twin sister, was enormously popular, merging the mega-hero male



Figure 1.3 A positive role model for girls? She-Ra, who made her debut in 1985.

character with “girl power.” She-Ra and He-Man had a shared history and narrative, which made marketing of toys from both shows a boon for toy companies. *She-Ra* helped reset the stage for the rise of girl power TV in the 1990s and beyond. The hip notion of girl power (as popularized by the British group the Spice Girls) helped revitalize mainstream feminism in the 1990s. Thus programming for girls, particularly teenage girls, and family-targeted sitcoms would feature heroic girls or young women, who were the voice of reason or who saved the day: *Rugrats* (1990–2006); *Clarissa Explains it All* (1991–1994); *Sister Sister* (1994–1999); *Moesha* (1996–2001); *Daria* (1997–2003); *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003); *The Powder-puff Girls* (1998–2007).

Beyond Television

The 1990s witnessed the rise of the Internet and the increased dominance of visual culture, both heralding significant changes to the landscape of American children and childhood. For the first time in history, children were “more comfortable, knowledgeable, and literate than their parents about an innovation central to society.”⁷⁵ Children in the 1990s grew up with access to a new digital world via computers. This change in power dynamic between adults and youth sparked renewed cries of “lost innocence” and the “end of childhood” earlier sounded by Postman and Meyrowitz in the 1980s. And as children’s media scholar David Buckingham observed at the turn of the new millennium, “Children are increasingly gaining access to ‘adult’ media, and being ‘empowered’

as consumers in their own right,” which has spilled over into “a more general concern about the terms under which children are gaining, or should be given, access to the ‘adult’ world – at least as this is made available via the electronic media.”⁷⁶

One of the prevailing ideas to emerge from adult concern about children’s access to television and new media and the “loss” of childhood is the notion of adultification, as raised by Postman. Adultification suggests a blurring of boundaries between child and adult and that children will lose their “childness,” i.e., their innocence, wonder, and dependence on adults. Postman of course decried the adultification of children in films and television, which he dubbed the “Gary Coleman phenomenon,” after the diminutive African-American actor’s turn as wise-guy Arnold Jackson in *Diff’rent Strokes* (1978–1985): that is, children whose behavior, attitude, language, dress, or sexuality does not differ significantly from adults.⁷⁷ Similarly for Meyrowitz the “Shirley Temple character of the past was merely a cute and outspoken child, but child stars of the 1970s and 1980s – such as Gary Coleman and Brooke Shields – have played the roles of adults imprisoned inside children’s bodies.”⁷⁸ Although the phenomenon is hardly new, this adultification reached its zenith in the late 1990s, continuing into the present. This may be traced to a multiplicity of cultural practices and influences that converged during the so-called Digital Era, *inter alia*: the Internet and widespread access to visual media, the rise of social media, the popularity of violent video games, rampant consumerism, rising materialism, economic uncertainty, the upsurge in school shootings, easy access to porn (via the Internet), rising drug use, and the reactive “war on drugs.” For its part, American television continues to reflect and refract images of childhood through the lens of adult fears and concerns as well as desires. As we write, television is rife with adultified children in prime time: Manny and Alex on *Modern Family* (2009–), *The Middle’s* (2009–) Brick, *Blackish’s* (2004–) Zoe and Diane, or Eddie on *Fresh off the Boat* (2015–).

The Volume

Whether center stage or in the background, children have been a part of the American television landscape since the mass-introduction of TV sets. But, while there have been other works that address the nexus between children and television, usually within an empirical framework, none offers the scope of the present collection. This collection adopts a more wide-ranging approach by presenting chapters that offer snapshots of how television in the American cultural landscape has (re)imagined children and childhood across decades since the postwar era. Representing different perspectives and disciplines, these chapters explore how individual programs have been a significant conduit for the

public consumption of changing ideas about children and childhood and how relevant events, attitudes, and anxieties in American culture connect to these programs. This includes both children's programming and programs that prominently feature children. Yet, we acknowledge that this landscape is so vast that no single collection can do justice to the richness and diversity of representations of children in American television. As such, advertising and news affairs are beyond the scope of this volume. For our purposes, we offer a suitably broad definition of children that encompasses not only children and adolescents, but also the more ill-defined category of "youth."

