

AN00240X

**The British cultural background between
1969 and 1974: the examples of *Doctor
Who* and *Monty Python's Flying Circus*.**

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Introduction:

Between 1969 and 1974, two television programmes reflected the British social background; the *Monty Python's Flying Circus* and *Doctor Who*. The *Flying Circus* was shown between 1969 and 1974 on the BBC and was created by five men coming from Cambridge and Oxford Universities, or Oxbridge. Three of them, Graham Chapman, John Cleese and Eric Idle, met and started creating some comic material at Cambridge University, while the two others, Michael Palin and Terry Jones, were coming from Oxford University. Finally, a sixth member, the American Terry Gilliam, joined the troupe at the start of the *Flying Circus*. Palin and Jones met the three from Cambridge in *The Frost Report* in 1966 where Palin, Jones, Chapman and Idle were writing and Cleese was writing and performing. All five of them as well as Terry Gilliam were highly educated and had a middle class background which could be visible through their references in the *Flying Circus*. The show mostly consisted in a series of sketches, not always linked together, in which they used to parody television shows and social behaviours. The Pythons took an interest in the relations between men and women and tried to promote gender equality while pushing the limits of television in a British society going towards more freedom for women. The troupe was mostly centred on showing that women were sexual entities who deserved respect and as many rights as any man. On the other hand, *Doctor Who* was mostly centred on the place of women at work. The programme was created in 1963 by Sydney Newman and Verity Lambert and is still going on today. It was supposed to be a means of education for children and young adults so it presented historical events and scientific facts in a way which could be interesting to them. Indeed, the Doctor, a Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey in the constellation of Kasterborous, travelled through time and space in his spaceship, a little blue police box called the TARDIS (Time And Relative Dimension In Space), with at least one companion, often female. The Time Lord had the ability to regenerate, meaning that when he was mortally injured, he could repair all the cells of his body, causing him to change his physical

appearance. That meant that between January 1970 and June 1974, Jon Pertwee interpreted the third incarnation of the *Doctor who* was trapped on Earth after being punished by the Time Lords. He was accompanied by various companions such as the Brigadier, interpreted by Nicholas Courtney, who was a regular between 1970 and 1974 and was the head of UNIT (United Intelligence Taskforce) whose purpose was to protect Earth from alien invaders. The Doctor, working more or less for the Brigadier, used to work with the scientist Liz Shaw (Caroline John) in 1970, then, after her departure, he was assisted by Jo Grant (Katy Manning) between 1971 and 1973, followed by Sarah Jane Smith (Elisabeth Sladen) in 1974 until 1976, after Jon Pertwee's departure. *Doctor Who* reflected the social changes happening in Britain at the time and tried to show that women were as capable as men at work. Together, they both drew a complete picture of the British society and the changes necessary in order to make it evolve; indeed, while *Doctor Who* focused more on the place of women at work, the *Flying Circus* put the emphasis on sexual freedom. The United Kingdom had been affected by the Second World War and the return of men meant that women would have to stay at home, taking care of the family while men would go back to work. This way of living was promoted by the Conservative Party, led by Edward Heath, the Conservative Prime Minister between 1970 and 1974. However, the 1960s and 1970s saw new progressive ideas and women, black and gay people started to fight to obtain the same rights as a straight white man. Sexual freedom was of prime importance for women because it meant that they would be the only ones to have control over their bodies. Some men, especially young men, supported women's rights, but others tried to assert their power over them even more by spreading false rumours and by trying to depict women as “evil”.

In a context of social revolution, did the programmes *Doctor Who* and *Monty Python's Flying Circus* promote gender equality in Britain?

I- The social context in Britain after World War Two: men and their authority within a conservative Society

1. The emergence of social complaints in the postwar era

In the twentieth century many worldwide conflicts happened and they all had a huge impact on gender, sexuality and race. Conflicts such as World War One, World War Two, the Cold War and decolonisation had a great influence on the British society. Anxiety, frustration and fears produced by the conflicts were often projected on the relations towards gender and sexuality. “In the postwar period, sexual conflict and polarisation between the sexes provided one of the few adequate means by which the political, economic, and social upheaval occasioned by the Great War could be represented”. (S. K. Kent, 1999, p.259). The conflicts shaped the British society of the 1960s and 1970s. Those two decades were torn between the need of social changes and the will to keep things as they used to be. Conservative people were probably more comfortable keeping things the way they were because they already saw many changes during the wars. Moreover, the changes that were happening at the time with the decolonisation and the Cold War might already be too much for them while they were trying to get used to a normal life again. Of course, the Cold War shaped British society. The Vietnam War, for instance, was covered by the media so the Americans, the Europeans and the British could see on TV the devastation and the Vietnamese's suffering. This started the hippy movement and the emergence of the need for peace.

The end of the postwar consensus (after World War Two) began during the 1960s. During this decade people started to realise that social and economic changes were necessary. The postwar era saw the continuity in social inequalities and an alarming rise in unemployment and the economic situation was unstable. All of these had an impact on society and the protests started. People used different ways to show they were unhappy; they used protests, strikes and also used counter-culture in the media. One TV show representative of the counter-cultural movement is the *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. It was considered as being immoral and permissive which was against what

Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath's government believed in, between 1970 and 1974, and the BBC, surprisingly, tried to use censorship on the show. The Pythons, at the beginning of the 1970s were all around thirty years old and could be considered as part of the youth. They were born during the Second World War and were too young to remember it. They grew up in a postwar world whereas most conservative people lived and remembered the war. Those two generations then had very different visions of society; on one side, the idea was to keep things as they were after World War Two, as, compared to the war, things were not so bad; and on the other side, the idea was to promote changes, to evolve, to get out of passivity and to go towards happiness. *Monty Python's Flying Circus* appeared during “a transitional moment in British media culture” (Landy, 2005, p.23). This transition was of course influenced by the social and historical background of Britain. The end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s were marked by society wanting to break away from old, conservative social codes. The hippy movement was thus very important, especially in relation to the Vietnam War. The need to change social and economic conditions became more and more important and, by the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, many protests and strikes emerged. The youth was the main actor of those revolts; students, black people, gay people and women were all fighting for their own cause and all wanted to achieve the same goals: they were asking for more freedom and equality.

