



Mad Men, Women, and Children: Essays on Gender and Generation

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As rich and complex as *The Sopranos* or *The Wire*, *Mad Men* demands a critical look at its narrative and characters as representative of both the period it depicts and of our memories and assumptions of the period. *Mad Men, Women, and Children: Essays on Gender and Generation*, edited by Heather Marcovitch and Nancy Batty, focuses on women and children, two groups that are not only identified together in this period (women characters in this show are often treated as coddled children and the children look to their parents as models of adult behaviors) but are also two groups who are beginning to gain political and social rights in this period. The connections between the women of *Mad Men*, early second-wave feminism, and contemporary third-wave feminism and post-feminism invite discussion in nearly every episode. These characters are further contextualized in light of historical figures and events, from the death of Marilyn Monroe and the assassination of Kennedy to the March on Washington and the bohemian counterculture. Moreover, the points of view of the children, who are now adult viewers of *Mad Men*, bridge the 1960s to the social and cultural concerns of today. *Mad Men, Women, and Children* presents an examination of these characters and issues in light of 1960s feminist writers such as Betty Friedan and popular writers such as Helen Gurley Brown, of historical events like the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement, and as lenses through which to view the sensibilities of the early 1960s.

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Editorial Review

Review

This collection of thirteen essays matches its subject's invention, wit, and historical earnestness. The scholarship is creative, carrying theoretical sophistication with a lightness of touch. This study of the contemporary cultural phenomenon that is *Mad Men* is important for anyone interested in understanding how a television show can dramatize the political implications of gender, race, family, and the intersection between the workplace and the home. Readers will have fun while they tussle with important ideas and recognize shrewd connections between past and present. (Roderick McGillis, The University of Calgary)

At last, the most provocative series on TV gets its due academic analysis. Each essay here provides trenchant insights into the show and how it reflects our culture and its influences. (Maurice Yacowar, University of Calgary)

A roundup of bestsellers from the decade introduces readers to how what happens to *Mad Men's* characters mirrors the common story lines of novels centering on the bored housewife, the swinging single, the business man, and the working girl. (*Communication Booknotes Quarterly*)

Mad Men, Women, and Children: Essays on Gender and Generation, edited by Heather Marcovitch and Nancy Batty, offers multiple perspectives on the representation of women and children in the popular AMC series, *Mad Men*. These essays explore the rich historical and social context portrayed in the series and connect the concerns and tumult of the sixties to the contemporary moment.

About the Author

Heather Marcovitch is professor of English at Red Deer College, where she teaches courses in Victorian literature and critical theory.

Nancy E. Batty is professor of English at Red Deer College, where she has taught American and international literature and science fiction for almost twenty years.

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