

CHAPTER 16

Male chauvinists and ranting libbers: Representations of single men in 1970s Australia

Chelsea Barnett

In September 1970, the magazine *Pix* published the following reader's letter:

Pity the poor victimised bachelor. He's overtaxed, pays high rent for a room or flat, does his own laundry, cooking and household chores. He has to take out girls, even if only for his own sanity. But, unless he's well off—and not many are—how can he save enough money to marry and settle down?¹

For the letter-writer—dubbed 'Fed Up', from Mt Gambier in South Australia—the life of the single man deserved pity, sympathy. Expectations of marriage lingered, as did those of financial security; a man had to be 'well off' to even contemplate marriage, 'Fed Up' reckoned. Read on its own, the letter reveals something of the uncertainty that shaped the lives of single men in the Australian 1970s. We might recognise the 1970s as a period in which the transformations of the 1960s continued to unfold with increasing visibility, but for 'Fed Up', at least, more conventional ideas about masculinity continued to burden unmarried men.² The publication of the letter suggests a complex gender order operating in the 1970s, particularly as it functioned outside the continuing legitimacy of marriage.

1 Letter to the editor, *Pix*, 19 September 1970, 23.

2 Michelle Arrow, *Friday on Our Minds: Popular Culture in Australia since 1945* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), 141.

Yet when read in the broader context of *Pix* (which would become *Pix/People* in 1972) in the 1970s, a more complicated image of single men emerges. True, that the letter was even published suggests that ‘Fed Up’ was speaking to a sympathetic audience. But ‘Fed Up’ was ultimately an anomaly in the pages of the magazine. Far from appearing as a figure requiring pity or sympathy, *Pix* and *Pix/People* charged the single man with asserting and maintaining a masculinism that both produced and was contingent upon a subservient femininity.

The 1970s continue to be remembered, in popular memory at least, as a decade of upheaval and change. Indelibly linked to these lingering memories is former Labor prime minister Gough Whitlam; upon his death in 2014, the statesman was eulogised as ‘[coming] to embody a period in Australian history which, for better or worse, was one of rapid and unparalleled change’.³ While Whitlam’s prime ministerial term was both the product of and catalyst for social change, cultural shifts were also unfolding—particularly in relation to the Australian national ideal. In this chapter, I argue that we see these shifts in *Pix* and then *Pix/People* magazine. I am particularly focusing on the periodical from 1970 to 1976, before it again changed its name to *People with Pix* and became more explicitly involved in reporting celebrity gossip—this change foreshadowed its eventual transformation to *People* magazine (and, simultaneously, the change to a magazine intended for both men and women). In these first seven years of the decade, *Pix* and *Pix/People* was a men’s lifestyle magazine that, in its coverage and discussion of politics, current affairs, gender and sex, articulated a particular masculinist vision of Australia in response to the increasing visibility of the women’s liberation movement in the 1970s. This chapter will explore the ways in which *Pix* and *Pix/People* linked particular understandings of femininity with a masculinist national ideal—and, thus, the ostensible threat to that ideal posed by the contemporary women’s liberation movement—before identifying how the magazine called upon unmarried men to adopt and embody the label of the ‘male chauvinist’ in response to this supposed challenge. More than just furthering a trite ‘battle of the sexes’, *Pix* and *Pix/People* mobilised a particular image of unmarried men to articulate an idealised, masculinist nationalism that left no space for femininity as posited by second-wave feminism.

3 Emma Griffiths, ‘Obituary: Former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam Dead at 98’, *ABC News*, October 2014, www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-10/gough-whitlam/3945026.

This chapter works within, and adds to, complex bodies of scholarship on Australian gender and Australian weekly periodicals. Betty Friedan may have, in 1963, positioned women's magazines as 'the purveyors of [a] cloak of darkness from which women had to escape', yet historians have, to some extent, recognised the importance of such cultural texts in their articulation of gendered ideals and expectations in twentieth-century Australia.⁴ The *Australian Women's Weekly* has received much of this scholarly attention—perhaps unsurprisingly, given that it became the most popular Australian women's magazine by the end of the 1930s (its first decade of circulation), attracted hundreds of thousands of readers in World War Two despite printing restrictions and then came to represent the 'popular face of Australian femininity' in the middle of the century.⁵ Megan Le Masurier has argued that *Cleo* in the 1970s created a public domain through which Australian women could access and engage with second-wave feminism.⁶ Yet although other scholars have acknowledged magazines' liberatory potential—Katie Holmes and Sarah Pinto, for instance, note that women's magazines in the early years of the twentieth century 'enabled some women to imagine autonomy'—deep engagement with magazines other than *Cleo* and the *Weekly* is rare.⁷

These gaps in the scholarship are only amplified when we turn to men's magazines. Historians interested in Australian men's magazines have most commonly looked to *Man*, published from the 1930s to the 1970s, and its place in the academic conversation has unfolded since the end of that decade.⁸ More recently, Madeleine Hamilton and Julie Ustinoff have both understood *Pix* as a harbinger of conventional hegemonic masculinity; however, they were not only looking at the magazine before it explicitly claimed to be 'entertainment for men', but they also explored its

4 M. J. Le Masurier, 'FAIR GO: *Cleo* Magazine as Popular Feminism in 1970s Australia' (PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2004), 12.