The television programme *Doctor Who* also tried to promote women's freedom and gender equality. The show started right in the middle of the postwar consensus, in 1963. It always adapted to what was happening in contemporary Britain and reflected the social changes of the country. Between 1970 and 1974, *Doctor Who* became different, first, thanks to the coloured television but also thanks to new female characters like Liz, Jo and Sarah Jane. They showed, through those characters, the need for social changes for British citizens but this was sometimes balanced by male characters like the Brigadier and even the Doctor. They represented the patriarchal society with the Brigadier being old-fashioned concerning relationships, and with the Doctor seen almost as a God. Moreover, during that period in *Doctor Who* the Doctor was stuck on Earth which could allow the

production to show that there were conflicts in the United Kingdom. He was also working with UNIT, a branch of the army in charge of protecting the planet from aliens, and it showed the army always present, meaning that Britain at the time was in a period of conflict within the country (social changes) but also outside of it (decolonisation and Cold War).

During the postwar period, in the 1960s and 1970s, British citizens started to ask for social changes and protest emerged. The youth wanted to fight for more freedom and equality whereas the conservatives wanted to keep things the way they used to be, meaning with men at work and women at home. The division of tasks within the household was thus of prime importance for them but the Monty Pythons had their own view on it.

2. The division of tasks within the household and Conservative Women as seen in the Monty Python's Flying Circus

After World War Two, families returned to the old ways of living while trying to cope with the pain caused by the conflict. Men returned home and started working again. Women stopped working in factories and returned home to take care of the house and of the children. Everyone was happy to be back home with their families, but the children, once they grew up, would ask for different things. The people who fought the war ended up being, for most of them, the conservative people who wanted to keep the old ways. But the old ways were not enough for the new generation any more. The conservative women were well represented in the *Flying Circus* and they were known as the “pepperpots”. The Pythons used parody to portray them; the troupe dressed like old women and were seen as gossiping, spreading rumours, and even being part of a gang (*Hell's Grannies*). The pepperpots were the old, more conservative women who did not really want the society to change but they still criticised it a lot. They were the women who lived the war, the mothers of this young and free generation and, because of all the changes that occurred during the

war, they probably only wanted to have a simple life without having to fight again for more freedom. They were pictured as stay-at-home women, taking care of the household and of the family, sometimes disgusting, for instance in a scene where Terry Jones, dressed as a “pepperpot”, was making a pie with rats in it for the husband, played by Idle, or Michael Palin, also dressed as a “pepperpot” stuffing a chicken, in a harsh, disgusting way.

The Pythons would also impersonate women presenting television shows about the home or about cooking. Those programmes often targeted stay-at-home women, meaning the older generation. The troupe managed to make this very funny as the way they depicted those women was very accurate, and they moreover used parody and a kind of humour that was out of time (as it still represents today's society in some ways and is still hilarious). In the episode *Michael Ellis*, Eric Idle's character asks for the toupet section to Michael Palin and Graham Chapman's characters; they are both dressed as women selling tights and gloves, they criticise a lot the men selling toupet, they seem nosy and gossipy, they have fashionable haircuts for the time but still appear to be part of the older generation. They seem disdainful, only interested in gossips and not in social changes or in improving society. However, they are active women because they have a job, unlike the conservative generation they do not stay at home taking care of the children, they also appear to have a temper and not to let anyone tell them what to do. The idea of older women gossiping was emphasised in the episode *Salad Days* where the “pepperpots” use surveillance equipment to spy on their neighbours. The place even looks like a military base which could be seen as complementary of the episode *War Against Pornography*. In *War Against Pornography*, the Pythons dress like older women who are trying to stop the new generation. They are literally making war against pornography by carrying weapons; their enemies are, for instance, modernism, foreign culture and the youth. They are even shown standing on the head of a young man lying on the ground. This showed that the conservatives were very hostile towards progressive ideas and they absolutely refused any form of social changes.

In *Doctor Who*, between 1970 and 1974, the companion's houses were never shown. The viewers

did not know anything of their personal lives, they only knew about their jobs and their relation to the Doctor. It was assumed that Liz, Jo and Sarah Jane were single, lived alone and had some kind of professional success, otherwise, their lives were completely tied up to the Doctor's. The women in *Doctor Who* could not be considered as conservative; indeed, they were not stay-at-home women and were very good at their jobs. Liz was a very qualified scientist, Jo was the perfect assistant and Sarah Jane was a very good journalist. All of them showed that women could do a job perfectly and could surpass themselves, especially while working with the army and the Doctor (which was a bit more demanding than working in an office). This type of companions were matching the new ideas promoted by the youth in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. They wanted to get out of the old ways and wanted to be able to do any job a man could do. However, Liz, Jo and Sarah Jane were very different. Liz was seen as the equal of men whereas Jo was seen as inferior and Sarah Jane could be more the balance between the two. Characters such as Liz might have been too progressive for the time and Jo maybe not enough. Jo was supposed to be the pretty blond who would do whatever the Doctor would tell her without asking any questions. However, even if she sometimes used her sexuality, she was more than just a pretty blond. She helped the Doctor many times and showed she was a lot capable. She also showed that her sexuality only belonged to her; she used to wear short skirts and to sometimes get close to Yates, one of UNIT's members, but the male characters never looked down on her for that which showed that *Doctor Who* was trying to evolve and to promote new ideas. She was the only character sexualised at the time, Liz was very pretty but the viewers did not know anything about her life outside of work and she did not seem to have any kind of sexual interest towards any other character; it was the same for Sarah Jane (but after 1974, it would be clear that she started developing strong feelings for the Doctor as it was confirmed in 2006 in the episode *School Reunion* where she revealed to David Tennant's Doctor that she waited for him). The Doctor, for his part, was represented almost as asexual but it was suggested, on the other hand, that the Brigadier had had some kind of liaisons but nothing of his life outside UNIT was shown. In a way, all the characters were equal because the viewer did not know of their personal lives outside of

UNIT, no matter if they were a woman or a man.

Both *Doctor Who* and *Monty Pythons' Flying Circus* tried to promote more progressive ideas and the two programmes could be complementary; on one hand, *Doctor Who* showed that women could have a professional life and that they could work as well as a man, on the other hand, the Pythons showed that women also had a sexuality and that they should be free to use their body however they pleased; the two programmes wanted to promote social changes and to show that male authority could be challenged.

