A YORK UNIVERSITY PUBLICATION

YOUNG MOTHERS

Winter/Spring 2007
Volume 9, Number 1 $18

Featuring articles by Deborah Keys, Pamela J. Downe, Aline Gubrium, Linda Hunter, Deirdre M. Kelly, Tanya Darisi, Corinne Wilson, Deborah L. Byrd, Lindsey Rock, Tara Mae Hillyer, Katherine Arnoldi and many more…

Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering

Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering

Young Mothers

Winter/Spring 2007
Volume 9, Number 1

Association for Research on Mothering
726 Atkinson, York University
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3
Tel: (416) 736-2100 ext. 60366 Fax: (416) 736-5766
Email: arm@yorku.ca Website: www.yorku.ca/arm

The Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering
(ISSN 1488-0989) is published by
The Association for Research on Mothering (ARM)

The Association for Research on Mothering (ARM) is the first feminist organization devoted specifically to the topics of mothering and motherhood. ARM is an association of scholars, writers, activists, policy makers, educators, parents, and artists. ARM is housed at Atkinson College, York University, Toronto, Ontario. Our mandate is to provide a forum for the discussion and dissemination of feminist, academic, and community grassroots research, theory, and praxis on mothering and motherhood. We are committed in both membership and research to the inclusion of all mothers: First Nations, immigrant and refugee mothers, working-class mothers, lesbian mothers, mothers with disabilities, mothers of colour, and mothers of other marginalized communities. We welcome memberships to ARM and submissions to the *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering,* our biannual publication, from all individuals.

Membership and Subscription Information

Full individual memberships are available for $85Cdn/US; institutional memberships are $120Cdn/US for 2006. A full membership includes membership to the association, a members directory, a biannual newsletter, participation on a listserve, pre-registration for annual conferences, and a subscription to the biannual *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering,* as well as regular information mailings with respect to upcoming events, lecture series, conferences, workshops, and fundraisers. Basic and student memberships are also available, as is a subscription solely to the journal. Please see the last page of this journal for detailed information and order forms.

Submission Guidelines

In order to submit articles, book reviews, or poetry to the *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering,* contributors must be a member of ARM. The journal will only consider material which is not under consideration at any other journal or publication. Please contact us for a list of upcoming themes as well as a copy of our style sheet. Articles should be typed, double-spaced, no longer than 3750 words (or 15 pages), and accompanied by a diskette. Art or photographs may accompany your work. ARM reserves the right to edit manuscripts for length and conformity to our editorial guidelines and house style. We will not publish writing that is sexist, homophobic, racist, or in any way discriminatory. Submissions will be blind-reviewed by a guest editorial board. Articles printed in the journal do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, the staff of the journal, or of our funders. Contributors retain copyright. No reproduction of any part of this journal is permitted without prior written permission from ARM.

Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering

Young Mothers

Winter/Spring 2007
Volume 9, Number 1

Contents

Young Mothers Speak Out

Folio

She Said

Book Reviews

Deirdre M. Kelly

Young Mothers, Agency and Collective Action

Issues and Challenges

Dominant discourses about young mothers typically position them as either unworthy choice-makers or passive victims of other people's intentions and actions. Drawing from critical and poststructuralist feminist theories of agency, I discuss ways of conceptualizing young mothers' agency that challenge conventional (conservative and neo-liberal) framing of agency as individual choice unfettered by historical and material constraints. I then examine the implications for programs that serve young mothers, highlighting the possibilities and risks of strategies aimed at encouraging young mothers' creative self-definitions as well as their shared sense of "we-ness" and collective action. I conclude that young mothers need opportunities to practice deflecting the negative judgments of others and effective ways of communicating their views and concerns to authority figures, thus exercising personal agency in ways aimed at promoting self-development. They also need opportunities and support to reach out to like-minded others who share their goals and strategies for action (however small-scale) aimed at collective problem-solving with regard to poverty, economic marginalization, racism, cultural imperialism, sexism, and heterosexism.

> I must stress I am not an exception to your stereotyping. I am one of the many hard-working welfare moms you have degraded. We are going through a genuine struggle to be able to solely support our families. Not only are we and our children going without things you may take for granted, we also have our already shattered egos smashed by welfare bashers like you.
>
> —Anna, age 18, letter responding to "letters targeting welfare moms," *Midland Daily News*

Anna wrote this letter about two years after I first met her; then, she was 16 and a new mother. Enabled to return to regular high school by government funding of an on-site daycare, Anna tackled her studies with renewed drive. She said she was "determined to make something of her life." Her words bespeak a strong sense of personal efficacy to manage her life's circumstances, achieved individually but also born of being a member of a group commonly misrepresented.

Dominant discourses (evident in the letters to the editor that Anna contested in her reply letter) construct young mothers either as unworthy choice-makers or as passive victims. In other words, young mothers are represented as either fully in charge of their lives or without any agency. This has very serious implications, not only for individual young mothers but also for the types of programs designed for young mothers and for coalition-building in support of services and funding.

I use the term *agency* rather than choice, because the word *choice* tends to be equated with entirely self-generated and intentional actions. The common understanding of the word choice tends to mask the circumstances under which people make decisions; particular material conditions, cultural practices, and social networks influence individuals and shape their decision-making. For example, the barriers to access to contraception and abortion services, mixed messages about sexuality, and the pervasiveness of poverty, child abuse, and unequal power relations based on age, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation all shape the lives of young mothers profoundly. The word "choice" does not draw attention to the fact that more powerful and privileged people (e.g., a high school administrator who also happens to be a single mother) command a broader range of choices than many young mothers do. By contrast, the word agency spotlights human actors and social forces simultaneously; it encourages us to situate individuals in their historical context. And, as Linda Briskin has argued, "agency recognizes that the power to change is vested in the collective will and collective action, and that the power that accrues to most individuals is severely restricted" (1990: 6).