5 Jeannine Baker, *Australian Women War Reporters: Boer War to Vietnam* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2015), 48; Sue Sheridan, with Barbara Baird, Kate Borrett and Lyndall Ryan, *Who Was That Woman? The Australian Women's Weekly in the Postwar Years* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2002), 56.

6 Le Masurier, 'FAIR GO'.

7 Katie Holmes and Sarah Pinto, 'Gender and Sexuality', in *The Cambridge History of Australia*. Vol. 2, *The Commonwealth of Australia*, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 309, doi.org/10.1017/CHO9781107445758.044.

8 See Richard White, 'The Importance of Being *Man*', in *Australian Popular Culture*, ed. Peter Spearitt and David Walker (North Sydney: George Allen & Unwin Australia, 1979), 145–68; Ross Laurie, 'From Bodybuilders to Breadwinners: Depictions of Masculinity and Gender Roles in Popular Magazines in Australia during the 1950s' (PhD thesis, Griffith University, 1995); and Chelsea Barnett, 'Man's Man: Representations of Australian Post-War Masculinity in *Man* Magazine', *Journal of Australian Studies* 39, no. 2 (2015): 151–69, doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2014.1001422.

representations of, respectively, femininity and homophobia rather than masculinity.⁹ Beyond this, engagement with Australian men's magazines is scant. Yet in her work on contemporary British men's magazines, Bethan Benwell has identified such texts as both producing representations of masculinity and, simultaneously, functioning as 'a site within and around which meanings of masculinity circulate and are negotiated or contested'.¹⁰ Benwell's approach to the scholarly engagement with men's magazines is a productive one, and I share with her the belief that men's magazines, like popular culture more generally, both shape and are shaped by gendered meanings. This chapter's focus on *Pix* and *Pix/People* accordingly works to contribute to scholarship on Australian weekly periodicals as well as shed light on Australian meanings of masculinity in the 1970s.

In turning my attention to the representation of single men in *Pix* and *Pix/People* in the 1970s, I am interested in the ways in which masculinity functioned outside the confines of the heterosexual marital relationship, and so seek to establish the single man as an historical figure through which historians might understand the changing gender order over time. The unmarried man has lingered on the periphery of Australian historians' interrogation of masculinity. Marilyn Lake has hinted at 'bachelorhood' being a way of life rather than an indication of a man's marital status, in her acknowledgement that the nineteenth-century Australian bushman, 'whether married or not, enjoyed the pleasures of "bachelorhood"'.¹¹ More recently, Catharine Coleborne has located the unmarried man in the insane asylums of late colonial Australia and New Zealand.¹² Bart Ziino's work on enlistment in World War One has identified the ways in which expectations of men's enlistment were often shaped by their

9 Madeleine Hamilton, "A Girl Cannot be Beautiful Unless She is Healthy": Nationalism, Australian Womanhood, and the *Pix* Beach Girl Quests of World War II', in *Historicising Whiteness: Transnational Perspectives on the Construction of an Identity*, ed. Leigh Boucher, Jane Carey and Katherine Ellinghaus (Melbourne: RMIT Publishing in association with the School of Historical Studies, University of Melbourne, 2007), 234–43; Julie Ustinoff, "Hit Him with Your Handbag!" Homophobia in Australian Magazines of the 1960s', in *Homophobia: An Australian History*, ed. Shirleene Robinson (Sydney: Federated Press, 2008), 128–47.

10 Bethan Benwell, 'Introduction: Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines', in *Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines*, ed. Bethan Benwell (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 8, doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2003.tb03600.x.

11 Marilyn Lake, 'The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context', *Historical Studies* 22, no. 86 (1986): 117, doi.org/10.1080/10314618608595739.

12 Catharine Coleborne, *Insanity, Identity and Empire: Immigrants and Institutional Confinement in Australia and New Zealand, 1873–1910* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 114–38.

marital status.¹³ And Zora Simic has noted that single migrant men in postwar Australia were a source of concern for their ability to elicit both fear and desire, in turn recognising the specific anxieties produced at the intersection of gender and race.¹⁴ Yet this recognition has done little to ignite broader interest in the single man; this is especially unlike the unmarried woman, whom scholars have recognised as eschewing and challenging conventional expectations of femininity.¹⁵ A focus on the cultural articulation of unmarried men, then, might reveal new ideas about gender in the 1970s, and suggest new ways to think about the 1970s themselves.

Australian historians have keenly investigated the ways in which the cultural landscape of the 1970s understood and articulated masculinity. This scholarship has focused most heavily on ‘ocker’ masculinity as depicted in the flourishing cinematic landscape of the decade, although others have identified this ockerism in contemporary music and advertising as well.¹⁶ The ocker functioned along particularly nationalist lines in this era. Stephen Crofts notes that the imagined figure ‘asserted an Australian self versus its British other more virulently than was possible before or after’.¹⁷ Michelle Arrow further links the ocker on screen to the nation-building project unfolding in the Oz Rock scene of the period. ‘Pub rock’, she writes, ‘articulated an aggressively masculine popular nationalism ...