3. The male authority began to be challenged and the emergence of censorship: *Doctor Who* and the *Flying Circus* as evidence

In the 1960s and 1970s in Britain, the social and economic climate was tense. The youth did not share the same views as the older generation; they had different perceptions of the “breaking up of national traditions and institutions” (Landy, 2005, p.15). The changes in society were seen through popular culture and counter-culture such as fashion, music and television. Popular culture was present everywhere so the most conservative people could see in their everyday life the changes the youth was trying to make. However, instead of seeing the changes as something different they considered them as wrong. Diversity was seen as a threat by the conservatives, they were afraid to lose their country to foreigners who would supposedly come in to take their jobs, they were afraid of the homosexual because they saw him as unnatural and as going against any form of Christianity, they did not want women to be free because they thought the natural order of things consisted in the man working and the woman taking care of the nuclear family supposedly because she was too weak to have a job. Unfortunately, even nowadays, the situation remains the same with people still being afraid of what is different and of the changes, they get violent because of fear when they should try to understand what is different. Those kinds of reactions were used for instance by the

Monty Pythons in their sketches and could also be used in *Doctor Who* as the show often mentioned the notion of tolerance. Indeed, the show was originally created as a means of education for children and young adults, hence the time travel for the history teaching, and the space travel for the scientific teaching. Over the years, *Doctor Who* kept that aspect but also evolved; the show became more entertaining thanks to better special effects and to more action, and it also started to teach more than science and history. The Doctor met so many aliens and not all of them were bad. He was always trying to save everyone, no matter the race or the sex of the individual. The show managed and still manages today to show that most of the time people judge on the appearance and are prejudiced whereas the Doctor proves that the different one is not always the bad one and that if you try to understand the other instead of defining him by his appearance, many conflicts could be avoided. In Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, the youth did not want to follow the rules imposed by the elder ones any more but the conservative ones did not want to try to understand what the youth wanted to, which resulted in conflicts, strikes and riots.

The Doctor, who was the main character, was the alien who knew more than the humans, however, at this time, he was banned from his home planet, Gallifrey, and found himself stuck on Earth amongst humans and got a job at UNIT; he seemed to be the extraordinary character who had to “lower his standards” in order to live amongst humans. The Brigadier was in charge of UNIT and encountered many problems with higher authorities because of the Doctor. There were only men under his command except for Liz and Jo, Sarah Jane not directly working for UNIT. Both the Doctor and the Brigadier were the figures of authority and each one sometimes fought to assert their authority over the other. Women were not even taken into account to be in a leading position, only Liz was seen almost as an equal and, as she was more open-minded, her character balanced well with the Brigadier who was old-fashioned. Jo was the one to be considered to be good for nothing by the Doctor at the beginning and Sarah Jane was the one who did not want to be a part of the story but who finally came around because she was very curious, being a journalist. She was the one to say that she was a feminist and that she was fighting for equality between women and men. She did

not want to be pushed around by the Doctor and the Brigadier but she still saw the Doctor as a higher authority. Male authority was still very present in *Doctor Who* but the female companions reflected the part of society who wanted things to evolve. It is debatable that the Doctor, who saw so many things during his life, was very open-minded but he still liked being the man people will look up to, the saviour, the hero. The Brigadier was supposed to be the character who was in control as he was in charge of UNIT, however, he had authority because he was a leader, but he did not have any problem with women working and he could admit that a woman could be great at any job. It was obvious when he tried to hire Liz as he was impressed by her work and absolutely wanted her to work for him. She would be the employee, not exactly the equal; only her character showed that even if she was an employee, she could be seen as an equal to the Brigadier and to the Doctor because they all brought something to each other. In other words, male authority started to be challenged in the show, which reflected what was happening in Britain between 1969 and 1974.

The BBC, which showed *Doctor Who* and the *Flying Circus*, always had a major influence on British television and started to change thanks to the Pythons who broke away from the cosy image television had at the time. But it was not an easy thing to do for the troupe as the BBC, which was a national channel, could not show the entire material of the Pythons, as they did not want to offend anyone and as some politicians did not particularly enjoy the programme. The targeted audience of the *Flying Circus* was mostly young people with an education and mostly from a middle-class background which was basically what the member of the Pythons were. “Their comedy addressed domestic life, work, leisure, political practices, education, high and popular art forms, religion, sexuality, social class, gender, and the cultural forms in which these institutions and practices were articulated and disseminated” (Landy, 2005, p.30-31) meaning that the viewer had to have some kind of education to understand the show at best. The Pythons were told by the BBC to “Do whatever you like. Within reason, as long as it’s within the bounds of common law”. As a result, public pressure groups, some politicians and even some of the BBC administrators started to be against the programme. The BBC tried to use censorship by 1971 on the *Flying Circus* because they

judged the content inappropriate for public viewing. They even decided to show the program later and later at night which had consequences on the public who could not always stay up late to watch it. Sexuality was seen as a problem by the opponents to the show. The Pythons had modern and progressive ideas and that was going against the opponents' principles. The troupe wanted to promote freedom and especially sexual freedom for men and women but the conservative groups preferred the promotion of women staying at home taking care of the house and of the children and making sure a meal was ready for the husband when he was back from work.

As the show was considered to be permissive, the conservative were against it because “notions of “permissiveness” contained at least two strands of thought against which conservatives railed: in one manifestation, permissiveness connoted the sexual revolution, gay rights, and feminism; in another, it referred to a purported breakdown in respect for law and order, a situation attributed to immigrants to Britain and their children, and articulated through a language of race” (S. K. Kent, 1999, p.335). Clearly the Python's were not conservative and promoted social changes, freedom and equality in a very straightforward way; they were not afraid to show that sexuality is a part of everyone's life, even women's, to show how silly the government could be and to show that race inequalities had no reason to be. Moreover, their ideas were seen as a threat by some conservatives as they would challenge male's place in society meaning that men's authority would not be as important as it used to be. In order to keep it their way, conservative groups used to complain to the BBC about the *Flying Circus* because they thought that “The Pythons were part of worldwide cultural transformations that increasingly challenged existing social and political institutions, opening the door, for better or worse, to more critical, and perhaps cynical, approaches to questions of authority, gender, generation, sexuality, and national and regional identity” (Landy, 2005, p.19). They then sent letters and appeared on talk shows in order to protest against the programme but the Pythons did not let the conservatives get to them. They used those critics and introduced them in the show for comical purposes. The “Vox Pops” and the letters read out loud in the show were inspired from the complaints of the anti-Pythons groups. They managed to turn the complaints into a

silliness without disrespecting the public. They would represent the disgust of some toward the show and how some people found the show itself to be silly or of bad taste. The Monty Pythons then showed how clever they were through this and by particularly paying attention to the codes of television used and by often breaking them by the use of clichés and destabilized conventions.

Doctor Who showed that male authority, although still present, could be challenged and that women could be equal to men. This idea was promoted by the Monty Pythons as well, however, they had to find a way around censorship in order to be heard. The 1960s and 1970s thus saw the beginning of women's movements meaning that society was started to go towards gender equality and more freedom for women.