The first four chapters in this collection offer analyses of programs from the 1950s to the 1960s. In Chapter 1, Ken Mogg examines Alfred Hitchcock's "ecumenical" view of childhood and the growing up process through the values of Fordism in child-centered episodes of his landmark anthology series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour* (1955–1964). In Chapter 2, Adrian Schober connects the troubling portrayals of damaged children in Rod Serling's equally landmark *The Twilight Zone* (1959–1964) to the medical and media "rediscovery" of child abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Using the short-lived *Gidget* (1965–1966) as a case study, Caryn Murphy in Chapter 3 highlights the challenges of creating a television series that appealed to a youth audience in the mid-1960s. In Chapter 4, Fran Pheasant-Kelly analyses the child figure Tabitha in the popular sitcom *Bewitched* (1964–1972), whom she sees as representing changes in child agency and the family dynamic in the early 1970s. Pheasant-Kelly demonstrates how *Bewitched*, through a nostalgic framework of 1950s–1960s domesticity, tackles rising social fears during the civil rights era.

American television has, and continues to be, widely circulated in different countries, exerting a major influence on international programs and models. Thus, in Chapter 5, we offer Helle Strandgaard Jensen's chapter on the impact of *Sesame Street* on programming in Europe in the early 1970s, the ambivalent reception of the program outside of the US, and the problem of cultural transference. Closer to home, Debbie Olson in Chapter 6 focuses on Sid and Marty Krofft's productions for children and their embrace of late 1960s and 1970s counterculture ideals. For Olson, the Krofft productions worked to normalize counterculture ideologies for America's youth, in opposition to the network push for traditional children's programming.

The next three chapters feature programs from the Reagan and post-Reagan eras. In Chapter 7, Yannick Bellenger-Morvan explores the rise of the child consumer in *Fraggle Rock* (1983–1987). Bellenger-Morvan argues that while the Jim Henson fantasy was a commercial venture, it ultimately functioned as a critique of Reaganite ideology and the emergence of the New Right. Drawing on the influential ideas

of political economist Francis Fukuyama, Robert Geal in Chapter 8 reveals a neo-liberal, capitalist-consumer, post-racial agenda in the portrayal of the African American Huxtables of *The Cosby Show* (1984–1992). In Chapter 9, Mark Macleod argues that the performance of childhood versus adulthood in US sitcoms like *Roseanne* and *Modern Family* reflects the cultural “repositioning” of both child and child.

Chapters 10 and 11 represent the period from the 1990s to the New Millennium. In Chapter 10, Jessica Balanzategui argues that horror anthology shows such as the American-Canadian co-productions *Goosebumps* (1995–1998), based on the highly successful books by R.L. Stine, and *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* revise the adult-oriented horror aesthetics of previous anthologies such as *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and *The Twilight Zone* into entertainment for children. In contrast, Katie Barnett in Chapter 11 unpacks fin de siècle anxieties related to representations of boy culture and masculinity in *Freaks and Geeks* (1999–2000).

The final chapters attest to the continued popularity of animated series in the 2010s. In Chapter 12, Bonnee Crawford and Shih-Wen Sue Chen argue that *The Legend of Korra* (2012–2014) reveals adult tensions about child safety and child agency in its representation of young characters who are, by turns, empowered and disempowered, while in Chapter 13 Emily Chandler finds empowered representations of girlhood in the sitcom *Bob’s Burgers* (2011–).

Notes

- 1 Margaret J. King, “The Recycled Hero: Walt Disney’s Davy Crockett,” in *Davy Crockett: The Man, the Legend, the Legacy 1786–1986*, ed. Michael A. Lofaro (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 143.
- 2 Chris Hodenfield, “1941: Bombs Away!,” in *Steven Spielberg Interviews*, ed. Lester D. Friedman and Brent Notbohm (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 77.
- 3 Leonard Maltin, *The Disney Films* (New York: Disney Editions, 2000), 122.
- 4 King, “The Recycled Hero,” 143.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 144.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Gary R. Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 186.
- 8 In the subsequent years, television played a major role in another cultural phenomenon – rock n’ roll – which included Elvis Presley’s history-making appearances on *The Steve Allen Show* (1956–1964) and *The Ed Sullivan Show* (1948–1971). *American Bandstand* (1952–1989) was aimed at another consumer category that came to the fore in the 1950s: the teenager.
- 9 Lynn Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 205–206.
- 10 Tom Genova, *Television History – The First 75 Years*, accessed July 23, 2017, www.tvhistory.tv/Annual_TV_Households_50-78.JPG. Estimates on the number of TV sets sold vary widely.