13 Bart Ziino, ‘Enlistment and Non-enlistment in Wartime Australia: Responses to the 1916 Call to Arms Appeal’, *Australian Historical Studies* 41, no. 2 (2010): 217–32, doi.org/10.1080/10314611003713603; Bart Ziino, ‘Eligible Men: Men, Families and Masculine Duty in Great War Australia’, *History Australia* 14, no. 2 (2017): 202–17, doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2017.1319739.

14 Zora Simic, ‘Bachelors of Misery and Proxy Brides: Marriage, Migration and Assimilation, 1947–1973’, *History Australia* 11, no. 1 (2014): 153, doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2014.11668504.

15 On Australian unmarried women, see Katie Holmes, “‘Spinsters Indispensable’: Feminist, Single Women and the Critique of Marriage, 1890–1920”, *Australian Historical Studies* 29, no. 110 (1998): 68–90, doi.org/10.1080/10314619808596061; Marilyn Lake, ‘Female Desires: The Meaning of World War II’, in *Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 60–80; and Kay Whitehead, ‘The Spinster Teacher in Australia from the 1870s to the 1960s’, *History of Education Review* 36, no. 1 (2007): 1–17, doi.org/10.1108/08198691200700001.

16 See Tom O’Regan, ‘Australian Film in the 1970s: The Ocker and the Quality Film’, *Culture & Communication Reading Room*, www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/film/1970s.html; Lisa Jacobson, ‘The Ocker in Australian Drama’, *Meanjin* 49, no. 1 (1990): 137–47; and Stephen Crofts, ‘The Adventures of Barry McKenzie: Comedy, Satire and Nationhood in 1972’, *Continuum* 10, no. 2 (1996): 123–40, doi.org/10.1080/10304319609365744; and Robert Crawford, “‘Anyhow ... Where D’yer Get It Mate?’ Ockerdom in Adland Australia’, *Journal of Australian Studies* 31, no. 90 (2007): 1–15, doi.org/10.1080/14443050709388105; Arrow, *Friday on Our Minds*, 112–16, 122–26.

17 Crofts, ‘The Adventures of Barry McKenzie’, 123.

The ocker, it seemed, was alive and well and enjoying his Angels gigs'.¹⁸ Much like the ocker on the big screen and in local pubs, the single man in the pages of *Pix* and *Pix/People* was engaged in a nationalist project, responding to the women's liberation movement of the 1970s through affirming, and maintaining, a masculinist nationalism.

'Sex and love: The most talked about subject on earth'¹⁹

Pix was first published in January 1938, and began as a weekly lifestyle magazine for both men and women. The magazine did not explicitly state its imagined or intended audience, but with coverage of celebrity affairs and human interest stories situated alongside that of the spectre of another world war, it certainly catered to a wide (imagined) audience in its early issues.²⁰ Ustinoff notes that the periodical attempted to appeal to the 'broadest possible readership consisting of both men and women from predominantly a working-class background'.²¹ By the 1970s, however, the magazine openly targeted a male readership. Nude or scantily clad women graced the magazine's covers in the early years of the decade; when, in 1972 and 1973, covergirls were indeed covered by a tiny bikini, an open vest or a strategically placed towel, the audience demanded a return to the more revealing images. In doing so, readers like 'Happy Medium' explicitly articulated that the magazine was produced for men:

I was disappointed when *Pix/People* discontinued nude pictures, due to the selfish few who are not content to have most magazines in a prudish form but want them all that way. If they find such harmless things offensive, there is a large range of women's magazines which should fulfil their needs. I, and many others would like to enjoy more of the old *Pix/People*.²²

18 Arrow, *Friday on Our Minds*, 128–29. See also Jon Stratton, 'Nation Building and Australian Popular Music in the 1970s and 1980s', *Continuum* 20, no. 2 (2006): 243–52, doi.org/10.1080/10304310600641778.

19 'Do Hormones and Alcohol Help?', *Pix*, 7 March 1970, 14.

20 See 'Shirley Temples: Hollywood Has Them by the Carload', *Pix*, 29 January 1938, 36–37; 'He's 34 Stone on the Hoof', *Pix*, 29 January 1938, 24–25; and 'Children for War and War for Children', *Pix*, 29 January 1938, 8–11.

21 Ustinoff, "Hit Him with your Handbag!", 129.

22 Letter to the editor, *Pix/People*, 12 December 1972, 12.

While it was not clear whether 'Happy Medium' was a man or a woman, the editor's brief response indicated that they, at least, understood the letter's author to be a man, confirming that 'Happy Medium can be sure we will not disappoint him'.²³ Sure enough, 'Happy Medium' would soon be pleased. The nude covergirls returned in early 1973, only months after the letter was published in December 1972.

In voicing their displeasure at the magazine's supposed 'prudish form', 'Happy Medium' articulated a distinction between women's and men's magazines. Clearly, for this particular reader, *Pix* and *Pix/People* was a magazine that, in catering for a male readership, was thus obligated to represent 'the beauty and appeal of the female nude from an artistic point'.²⁴ By the time this letter had been published, the magazine had already introduced the tagline 'For Men' on its covers; the more enduring tagline, 'Entertainment For Men', was adopted in December 1972 (albeit discarded in July 1975).