II- Between the 1960s and 1970s: going towards more sexual freedom and equality

1. The youth fought for equal rights between men and women: both the *Flying Circus* and *Doctor Who* support this idea

In *Doctor Who*, Liz, Jo and Sarah Jane are three young, independent and clever women, they all have character and don't let men push them around. However, they have to fight to make their voices heard, especially Jo and Sarah Jane; Liz, being a scientist, was more listened to by the Doctor and the Brigadier. She was considered as more of an equal to them, intellectually, but it did not change the fact that men had more power, like the Brigadier, and that they were supposed to know more, like the Doctor. In a sense, Liz showed how clever she was because she understood everything very fast and it was interesting to see that when the Brigadier contacted her to give her a job, she was already very well accomplished professionally and she did not owe that to any man. On the other hand, Jo was the Doctor's assistant so she had to work for him and the Brigadier and she only had to obey whatever they told her to do. Unlike Liz, Jo had to prove that she was very capable to do her job well and that she could also help the Doctor in his many adventures. However,

she was more of the pretty assistant than the intellectual character. Even if she was a very good companion to the Doctor and even if she seemed to be more sexually free than any other character at the time, she did not really represent the social changes in Britain between 1969 and 1974. At the time women were fighting for sexual freedom but they were also fighting to be intellectually recognized, to be able to do jobs that were only reserved to men and to have equal pays. Even if Jo could represent the sexually free and independent woman, she lacked in representing the other parts which were as important. In a way, Liz seemed to be a more complete character as she was recognized for her job and, moreover, she was one of a few females working as a successful scientist, she was independent and she seemed sexually free as well; Liz represented the type of woman the youth could identify to.

The scene where Liz met the Brigadier for the first time was an interesting one because the viewer could see right away that Liz had character and that she was independent, very intelligent and that she could bring a balance to the Brigadier. They first met in the episode *Spearhead from Space, Part One* (from 3min15 to 5min54). Liz is escorted by one of UNIT's member to the Brigadier's office where he is waiting behind his desk. To be polite, he gets up to welcome her, they shake hands and he politely let her in first. They are framed by a medium shot which becomes a long shot, thanks to a pan to the right, as the Brigadier moves forward. Liz is seen at the centre of the frame of the door letting appear a frame within the frame shot. Her being at the centre of the frame of the door and about to come in the office suggests that she could be torn between two jobs but when she passes the door, it is suggested that she would enter UNIT and that the decision was already made. Liz shows that she has temper right away as she was not pleased that she was searched, she felt like it was disrespectful as the Brigadier is the one who asked her to come in. At that point, the viewer learns that she is a scientist researching on meteorites, and she once more shows that she has character as she was not happy to lose time in her research just to meet the Brigadier, which implies that she did not really have a say in meeting him. It is obvious that the Brigadier has been enquiring on her as he says that she is just what he had been looking for. He

admits that she is a woman with a lot of resources and he seems ready to treat her as an equal and to accept that she knows things he does not. Liz seems to be more in control which breaks off with the old ways; she is the woman and she is in a leading position and that shows that a woman does not have to be controlled by a man any more. However, the Brigadier is still in charge of UNIT, but Liz does not want to be bothered by him and makes fun of his operations within UNIT saying that she is “not interested in security, invisible ink, that sort of thing” making her appear once more in a position of power. The Brigadier seems amused, not annoyed at all, he is not patronising her. The conversation is shot using medium close-ups and shot-reverse-shots in order to focus on what the characters have to say. Liz is still curious and asks to know what UNIT does while the Brigadier sits in a relaxed position, in contrast to her sitting straight; he knows what he is doing, he is confident that she would join UNIT once he had explained what that branch of the army does. However, she makes fun of what he says once again by answering “alien invaders?! Little blue men with three heads...” showing that she is still on the defence because she felt like he was wasting her time. The Brigadier keeps on explaining that aliens are present on Earth to what she answers “and yet do no harm to anyone”. It shows that she does not really believe what he was saying but still have doubts at the same time otherwise why would the Brigadier organise a meeting with her. Liz is curious and that is why she did not leave immediately. They appear to be exchanging looks, as if they were trying to read each other. Finally, Liz talks about meteorites showing that she knows her subject but the Brigadier leans forward, getting more serious, telling her something she does not know which destabilizes her a bit. She admits that she does not know everything but she still seems to be a very good scientist. This time it is the turn of the Brigadier to show that he knows more than her which intrigues her and it is visible thanks to a close-up on Liz's face which allows the viewer to fully see her reaction. It shows that the Brigadier managed to get her attention because, as a scientist, she would want to know more about meteorites which fell at the exact same spot a month apart.

The scene was a battle they could both win; as a scientist, Liz could learn so much by working with UNIT, and the Brigadier needed her to conduct research to understand alien life at best to

ensure the safety of people on Earth. The scene showed equality between the two characters as well, they were both in control, both were curious of each other and needed each other to learn more about aliens and science. Even if the Brigadier was in charge of UNIT, he was not in charge of the conversation; Liz made fun of him and tried to destabilize him when he wanted to impress her. They both wanted the last word but they would realise soon that they had the same interests and would even become friends without being bothered by the question of gender. Even if the Brigadier was old-fashioned, Liz had a very strong temper and could put him back in his place if needed, which did not bother him as she was considered like an equal, no matter the gender. The scene showed that a woman could be equal to a man which corresponded to the social demands in Britain at the time. Liz had a strong character and refused to be pushed over by the Brigadier and which he understood, moreover, he did not try to pressure her or to force her into joining UNIT. He, as a man, recognized that a woman was totally capable to be a great scientist, to be very clever and to have more knowledge than a man like him. Here, the gender did not matter; the Brigadier was in a position of power as he was the head of UNIT but Liz also had power as she was an excellent scientist. They were both very good at what they do which entails that they did not need to fight to control one another because they could complete each other. Both of them would bring something to the other and that put them in an equal position. Liz represented women in Britain between 1969 and 1974 as she was very clever, driven and capable to achieve as much as a man. She was very strong and she was a fighter as the scene showed very well. She was the one who started the battle by making it clear that she did not want to be bothered and she had an answer for everything showing that she would not let a man like the Brigadier push her around. She established the limits right from the start while trying to push the Brigadier's. That also showed that the Brigadier was an open-minded man who had no problem with a woman being strong, independent and in charge.

The Brigadier and Liz's first encounter showed very well that women did not want to be pushed-around any more thanks to Liz. She showed that she would fight to be heard and that she was as strong as a man, and was surprised to see that the Brigadier did not have any problem with a woman

being strong. The scene represented well what women wanted in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s and that they were ready to fight for it, a fight which would be very important as it led to new reforms.