- 11 Christopher H. Sterling and John Michael Kittross, *Stay Tuned: A History of American Broadcasting* (New Jersey and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers, 2002), 385.
- 12 Although the Crockett phenomenon was seen as mostly innocuous, teachers still complained about how their students' Crockett games undermined discipline in the classroom. King, "The Recycled Hero," 149.
- 13 Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse*, 192–194.
- 14 Ibid., 201.
- 15 See, for example, Leo Bogart's summary of audience research in *The Age of Television* (1956).
- 16 Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse*, 203.
- 17 Ibid., 198.
- 18 Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 8.
- 19 Ibid., 97.
- 20 Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 94.
- 21 Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behaviour* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 243.
- 22 Ellen Seiter, "Children's Desires/Mothers' Dilemmas: The Social Contexts of Consumption," in *The Children's Culture Reader*, ed. Henry Jenkins (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), 311, 313.
- 23 Jamie G. O'Boyle, "Be Sure You're Right then Go Ahead: The Early Disney Western," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 24, no. 2 (1996): 74.
- 24 Jeffrey Davis, *Children's Television, 1947–1990* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, 1995), 189.
- 25 Ibid., 192.
- 26 Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*, 181.
- 27 Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse*, 207.
- 28 Peabody – Stories that Matter, Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Georgia, accessed 24 July, 2017, www.peabodyawards.com/awards.
- 29 Sean Griffin, "Walt Disney Programs (Various Titles)," in *Encyclopedia of Television*, The Museum of Broadcast Communications, accessed 20 July, 2017, www.museum.tv/eotv/waltdisney.htm.
- 30 Howard P. Chudacoff, *Children at Play: An American History* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2007), 154.
- 31 Davis, *Children's Television, 1947–1990*, 165.
- 32 Newton N. Minow, "Television and the Public Interest," *American Rhetoric: Top 100 Speeches*, accessed 15 April, 2017, www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/newtonminow.htm.
- 33 Robert W. Morrow, "*Sesame Street*" and the Reform of Children's Television (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 8–9.
- 34 Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*, 427.
- 35 Newton N. Minow, "Abandoned in the Wasteland: Children, Television, and the First Amendment," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 49, no. 2 (October 1995): 29.
- 36 William Douglas, *Television Families: Is Something Wrong in Suburbia?* (New Jersey and London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003), 21.
- 37 Ibid., 82.
- 38 Ibid., 90.
- 39 James Joslyn and John Pendleton, "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 7, no. 1 (1973): 29.

- 40 Ibid., 32.
- 41 Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 276.
- 42 Douglas, *Television Families*, 88.
- 43 Meyrowtiz, *No Sense of Place*, 36.
- 44 Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 279.
- 45 O'Boyle, "Be Sure You're Right then Go Ahead," 72.
- 46 Erin Lee Mock, "The Horror of 'Honey, I'm Home': The Perils of Postwar Family Love in the Domestic Sitcom," *Film & History* 41, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 35–36.
- 47 Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse*, 118–119.
- 48 Ibid., 119.
- 49 Interestingly, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *My Three Sons*, and *Family Affair* anticipate what Molly Haskell has termed the male-parenting movie which emerged in the late 1970s: for example, *The Champ* (1979), *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979), *Mr. Mom* (1983), *Three Men and a Baby* (1987), *Three Men and a Little Lady* (1990), and *Hook* (1991).
- 50 For the record, this wasn't the first sitcom portrayal of a step-family. *Make Room for Daddy* (1953–1964) is a case in point.
- 51 Mina Marinucci, "Television, Generation X, and Third Wave Feminism: A Contextual Analysis of *The Brady Bunch*," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 38, no. 3 (2005): 508.
- 52 Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2001), xii, xv.
- 53 Ibid., 7.
- 54 Ibid., 8.
- 55 Ibid., 18.
- 56 Marilyn B. Young, "Introduction: Historicizing the American Counterculture of the 1960s and '70s," in *Imagination Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s–70s*, eds. Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Timothy Burke and Kevin Burke, *Saturday Morning Fever* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1999), 8.
- 59 Tim Hollis, *Hi There, Boys and Girls!: America's Local Children's TV Shows* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 20–21.
- 60 Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*, 458.
- 61 Heather Hendershot, *Saturday Morning Censors* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 108.
- 62 Jeffrey Ruoff, *An American Family: A Televised Life* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xii.
- 63 Arlene Skolnick, *Embattled Paradise: The American Family in an Age of Uncertainty* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 126–127.
- 64 Ibid., 130.
- 65 Ibid., 137–139.
- 66 Marsha Kinder, *Playing with Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games: From Muppet Babies to Teenage Ninja Mutant Turtles*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 2.
- 67 Ibid., 112.
- 68 Ibid., 109.
- 69 Ibid., 128.
- 70 Susan Jeffords, *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 13.