Despite this explicit recognition of its male audience, *Pix* and *Pix/People* continued to cater to women through the 1970s. Indeed, while the magazine continued to cover human interest stories, current events and celebrity natter as it did in the 1930s, more titillating material was also discussed, and the magazine functioned as a site in which issues of sex and gender could be discussed by men and women, young and old. One reader thanked the magazine for its 'thought-provoking and generally enlightening' coverage of sex, adding: 'At my age (33) I find my education in these matters left a lot to be desired, and I wish my parents had had courage and the knowledge to inform me much sooner'.²⁵ Women who wrote requesting the inclusion of male nudes, to be on par with the magazine's male readers, were rewarded with posters of barely clad men.²⁶ While editors deemed full-frontal views impractical because 'retailers wouldn't sell them', they also saw no harm in providing 'beefcake bonanza ... strictly for the girls'.²⁷ Whether these letters were genuinely sent in by readers is less important than the comments being 'presented' as the

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Letter to the editor, *Pix*, 21 November 1970.

26 'Men for Walls', *Pix/People*, 26 October 1972, 20–21.

27 Ibid., 20; Editorial, *Pix/People*, 26 October 1972, 41.

work of readers ... [to] give readers a sense of agency and project a feeling of communality'—and, ultimately, to suggest a community of readers engaged in a dialogue with each other, and with the magazine.²⁸

Understanding the relationship *Pix* and *Pix/People* had with their imagined or intended readership is important, because it is clear that the magazine was articulating ideas around gender, sex and marriage to both men *and* women. The magazine did acknowledge female sexuality and sexual agency outside of marriage, with the yoga column 'SEXercises with Swami Sarasvati' encouraging women to exercise their pelvic muscles:

which are so important for childbirth and enjoying your sex life. Well-toned muscles add to a girl's femininity ... You can get the man you want and keep him as long as you want him to stay with you.²⁹

Overwhelmingly, however, *Pix* and *Pix/People* advocated a conventional femininity that was both subordinate to masculinity and bound by marriage. Other 'SEXercises' columns noted that 'a clever woman will always keep her man happy by dressing to please him ... A really sexy woman is feminine all the time, whether she is dressed up to go to a ball or is simply doing her housework'.³⁰ Married women were advised to reignite the spark with their husbands 'after she's sent the children to her mother's, and cleaned the house and made some good steaks'.³¹ More generally, it was only within the marital relationship that women's sex was represented as legitimate at all. One woman asked regular columnist 'Dr Pix' for advice: her boyfriend was requesting she wear 'see-through gear', but she was a 'bit too timid'. Dr Pix's advice? Not to worry until after marriage, for 'see through gear is essentially designed for the bedroom after the nuptial deal has been sealed, signed and delivered'.³² Another 16-year-old girl was worried about getting carried away with her boyfriend, for 'anything's liable to happen after that'. Dr Pix's suggestion was, again, to wait: 'Keep your passion under control until the wedding bells toll. Then get on "The Pill" (or what) and your problems will vanish'.³³ Furthermore, married women who *had* access to the pill were advised to reconsider their

28 Bridget Griffen-Foley, 'From *Tit-Bits* to *Big Brother*: A Century of Audience Participation in the Media', *Media, Culture & Society* 26, no. 4 (2004): 540, doi.org/10.1177/0163443704044216.

29 'SEXercises with Swami Sarasvati', *Pix*, 23 January 1971, 31.

30 'SEXercises with Swami Sarasvati', *Pix*, 26 December 1970, 22.

31 'What I'd Like to Tell my Husband about Sex', *Pix/People*, 26 June 1972, 18.

32 'Dr Pix', *Pix*, 29 August 1970, 24.

33 'Dr Pix', *Pix*, 30 May 1970, 22.

usage should it ‘wreck’ their sex life and produce ‘disastrous, marriage-destroying symptoms’.³⁴ While acknowledging that sex was an important (and even essential) component of married life, *Pix* and *Pix/People* was clearly committed to an ideal femininity that could mobilise sexual agency and desire sexual pleasure only within the bounds of marriage.

‘I want one who recognises her own subservience’³⁵

Through its articulation of feminine sexuality circumscribed by marriage, *Pix* and *Pix/People* was engaged in a broader cultural conversation that was grappling with changing meanings of gender and, by extension, changing ideas of the Australian nation. That the nation is a gendered institution is widely accepted by scholars of gender; others similarly recognise that nationalism, and Australian nationalism in particular, has been constructed by and through ‘masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope’.³⁶ Gail Reekie, for instance, notes that it is through the exclusion of the experiences of women that Australia has ‘retained its masculine integrity’.³⁷ As such, while the idealised Australian nationalism has relied upon ‘the celebration of a particular style of white masculinity’, feminist historians have emphasised that this nationalism ‘could come into conflict with a feminist interest in the rights of women’.³⁸ Accordingly, the continued rearticulation of the dominant, masculinist national ideal was dependent upon a subservient femininity, which the women’s liberation movement of the 1970s sought to dismantle.