2. A wave of new reforms in favour of women

During the postwar period, in the 1960s, the “sexual revolution” started because of the creation of a sex-related market. The targeted part of the population was the youth which offered better possibilities in selling sex. The pill was also very important for the “sexual revolution” as well as the legalisation of abortion in 1967. Women could then have sexual intercourse more freely as they could choose to avoid pregnancy. The Monty Pythons managed to represent well the need of sexual freedom in the *Marriage Guidance Counsellor* sketch, where Carol Cleveland portrayed a sexy woman, flirtatious, who did what she wanted with her body. She dressed in a sexy way, with a short dress and an apparent cleavage, she also seemed manipulative as she appeared to be using her husband, Arthur Putee, played by Michael Palin, in order to get what she wanted. Obviously, Cleveland's character, Deidre, was not faithful, she took her own decisions and chose whoever she wanted to have sexual intercourse with. For instance, in that sketch, she flirted with the counsellor, played by Eric Idle, right in front of her husband who was naïve and too nice, and he even seemed to be a push-over and a coward. The counsellor was also sexually liberated and tried to get with the woman right in front of her husband. That sketch was first broadcast in 1969, two years after the legalisation of abortion and after the pill was made accessible to all women, no matter the marital status, through Family Planning Clinics. The sketch showed how things had evolved in two years but it also pushed the limits even further with the way Cleveland was dressed or with the fact that she did not get embarrassed to flirt and to have an affair with another man right in front of her husband.

Palin's character was clearly the push-over as he was told to leave the room for the counsellor

and Deidre to have some privacy. This was confirmed when he came back after speaking with John Cleese's character, who was dressed like Zoro, who made him understand, using some kind of riddle, that he should man up and be in charge in the relationship. When Palin's character returned in the office to tell his wife to stop what she was doing and to go home with him, Arthur had been told off by the counsellor, saying "go away!" to which Putee answered "yes, right". Those final lines may be interpreted as the modern man, the counsellor, telling the conservative one, Arthur, to let go of his ancient habits and to respect women's choices of sexual partners. Palin's character, the conservative, was being portrayed as weak and quiet, not very present, and as the object of mockery which meant that the old ways were dying and that society was going towards more equality. Cleveland's character, Deidre, and the unnamed counsellor were the most present in the room; Idle's character was in his own office, meaning that this was his world and his job was to bring new ways of thinking. The conservative character did not really have a place there any more which is shown at the end with Putee standing in a corner, waiting to be hit on the head by the knight with the chicken. Sexual freedom was very important in order for women to become equal to men and the Pythons understood that very well. Moreover, going with the sexual revolution were also "anti-war protest, racial equality and black power groups, gay rights organizations and powerful women's liberation movements" (S. K. Kent, 1999, p.353) which shaped the changing society in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. Those movements were seen as the "enemies within" which were giving "a bad image" of the country and which could not be tolerated according to conservatives.

The gay liberation movement made many people uncomfortable and so did the women's liberation movement. Women, gay people and black people wanted to be equal to the heterosexual white man, they were asking for the same rights as them, they did not want to be oppressed, diminished and seen as limited any more. However, even if they were fighting, some men found a way to go against the sexual revolution. They highly sexualised women in magazines such as Playboy trying to show that women's only interest was to please men, which of course was not true. But the women posing in those magazines could also be seen as being able to choose what they

wanted to do with their body, they could be seen as sexually free; they could be seen as human beings who would also enjoy their own sexuality. Women's liberation movement of course protested against men sexualising women in Playboy and other magazines and were asking for equality. If women had to pose in those magazines, then why could men not do as well? However, surprisingly, the women's liberation movement did not seem to have the expected impact on the British society. According to some surveys, society did not appear to have changed very much. One particular survey done at the end of the 1960s stated that “over one-quarter of the men and almost two-thirds of the women surveyed had been virgins at the time they married” (Kent, 1999, p.353). This still showed inequality between women and men; men seemed more free to have sex before getting married than women. It also seemed that one reason might be because women were getting married when they were younger than men. So, for instance, a woman would get married when she was 20 to a man who was 25, which gave him more time to have different sexual partners. The age factor was unfortunately not given in that survey which does not allow us to have a clear representation of the British way of living at the time.

New social reforms such as the legalisation of abortion and the availability of the pill were a huge step towards women's sexual freedom and gender equality. The Monty Pythons showed through the *Flying Circus* that those reforms were very important for women and they tried to give a new, different view of British society between 1969 and 1974.

3. New social movements gave a different view on society

In the *Flying Circus*, Carol Cleveland represented the young, attractive, free woman who could use her body however she wanted. The goal of the Pythons was to push the limits on-screen and to give their point of view on society, but, first of all, to make people laugh. Cleveland was hired because she was talented and attractive, she could encourage other women and show them that their

body only belonged to them and not to men. The troupe was trying to promote gender equality, but it could be disputable because there were more men on screen and women were there to show that they were pretty and sexy but their cleverness was not taken into account. The Monty Pythons wanted gender equality and sexual freedom not only for women but also for gay people, as Graham Chapman was gay, and they thought that no one should be discriminated, whatever the gender, the sexual orientation or the ethnic background. The troupe was very open-minded for the time and they showed it through the use of comedy, parody and satire in order to promote tolerance and equality.

The Pythons being very open-minded and expressing it and showing it, caused the show to be censored by the BBC, meaning that some sketches could sometimes be modified or deleted. A way to go around censorship was the use of Terry Gilliam's animations. He could create some violent scenes or nudity scenes without being censored at all. "His cartoons linked the show's sketches together, and defined the group's visual language in other media. Gilliam's animations mix his own art, characterized by soft gradients and odd, bulbous shapes, with backgrounds and moving cut-outs from antique photographs, mostly from the Victorian Era." (Python, 2016). Gilliam's animations could be called surreal. The images he used were taken from famous artworks mostly from Victorian inspiration. It is interesting to know that the famous foot, which is the image of the Pythons was actually Cupid's foot taken from the Renaissance painting "Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time" by Bronzino. Gilliam used famous work of art and forced them into unlikely situations which created a comic effect. According to Gilliam and Jones, "art not only influenced the animations but also the content of many of their acts".