Certainly, women’s liberation made significant strides to bring about social change in this period. The establishment of ‘refuges, women’s centres, rape crisis centres, Women’s Studies units in institutions of tertiary education’, as well as campaigns against sexist advertising, for equal pay and for safe

34 ‘The Pill is Wrecking My Sex Life’, *Pix*, 9 January 1971, 10.

35 Hugh Schmitt, ‘The Girls Said: “Bring on the Piggies”’, *Pix/People*, 12 July 1973, 7.

36 Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 93; Mrinalini Sinha, ‘Gender and Nation’, in *Women’s History in Global Perspective*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 230.

37 Gail Reekie, ‘Contesting Australia: Feminism and Histories of the Nation’, in *Images of Australia: An Introductory Reader to Australian Studies*, ed. Gillian Whitlock and David Carter (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1992), 145.

38 Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marian Quartly, *Creating a Nation*, 2nd ed. (Perth: API Network, 2006), 2.

and legal access to abortion, signalled 'second-wave feminism at work'.³⁹ But a significant component of this feminist project unfolded in cultural terms, particularly regarding the relationship between Australian women, and Australian femininity, and the nation. While Susan Magarey, for instance, notes the complex relationship between women's liberation and the government, emphasising that both entities (the movement and the state) and their relationship changed over time, she also acknowledges 'the overwhelming desire unleashed in Women's Liberation for an order of transformation unimaginable in conjunction with any kind of government we know'.⁴⁰ Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marian Quartly point out that second-wave feminists, 'armed with a university education and the pill', aimed for liberation, and not equality, upon realising that dominant assumptions of the national political economy 'worked against women'.⁴¹ Elsewhere, Lake has emphasised women's 'sense of profound alienation from the nation' in the 1970s.⁴² The second-wave-feminist quest to liberate women from 'the orbit of their mothers' produced not only the possibility of a femininity that functioned beyond the 'oppressive and stifling' expectations of marriage, motherhood and domesticity, but also produced the possibility of a feminist national imaginary.⁴³ However, it was this very possibility that threatened the gendered conventions advocated in *Pix* and *Pix/People*.

It is important to acknowledge that the women's liberation movement was not exclusively derided or panned in *Pix* and *Pix/People*. Readers' letters advocating equality, for example, found space in the weekly feature. Miss S. Angus went so far as to declare that she wouldn't marry a man 'for the world': 'Women should have double [men's] pay', she argued. 'They earn it.'⁴⁴ Beyond readers' contributions, however, feminism found an interesting ally in Ormsby Wilkins, a weekly columnist in the decade's early years. Wilkins lauded the increasing divorce rate of the early 1970s as 'quite a healthy sign', arguing it signalled that 'more women are finding the means to get out of their unhappy marriages and, maybe,

39 Susan Magarey, 'Women's Liberation Was a Movement, Not an Organisation', *Australian Feminist Studies* 29, no. 82 (2014): 378, doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2014.976898; Holmes and Pinto, 'Gender and Sexuality', 324.

40 Magarey, 'Women's Liberation Was a Movement, Not an Organisation', 379.

41 Grimshaw et al., *Creating a Nation*, 294, 298.

42 Marilyn Lake, 'Women and Nation in Australia: The Politics of Representation', *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 43, no. 1 (1997): 48, doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8497.1997.tb01377.x.

43 Grimshaw et al., *Creating a Nation*, 294.

44 Letter to the editor, *Pix*, 27 June 1970, 46.

try again'.⁴⁵ But although Wilkins's support was articulated in numerous columns, it seemed that even he recognised the movement's limits.⁴⁶ One particular column, entitled 'Bachelor Bliss', expressed Wilkins's difficulties navigating household chores as a single man and his sense of pride at having completed the tasks but, so too, a final concession:

It's time somebody started a Men's Lib movement to prove that at least when it comes to housekeeping, men are just as good in every way as their female counterparts. Mop in hand and saucepan under my arm I'll join and defy any woman to do better. Yet deep down inside me I know that I do need a woman if ever my house is going to be in perfect order again, try as I may to deny it.⁴⁷

Even the most ardent male supporters of feminism were ultimately shown to rely upon women to maintain their expertise in all things domestic. More than just reinforcing the notion of women's 'roles', however, the emphasis on Wilkins's unmarried status suggested it was single men who were ultimately responsible for resisting the social and cultural changes that second-wave feminism produced.

Despite *Pix* and *Pix/People* publishing positive ideas around women's liberation, these favourable representations did little to challenge the magazine's overwhelmingly negative position on the movement. The whole world was ostensibly 'in fear' as the 'Women's Lib "monster" [ran] amok', and although one reader conceded that 'Australia is behind the world in some aspects of the Women's Lib beast', the editors dryly noted their gratitude: 'and thank heavens for that'.⁴⁸ The same reader expounded their opposition to the movement on religious grounds, noting that: 'The Good Book says women should serve their husbands, and although the Bible is criticised by many people today, few (men at least) could argue with it in this case'.⁴⁹ Largely driving the general opposition to the increasing visibility of second-wave feminism in *Pix* and *Pix/People* was a broader discontent with the movement's challenge to conventional expectations of femininity. Reporting on what it deemed a 'backlash' to the women's liberation movement, the magazine asked if women had 'lost more than

45 Ormsby Wilkins, 'Our Sex Laws Made by Old Men!', *Pix*, 3 October 1970.

46 See, for example, Ormsby Wilkins, 'Women Get a Raw Deal', *Pix*, 21 November 1970, 23; and Ormsby Wilkins, 'Laugh's on Women's Lib.', *Pix*, 3 April 1971, 26.

47 Ormsby Wilkins, 'Bachelor Bliss', *Pix*, 18 September 1971, 22.

48 Letter to the editor, *Pix/People*, 8 March 1973, 14.

49 *Ibid.*

they [had] gained?’⁵⁰ Further, what of the social effects? Feminists had reportedly ‘[deserted] their families’, making children suffer.⁵¹ Concerns about women ‘out of control’ permeated the magazine’s contents, as contributing authors and readers alike looked to the ostensibly dangerous precedent set by American feminists. *Pix* and *Pix/People* warned that ‘[m]any Australians living in the US fear the backlash of the women’s liberation movement will soon be felt back home’, and spoke to an Australian woman living in Miami with her husband who cautioned her female compatriots:

Australian women are blindly following what the American women’s libbers say they should do ... I want men to open doors for me. At the same time if I do equal work I’d like equal pay. But this equality cannot be general because I generally can’t do the work of a man.⁵²

Others lamented the extent to which American feminism had grown recalcitrant: ‘Americans created the Women’s Lib monster—now they are searching grimly for ways to control it’.⁵³ These continual references to the state of women’s liberation in the United States reveal concerns for the unruliness that could potentially unfold in Australia, as incredulous readers demanded:

What do women want from liberation now? They’ve got the vote, are less sexually restricted, are no longer slaves in the kitchen ... So what’s the bellyache about by women’s liberation movements? They’re only malcontents or militants who are just plain bossy types wanting to exercise tyranny.⁵⁴

Pix and *Pix/People* thus quite explicitly advocated for the maintenance of conventional femininity and sexual norms that would maintain masculine superiority and, by extension, a masculinist national vision. Sophie Robinson’s work on men’s engagement with second-wave feminism argues that while Australian masculinity was, in the 1970s, being confronted by both feminism and the gay liberation movement, ‘it was feminism which was the most challenging to late-twentieth century Australian masculinity and politics’.⁵⁵ The magazine represented

50 Colin Dangaard, ‘Women’s Lib Backlash’, *Pix/People*, 5 April 1973, 5.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., 4.

53 Letter to the editor, *Pix/People*, 8 March 1973, 14.

54 Letter to the editor, *Pix*, 16 January 1971, 35.

55 Sophie Robinson, ‘The Man Question: Men and Women’s Liberation in 1970s Australia’, *Outskirts* 31 (November 2013), www.outskirts.arts.uwa.edu.au/volumes/volume-31/sophie-robinson.

the relationship between Australian men and feminism along these lines; it was reported that men ‘[resented] women’s domination’, which was said to ‘[gall] his masculine pride’.⁵⁶ Contributing authors undermined feminism and feminists by interviewing women who generally resented the movement: one woman advised women’s libbers to ‘honestly [ask] themselves if they want to be equal with men’.⁵⁷ Said another: ‘I don’t care what the libbers say, a pair of strong arms around me is as much of a turn-on as you can get’.⁵⁸ This negative representation of feminists aligns with broader media portrayals of the movement in the 1970s. Susan Sheridan, Susan Magarey and Sandra Lilburn note that early accounts of the women’s liberation movement ‘attracted a good deal of intrigued, though rarely sympathetic, reportage’.⁵⁹ But as the decade wore on—and ‘the novelty wore off’—feminism and feminists were more generally depicted in ways that were ‘less than friendly’.⁶⁰ Recruitment efforts for the ‘short-lived Women’s Liberation Movement’ in Adelaide were reported to be unsuccessful, as ‘potential recruits ... indicated that they would remain the objects of men’s desire, and like it’.⁶¹ And one letter-writer, dubbed ‘Anti-lib’, succinctly expressed the general opposition to the cultural transformations wrought by women’s liberation:

Women’s Liberation is a lot of rot. What is happening to feminine women? Women can be powerful without being liberated?

I, for one, don’t like the idea of liberated females running the world. In a woman’s own little world, the order of significance is usually, husband, children, then herself.⁶²

How, then, might the conventional gender order—and with it, a masculinist Australian nationalism—be maintained and rearticulated in the 1970s? While Orsmy Wilkins’s ‘bachelor bliss’ implied that unmarried men were responsible for the continuation of a femininity subordinate to a dominant masculinity, *Pix* and *Pix/People* adopted more explicit measures as well. In particular, *Pix* and *Pix/People* turned to unmarried men whom the magazine called, and who self-identified as,

56 ‘16 Truths About Men’, *Pix/People*, 17 October 1974, 32.