The Monty Pythons transgressed boundaries that many other programmes would not cross. They showed nudity, sexuality, violence which triggered negative reactions from pressure groups, politicians and even from the BBC. The Pythons showed they could extend the limitations given by television at the time despite obstacles given by the BBC such as not programming it for weeks or showing it later and later. "The *Flying Circus* was more than satire or parody of television. In its uses and abuses of television time, chronology, genres, and continuity, the four seasons of the show

exposed both the existing limitations and the possibilities of the medium” (Landy, 2005, p.2). The troupe was always trying to experiment and to push the limits using sound, cartoons, various format (the opening credits being sometimes at the end and the end credits being sometimes at the beginning of the show) and by using satire and parody they managed to criticise the society of the time. “The mixing of high and low culture, the inter-textual dimension of the comic material, the daring treatment of the body and of sexuality, and the unrelenting critique of the television medium made the shows accessible to wide audiences despite the often erudite character of allusions to literature, philosophy, and history” (Landy, 2005, p.3).

The Pythons experimented so much that they started having an impact on contemporary culture. Their type of comedy was often qualified as “stream of consciousness”, “surreal”, “carnavalesque” and “nonsensical”. By these means, they were challenging the codes of society and the “old ways”. They used their critical minds and pushed the viewers to do the same. They managed to show how silly politicians can be and how the conservatives only felt threatened by people thinking on their own because they did not want the society to change. The conservatives did not understand or did not want to see that the youth was unhappy and that women were as capable as men and that they should not be treated any differently. The Pythons wanted to show how untrue these conceptions were and that equality was important, no matter the race, religion, or sex of the person. This was visible throughout the entire show as they turned into silly not only politician ideas but every kind of extreme thinking. In the Pythons' world, nonsense almost became some kind of sense that was shown through “the language of the body, inversion of linguistic categories, and distortions in visual perception of places and events” (Landy, 2005, p.4). The use of nonsense and of silliness and the fact that years later their sense of comedy is still funny shows how clever the troupe was; they managed to show that new social reforms were very important in order to make society change for something which would allow more equality and freedom.

The *French New Wave sketch* was very interesting regarding the representation of women. Carol Cleveland played a woman who looked similar to Brigitte Bardot in some of Jean-Luc Godard's

films. She wears a short white dress, she is very feminine and sexy but not vulgar and she has very long blond hair, like Bardot, she, moreover, has irregular acting skills, like the French actress. Bardot was the symbol of the free, sexy woman who did what she wanted with her body and who did not follow men rules. The sketch is a trailer for a film which belonged to the French New Wave movement called *Le Fromage Blanc*. It talks about a love story between Cleveland's character and Terry Jones'. It is shot with medium shots, a hand-held camera and with shot-reverse-shots during the dialogues, exactly like in the French New Wave films. It is set in a dump and the main action is cut by images of violence like war and people being injured or killed; like in Godard's films neo-realism is the main theme and it is obvious that there is some kind of hidden meaning to this. Like in Godard's films, the sketch shows that a woman is free to talk to an unknown man if she wants to, that she could wear short skirts without being looked down on and that, like Bardot in *Le Mépris*, her body only belongs to her. The way the Pythons view society was thus very important as it could allow the viewer to think out of the box and they could learn about equality and freedom.

New social movements and reforms gave the opportunity to women to become more equal to men and to take control over their lives and bodies. However, the male gaze was still very present and was a different form of control over women.

III- Male gaze still present in the British society in the 1970s; a different form of power over women

1. The conservative ways still had an important place within society and male figures were still somehow dominant

In *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, the male characters were often the comic heroes whereas women often portrayed the sexual entities. This could be seen in two different ways; either actresses

like Carol Cleveland played sexy and flirtatious women in order to attract men or they wanted to show that women were free to do whatever they wanted with their body, which seemed more likely as the Pythons were trying to challenge the social codes of the time. This was confirmed by the troupe also sometimes undressing, however, they mostly did it for comic purposes rather than for showing that they could be sexually appealing too. The Pythons were sometimes seen as superior to women but it was more for comic effect and in order to show that of course, in real life, it was not the case. However, in the show, the emphasis was more on the female body than on their mind, and whenever they showed that women had emotions they made fun of them in order to break the clichés related to women over-reacting and being overly emotional. In the *Flying Circus*, women appeared free to be and to do whatever they wanted but, like the emphasis was on their sexuality, it is fair to say that the male gaze is still present. Even if the troupe was trying to show that women should not be repressed and should be free of their actions, there was almost no emphasis on their mind, only on their emotions which they made fun of. They did not show how clever a woman could be, they only focused on the sexually appealing part which was why this programme could be complementary of *Doctor Who* which showed women in their professional world and being very good at their job. Indeed, in the *Flying Circus*, every time a woman had a career, they were nurses, not doctors, or assistants and not the boss, and that showed that the conservative codes of society were still very much present, even in a programme which was trying to break away from them. In *Buying a Mattress sketch*, Carol Cleveland only had one line and it was “wrong”, she was not heard amongst the men, her voice did not really count, and when she was finally heard, it was to say something wrong; she said the word “mattress” which caused Chapman's character to put a bag over his head. She ended up being emotional and started crying while the men told her off. Carol Cleveland once again played the pretty woman while the men were the funny ones. She was funny despite herself and the men made fun of her and were annoyed at her alongside the viewers who made fun of her as well and of the fact that she was crying. Cleveland's character was seen as a cliché of an over-sensitive woman and the troupe turned her into a joke in order to break the cliché.

Some clichés could also be found in *Doctor Who*. For instance, women had to prove they were as capable as men. Jo, eventually, proved that she had talents but the problem was that she had to prove herself to “impress” a man when society wanted to stop these kinds of behaviour. However, Jo was strong but she was ready to give up many things for men. On the other side, Sarah Jane was a strong independent character but her falling in love with the Doctor took away the originality of her character and seemed to make her weaker than she actually was when she was introduced. In a world dominated by male presence, the only women present were young and attractive. That kind of female character at the time would represent the youth which wants the social codes to change, but the actresses were also cast because of their physical appearance; they had to be pretty women in order to attract male and female viewers who could look at them or identify with them. Another aspect showing that male presence was still more important is that the Doctor's companions were all impressed by his cleverness and by all he could do. However, the Doctor was never really impressed at his companions even if they were surpassing themselves. It seemed like he saw that as normal; the companions had to push their limits in order to try to impress and to equal the Doctor. This aspect is still present in nowadays *Doctor Who* but much less than in the 1960s and 1970s. The relation Doctor-companion now is more of an equal relationship as companions such as River Song, Amy Pond and Donna Noble have a strong temper and are not easily impressed. On the contrary, the Doctor has now to prove that he has amazing things to show and he sometimes has to do his best to impress his companions. The Doctor-companion relationship now is more mutually beneficial as both the Doctor and the companions try their best to impress but also to help one another.