57 Colin Dangaard, ‘Women’s Lib Backlash’, *Pix/People*, 5 April 1973, 5.

58 ‘Why Girls Go for Macho Men’, *Pix/People*, 23 September 1976, 13.

59 Susan Sheridan, Susan Magarey and Sandra Lilburn, ‘Feminism in the News’, in *Feminism in Popular Culture*, ed. Joanne Hollows and Rachel Moseley (Oxford & New York: Berg Publishers, 2006), 25.

60 *Ibid.*

61 ‘It’s Slavery, Said the Lady’, *Pix*, 25 April 1970, 26.

62 Letter to the editor, *Pix/People*, 16 August 1973, 18.

'male chauvinists'. This was a label that was not only to be embraced and embodied as a badge of honour, but also functioned to represent the antithesis of second-wave feminism. Key to this male chauvinism was the dominance of men over women, of masculinity over femininity, which would in turn ostensibly secure the masculinist nationalism that the women's liberation movement sought to demolish. Indeed, if this legitimate Australian nationalism functioned as incompatible with feminist claims for women's rights, then a continued subservient femininity was an essential component of a masculinist Australia.

Pix and *Pix/People* called upon single men to embrace male chauvinism, rather than their married peers, because it was in their sexual relationships with women outside of the bonds of marriage that men could most forcefully assert their dominance. Attached or married men were not in a position to remind women of their inferiority. In such relationships, the magazine warned its readers, men needed to become accustomed to losing arguments, to receiving criticism, to becoming sexual and emotional equals: 'it's getting to know her body so well that you don't have to ask and she doesn't have to tell'.⁶³ Single men faced no such burdens. On the contrary, in claiming the male chauvinist label, men were *required* to be 'aggressive, active and extroverted' in order to remind women how they 'should' be acting, and what they 'should' be doing.⁶⁴ One author recommended that single men make themselves sexually 'irresistible' in order to tame uncontrollable women. Women were, the article explained, 'by nature devious', but had it in them 'to be loving, exciting, skilful and sensual. All they [needed] was a man who [could] bring out these qualities, using his knowledge, intuition and intelligence to select the right approach'.⁶⁵ The magazine here deemed self-confidence to be 'the most attractive quality a man can have'; elsewhere, *Pix* and *Pix/People* extended this assertion, assuring men that 'millions' of women '[yearned] for the strong individual who is the personification of what the ranting libbers dislike most: the man who takes charge in any male-female relationship'.⁶⁶

More than just appealing to other women than the 'ranting libbers', *Pix* and *Pix/People* charged male chauvinists with being 'macho' (which, it explained, was 'Spanish for masculine') to remind women of the

63 Eleanor Williams, 'Sharing a Bed is Not Sharing a Life', *Pix/People*, 18 July 1974, 17.

64 Tim Leach, 'You Don't Have to be an Athlete', *Pix/People*, 20 July 1972, 54.

65 Robert Wimpole, 'The Irresistible Male', *Pix/People*, 17 August 1972, 38.

66 'Why Girls Go for Macho Men', *Pix/People*, 23 September 1976, 12.

benefits of a 'strong man'.⁶⁷ In the 'silence' that had followed the 'first explosions of women's lib ... many girls [remembered] it's pretty good to have a masculine man who opens doors for them, gives them a shoulder to cry on, and has a mind of his own'.⁶⁸ This was the 'gutsy guy, also known as a male chauvinist pig'—a label not to be baulked at.⁶⁹

So if you're considered a tough guy by some ladies, if you've been called a male chauvinist pig because of your attitudes, if you're the type who is the aggressor in a male-female relationship, don't change. You're probably making out better than the rest of us.⁷⁰

Readers approved the magazine's advocacy for this masculine type:

Your article on macho men ... proves what I have been saying all along. Women don't want small, snivelling men. They want real men who can push them around when necessary and show them who rules the roost.

This 'mother instinct' seems to be fine for a week or so, but sooner or later any woman wants her man to show her what he's made of.

Underneath the women's lib facade these women want real men.⁷¹

For this male chauvinist, dominance over women included physical strength; '[pushing] them around' was an acceptable means of reminding women 'who ruled the roost'. But male chauvinists also 'loved women', and *Pix* and *Pix/People* mobilised a particular romantic ideal to appeal to potential or untapped male chauvinists. One interviewed man, a 43-year-old divorcé, was a self-confessed male chauvinist who claimed to 'love women', and accordingly '[resented] having to treat some of them like men, just because they claim to be equal'.⁷² He continued:

I love to be kind and considerate with a woman. If I am denied this pleasure, which is the trend these days, then my enjoyment is not what it used to be.

Many men I know feel the same way. I'm proud to be a male chauvinist.⁷³

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., 13.

71 Letter to the editor, *Pix/People*, 11 November 1976, 2.

72 Colin Dangaard, 'Women's Lib Backlash', *Pix/People*, 5 April 1973, 5.

73 Ibid.

But male chauvinist claims of loving women were limited to very specific notions of femininity. Male chauvinists clearly did not seek out feminists on whom to lavish their attention. Rather, these men sought women who would let them ‘pull out chairs, open doors, extend old-fashioned graces ... Women should be kissed and cuddled, hugged and pampered and cherished. They should be put on pedestals, smell sweet and be well scrubbed at all times’.⁷⁴ Male chauvinism thus depended upon, and celebrated, a subservient femininity that was driven by particular beauty standards—something against which feminists had been actively campaigning since the emergence of the second wave in the United States.⁷⁵

Accordingly, and unsurprisingly, interaction between male chauvinists and women involved in second-wave feminism did not unfold smoothly. *Pix* and *Pix/People* continued to affirm the necessity of single men embracing male chauvinism by reporting on its increasing visibility in Australian society. In doing so, the magazine emphasised the belief that male chauvinists could push back against any progress achieved through the women’s liberation movement. The magazine reported on a ‘Student Sex War’ unfolding between feminists and members of the Male Chauvinist Society in operation at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT). Describing the conflict as ‘a full-scale, bomb-throwing battle [that] flared up as the women fought for liberation and the men for their chauvinism’, *Pix* and *Pix/People* claimed to be ‘male chauvinists at heart’.⁷⁶ The magazine thus supported the claim made by the president of the Male Chauvinist Society that ‘male strength will drive [feminists] into submission’, and applauded the society’s slogan: ‘Keep ’em barefoot and pregnant’.⁷⁷ Over a month after this first report was published, author Hugh Schmitt returned to report on a debate that unfolded on the WAIT campus between three feminists and two members of the Male Chauvinist Society: outgoing president Tim Robinson and his incoming replacement Peter Woodward.⁷⁸ Woodward criticised women’s liberation for being ‘violently sexist, a case of the so-called oppressed becoming oppressive’, and stated that ‘[w]omen should learn

74 Ibid.

75 Michelle Arrow, “‘It Has Become My Personal Anthem’: “I Am Woman”, Popular Culture and 1970s Feminism’, *Australian Feminist Studies* 22, no. 53 (2007): 214, doi.org/10.1080/08164640701361774.

76 Hugh Schmitt, ‘Student Sex War’, *Pix/People*, 31 May 1973, 8–9.

77 Hugh Schmitt, ‘The Girls Said: “Bring on the Piggies”’, *Pix/People*, 12 July 1973, 6.

78 Ibid., 6–7.

to live the role they've been born to'.⁷⁹ Similarly, Robinson was interested in the prospect of marriage, but only conditionally; he wouldn't marry, he said:

until females start to change back to what they were before Women's Lib came along. I don't want a dumb bird, but I want one who recognises her own subservience—and with expertise on housework.⁸⁰

While the Male Chauvinist Society was located only at WAIT at the time the article was published, Robinson hoped that branches would open at other universities and technical colleges; they were needed 'to straighten out the women of Australia who have gone the wrong way'.⁸¹ Women who had 'gone the wrong way'—who had embraced feminism—threatened the Australian vision in which male chauvinists were invested. While WAIT's feminist women were adamant that they had 'destroyed' the Male Chauvinist Society, Robinson was equally forceful: '[t]hey can't laugh us off'.⁸²

Conclusion

Five years after 'Fed Up' asked the readers of *Pix* to '[p]ity the poor victimised bachelor', the magazine published another reader's letter calling for sympathy for unmarried men. Mrs CLE of Wollongong, New South Wales, declared that she detested the expression 'Male Chauvinistic Pig', which she acknowledged had 'only existed during the last decade'.⁸³ It was an ill-fitting label, she argued, because:

the expression does not aptly describe what it is supposed to describe—smug, superior, female exploiting males. Until this woman's [sic] liberation movement started men treated women like ladies, and only females who allowed themselves to be exploited were exploited. Women's Liberation is something each woman must battle on her own, subtly. The present form adopted only gets the fellows' backs up; and rightly so.⁸⁴

79 Ibid., 6.

80 Ibid., 7.

81 Ibid.

82 Hugh Schmitt, 'Student Sex War', *Pix/People*, 31 May 1973, 9.

83 Letter to the editor, *Pix/People*, 7 August 1975, 2.

84 Ibid.

For Mrs CLE, men were undeserving of such a label; women who required liberating needed to work alone, and discretely. While her dislike of the label 'Male Chauvinistic Pig' sat at odds with the magazine's own enthusiastic embrace, the responsibility she placed on women to navigate women's liberation without troubling men aligned more closely with its own engagement. Indeed, while *Pix* and *Pix/People's* representation of the women's liberation movement was not homogenous, the threat that it posed to men—and, more broadly, particular ideals of masculinity—was of particular concern to the periodical throughout the 1970s.

In emphasising and advocating male chauvinism, *Pix* and *Pix/People* represented single men as functioning with a particular power in the face of cultural and social transformations. If, by imagining a new agenda for women's rights and thus a new femininity, second-wave feminists were challenging masculinist Australian nationalism, then *Pix* and *Pix/People* charged single men, through an embrace of male chauvinism, with maintaining that national vision. This tension that unfolded in the cultural sphere of the 1970s reveals not only the necessity of understanding the single man as a historical figure, but also that cultural transformations did not unfold in the 1970s as easily as popular memory suggests.

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