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, the companions were there more to make the Doctor look good and to ask the questions the viewer would want to ask. Nevertheless, it made them look like they were not bright enough for the Doctor and like they lacked confidence which was a misrepresentation of British women at the time. Of course, if Jo and Sarah Jane were “chosen” by the Doctor to be his companions, it was because they were in a way clever and capable, but every

time they showed they could do great things, it was in order to help the Doctor or they were acting on his orders. In a word, the male figure was too present and too idealized to let room to the companions to fulfil themselves on their own. This was another aspect which was going against what women were fighting for in the 1960s and 1970s. One scene showed that male presence had too much impact on one of the companion's life, was when Jo decided to leave the Doctor in the episode *The Green Death*. The scene started with Jo and her fiancé celebrating because they just got engaged. The Brigadier and other members of UNIT came in and congratulated Jo while the Brigadier told the fiancé that he had been granted the right to do his scientific research. Then the camera focuses on Jo and the Doctor with a medium close-up, and the viewer can hear Jo asking, in a way, for the Doctor's permission to get married. For her, getting married meant that she would quit UNIT and stop working with the Time Lord. She has to choose between her friend and her boyfriend who she only met during that same episode, but she does not want the Doctor out of her life. Nevertheless, it was known that when a companion decided to move on with her life, it was very unlikely that the Doctor would ever see her again. The Doctor seems disappointed to see her leaving but he tries his best to hide it, he appears to be respecting her choice and does not want to make things harder for her, he even intends to go to her wedding but the viewer will never know if he actually went as he gives her her wedding present early. She finally hugs him and her fiancé comes in saying that the Doctor should not worry about Jo because he would look after her, as if she could not take care of herself. Then, the fiancé, with his hands on Jo's back, takes her away, suggesting that he is now in control, leaving the Doctor alone to down his drink which seems unusual for him as he is not known for being a drinker. He finally leaves, in silence, while the others are singing to celebrate the good news.

On the door, when the Doctor exited, the words “room for living” can be seen on the door which suggests that Jo is moving on with her life, she is starting a new chapter and the Doctor must do the same even if it seems especially hard for him. As he is leaving, Jo watches the door closing on her friend, and on her time with him, maybe wondering if she made the right choice. The

expressions on her face are emphasised thanks to a medium close-up which allows the viewer to see that she is anxious. Then, the Doctor comes out of the house they were in, all dressed in black and in the darkness, going towards his car, Bessie, looking disappointed, while, in the background, the party going on can be heard. The Doctor finally seems to be thinking that this situation was normal, that people have to move on with their lives but it does not mean that because things were going to be different that they were going to be bad. He gives a last look to the house, to Jo, as a goodbye, and finally drives away. Inside, people are partying, dancing, drinking, laughing, being very joyful, which is in contrast with the Doctor's mood. Jo is seen for the last time, kissing and hugging her fiancé, looking happy but still being affected by the recent events to fully be happy. Finally, the viewer can see the Doctor driving Bessie, in the dark, the sun is on the top left corner of the frame which means the Doctor is in the dark as he drives towards new adventures.

In that scene, Jo had to make a choice, she had to choose between travelling through time and space with her friend and a normal life on Earth with her fiancé. However, this was a choice that probably did not need to be made, she could still work with UNIT and the Doctor, on Earth, even travel in time and space, when the TARDIS worked, and still be home in time for dinner with her fiancé. Even up to the last episode Jo was looking up to the Doctor, hoping for his approval which she did not need, she could take control of her life without any man's approval. Nevertheless, the Doctor did not give the impression that he had to give his consent, he respected her decision, he was disappointed, of course, but he supported her. He was of course disappointed because there was another companion leaving him behind, but he still respected Jo's choice. The fact that Jo kind of asked the Doctor for his permission should not have been considered because she started as an independent woman who showed she could cope on her own to end up choosing between two men when she could easily combine work and home.

Even if the Monty Pythons and *Doctor Who* supported women's rights, there were still some signs in both programmes suggesting that male place was still very much important in British society between 1969 and 1974. The Monty Pythons though, always pushing the limits of

television, completely supported women's sexual freedom and equality no matter the gender, the ethnic background or the sexual orientation.

2. The Monty Pythons supported women's sexual freedom but some men enjoyed it

Sexual freedom was necessary for women in the 1960s and 1970s. It was one of the main social changes needed in order for women to be equal to men. Women were asking for the same rights as men so they would not be controlled any more. They wanted to choose their sexual partner and they wanted to be able to dress however they wanted without having to choose their outfit according to any man's taste. Some media were trying to reflect that need for change and television shows such as the *Monty Python's Flying Circus* were then a success. For example, in the *Summarize Proust Competition* sketch, the woman who wins is almost praised by the men. She appears to be sexually free as she shows through the way she dresses and the fact that she is flirtatious. However, in that sketch, men are taking pictures of her and seem to be looking at her breasts meaning that they enjoy her being sexually free. In the *Marriage Guidance Counsellor* sketch, Carol Cleveland's character Deidre also is sexually free and it is visible through her attitude and through the way she dresses as well. The counsellor is enjoying looking at her meaning that her physical appearance is very important. However, Deidre is in charge in that sketch, she is the one taking decisions for herself and she is the one controlling her husband and allowing the counsellor to make a move on her. In both the *Summarize Proust Competition* and the *Marriage Guidance Counsellor* sketches, women were in a power position and men seemed to adore them. Both women were sexually free, they showed that they could wear short dresses or show some cleavage if they wanted to but the men in those sketches were completely mesmerised by the women's physical appearance. They enjoyed looking at them and almost became infatuated with them as if they were some kinds of mythological mermaids. The Pythons amplified women and men's characters and

parodied them in order to show that some social changes were necessary. Women were shown as very flirtatious, even too much, which made the sketches funny, and that showed that indeed women could choose their partner but it was pushed so much that the viewer understood that it did not mean that women should be seen as less than men when they could do the same as a man. Moreover, they were portrayed as strong female characters whereas men almost seemed to be their slaves; they only followed them because of their beauty and became blinded by it. Both sketches reversed the roles putting women in a power position and men as being blinded and controlled by strong female characters. The troupe therefore pushed the limits of the representation of the male and female relationship and used parody in order to support gender equality. They put forward the need for change and they promote the idea that changes were not bad for society; instead they would make society happier.

The *Flying Circus* represented well the social changes needed in the 1960s and 1970s, especially concerning sexual freedom, which, on the contrary, was not addressed in *Doctor Who*. The show was more focusing on gender equality within the work place rather than outside it. Most of the British society was in favour of sexual freedom and it was visible thanks to laws such as the abortion law or the pill being made available to women, at the end of the 1960s, no matter their marital status. Those laws gave the opportunity to women to be free to do whatever they wanted with their body, however, it also gave the opportunity to men to put pressure on them to sexually engage. They also started to face some verbal aggression from men; “in some ways, the sexual revolution had freed me from guilt and anxiety; in other ways it had enslaved me anew, with different fetters” says Celia Haddon in *The Limit of Sex*, 1983. That disrespect was not present in *Doctor Who* and in the *Flying Circus*; in the Monty Pythons' show, women are not shamed for being sexual entities, they seem to be in total control of their bodies and they do not care about what men or conservative people think.

Although *Doctor Who* and the *Monty Python's Flying Circus* supported women's freedom, and especially sexual freedom, some men would take advantage of women's sexual freedom for

their own enjoyment or in order to spread false ideas and to discredit women.

3. Men, like in *Doctor Who* and the *Flying Circus*, promoted gender equality whereas others would use the same arguments in order to discredit women

Some men, especially young men, supported women's freedom and were in favour of gender equality. However, others would twist the facts and try to make believe that equality between sexes would be a bad thing as it would enable women to do bad things and they would say that they should not be trusted and they would go as far as to compare them to the devil. Britain has always been influenced by the Christian Church, and many conservative ideas were actually coming from it. The question of good and bad was very present within the British society and any social change could be seen as a threat, especially if it meant that men would have to share their rights and not be in charge of everything any more. Some would say that sexually free women would only have one purpose: to try leading men on the “wrong” path, away from “normal” social codes. Not only conservative men would go against the new way of living, but conservative women would as well. They would often support their husband which increased the break between the youth and the older generation.

One example of men supporting women's rights and using parody in order to show that “evil” women was a myth was the Monty Pythons. They were clearly favourable to women's rights as they explicitly said in interviews, but they also showed it in their television programme. For instance, they used parody, satire and they used to put conservative characters in funny situations in order to show that the old ways had to evolve if everyone in Britain wanted the same rights. They showed that one part of the population could not be allowed to make decisions for all the others if it meant that some people would have to be looked down on. Moreover, they showed that women were not weak and were as good as any man by parodying weak or not clever men and women. In

the *Summarize Proust Competition* sketch, the men are all portrayed as silly and lose the competition whereas it is the “girl with the biggest tits” who wins. She seems confident, flirtatious and she uses her body to win the competition when she did not even participate. In that sketch, the troupe broke the cliché of the woman being controlled by men by showing that she was the only one in control of her body which she chose to use to win the competition. The image of the “evil” woman was replaced by the image of the free of her actions woman while it was suggested that the men were the “evil” ones; indeed, they were the ones who chose the winner and who seemed to take photographs of the woman's chest. The woman seemed to enjoy the men's attention which can be interpreted like she did want to be seen, she wanted to show that she was free, that no man was telling her to stay at home. The men, on the other hand, were portrayed as not really thinking with their brain, as becoming dumb and blind in front of a woman's looks. The Pythons do not convey the idea that free women are “evil” or should not be “trusted”.

On the contrary, by using the manipulative, unfaithful woman in the *Marriage Guidance Counsellor* sketch and by parodying her, they showed that women should not be seen as untrustworthy and that they were not “evil”. That idea was also conveyed in *Doctor Who*; the Doctor's female companions were his most trusted friends. They were always there for the Time Lord, in good and bad times, he could rest on them and trusted them with important matters in order to protect the Earth. The show pointed out that women had the same qualities a man could have through the relationship between the Doctor and the Brigadier with Liz, Jo and Sarah Jane. All three women were completely trusted by the two male characters and were given very important responsibilities. However, all of this was set in the workplace. Sexuality was not put forward in *Doctor Who*, so women were seen as equal and trustworthy at work but their private lives were absolutely not shown which is why the *Flying Circus*, which covered this aspect, could be complementary of *Doctor Who*.

The Pythons and *Doctor Who* were trying to promote gender equality and women's freedom. Both programmes would support the social changes favourable to women, nevertheless, some men

and some conservative people would use that new freedom in order to discredit women and make them appear as untrustworthy and even “evil”.

Conclusion:

To conclude, both *Doctor Who* and the *Monty Python's Flying Circus* promoted gender equality in Britain between 1969 and 1974. However, neither explored every aspect of women's rights and of their capabilities. *Doctor Who* failed to represent women's sexuality whereas the *Flying Circus* did not represent women being equal to men at work. Both programmes together were thus able to draw a complete picture of women's competences and showed that they were capable to be equal to men mentally and sexually. Nevertheless, postwar period thinking was still very present within the British society; conservative people still believed that the right order was with men working and women taking care of the family at home. Male authority was still very important but the youth started challenging it and were demanding equal rights for everyone. They wanted women, gay and black people to be equal to a white straight man. Strikes and riots started to emerge showing that the youth, and especially women, were ready to fight to obtain more rights. New laws and reforms were thus voted and women could then have access to the contraceptive pill and were free to get an abortion. Those two reforms were a pivot in British society which allowed women to become sexually free. This was well depicted in the *Flying Circus* with some female characters, often played by Carol Cleveland, being able to choose their sexual partners without being shamed by the male characters. Women also obtained more rights on the work place and did not have to stay at home any more. This appeared in *Doctor Who* with the Doctor's female companions showing that women were as capable as men and that they should not be looked down on just because they were female. *Doctor Who* and the *Flying Circus* taught the viewers about tolerance and respect, no matter the age, the gender, the sexual orientation or the colour of the skin. Nevertheless, things did not

change in one day, and male's place in the British society was still seen as important. The conservatives were completely against the changes made by the youth and wanted to keep society as it was after World War Two. Moreover, some men who did not support women's liberation, still enjoyed the sexually free part of it. They were happy to read magazines such as *Playboy* or to spend the night with a woman no matter the consequences. In a way, that new freedom gave the opportunity to some men to take more advantage of women. In addition, women's sexual freedom was used by some to portray them as manipulative, shallow or evil. Some men understood that they could no longer keep control over women and, out of fear, decided to give a wrong representation of them. Once again, the Monty Pythons and *Doctor who* proved those people wrong by showing that women's rights were not about who would control society, but about happiness, freedom and equality. They showed as well that women's rights were not to be seen as a threat but as an evolution within society and that both male and female could only learn from it and help each other. The two programmes also taught that respect should be of prime importance, no matter the gender, the origin or the sexual orientation and nowadays, *Doctor Who* and the members of the Monty Pythons still try to convey that idea.

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