In order to move beyond discourses that position young mothers as either "bad girls" or victims, we need a theory of agency adequate to the embodied experiences of young mothers. This theory must be one that challenges conventional framings of agency as individual choice unfettered by historical and material constraints; one that accounts for the creativity of young mothers' self-interpretations, albeit within limits; one that encourages us to consider collective identity and action. What analytic approaches might allow us to connect self-development and individual agency to the collective agency and empowerment of young women?

Critical and poststructuralist feminist theorizing about agency

Critical feminists and poststructuralist feminists alike, in theorizing agency, have emphasized how individuals' seemingly unique and autonomous decisions and actions are shaped by language, culture, and institutions (see, e.g., Davies, 1991; Butler, 1990, 1993; Fraser, 1997; Benhabib, 1999). Both critical and poststructuralist theorists have helped illuminate how and why human beings often think of ourselves as freely choosing, even as unconscious desires and socio-historical forces often shape and regulate our behavior. They differ, however, in terms of the strength of their notion of agency in relation to dominating structures. They differ, too, in terms of where exactly they locate the source of agency.

A number of critical feminists have taken inspiration from Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) work. Bourdieu's concept of subjectivity is not as determinist as certain poststructuralist accounts; he does not reduce the self to "effects" of discourses (McNay, 2003; see also Nelson, 1999, esp. p. 338 for a critique of Butler, 1990, 1993). Social practice theorists like Bourdieu (e.g., 1977; see also Connell, 1987; Holland *et al.*, 1998) argue that human beings act and make decisions within particular contexts created by our past actions and decisions and in social worlds already shaped by broader racial, gender, and class relations. One of Bourdieu's concepts for capturing this idea of agency-within-limits is *habitus*. "[W]hen habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water'; it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu and Wacquant qtd. in Reay, 2004: 436). Yet Bourdieu also stresses that human knowledge is reflexive and that practice can be turned against what constrains it. More space opens up for agency-as-invention when individuals encounter unfamiliar circumstances or are confronted by events that prompt self-questioning (Reay, 2004).

By contrast, in the work of feminist poststructuralists like Judith Butler and Joan Scott, the source of agency and change lies in the fact that subjectivity is constituted within multiple discourses. According to Scott (1991), "change operates within and across discourses": "Subjects are constituted discursively, but there are conflicts among discursive systems, contradictions within any one of them, multiple meanings possible for the concepts they deploy" (793). Drawing inspiration from Butler's work, Edwina Barvosa-Carter (2001) argues that a subject's multiple identities are a key factor enabling agency. Certain identities may provide some critical distance and a competing perspective on other aspects of one's multiple identities.

Some disagreements among poststructuralist feminists and critical feminists persist over how to conceptualize agency's relation to human intention, autonomy, and reflexivity (e.g., Davies, 1997b; Jones, 1997; Benhabib, 1999; Nelson, 1999). With Nancy Fraser (1997), I believe researchers can steer a middle course, conceiving of subjectivity as endowed with certain "critical capacities" (e.g., reflexivity), where subjectivity and attendant critical capacities are both theorized as "culturally constructed" (214). More conceptual work needs to be done on what these critical capacities look like and how they might be enhanced. Bronwyn Davies' work provides a good starting point. Davies (1991) argues that:

> Agency is never freedom from discursive constitution of self but the capacity to recognise that constitution and to resist, subvert and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted. It is the freedom to recognise multiple readings such that no discursive practice, or positioning within it by powerful others, can capture and control one's identity. (51)

To recap: young mothers face decisions bounded both by their external (cultural, political, and economic) circumstances as well as their internalized filters on the world that make "some possibilities inconceivable, others improbable and a limited range acceptable" (Reay, 2004: 435). Yet they also have some room to improvise "on materials provided by the gender [and other social] order[s]" (Connell, 2002: 23), and these improvisations may form the beginnings of an altered identity (Holland *et al.*, 1998; Kelly, Pomerantz and Currie, 2005, 2006).

Young mothers may evince much personal agency as they reject common *stigma stories* (Kelly, 1997). They may capitalize on the contradictions and tensions within dominant discourses about mothering to begin to forge positive identities for themselves. But ultimately, the successful telling of de-stigmatizing *counter stories* will depend on others taking up their way of speaking, too. "Effective political agency is interactional and collective" (Lovell, 2003: 14). Thus, if young mothers (and their allies) are to succeed in rewriting young motherhood, they must look to various oppositional discourses and social movements for pieces of new scripts, pieces that help them to name their experiences and link these to the ongoing quest for various forms of social justice.

Young mothers will need to join with others in various coalitions and take up their altered identities as political. Not only must they improvise counter stories, they must publicize them and persuade others to help circulate them. This is because individuals, acting alone, no matter how hard they might push the boundaries of what constitutes acceptable motherhood, cannot transform unequal power relations and dominant institutions with vested interests in stigma stories. The power necessary to bring about such social change is largely vested in collective will and collective action. For subordinated groups like young mothers, collective agency has usually been expressed in and through social movements. By contrast, "the collective agency of dominant groups of men is expressed in other ways than social movements. Patriarchal power normally operates through the routine functioning of the institutions in which the dominance of men is embedded—corporations, churches, mass media, legal systems and governments" (Connell, 2002: 145).

Implications for programs serving young mothers

Nurturing personal agency and enabling and encouraging collective agency are both important goals for programs serving young mothers. In this section, I discuss some strategies for reaching each goal, as well as the possibilities and tensions of pursuing the two goals. Some strategies will be more feasible for stand-alone or sheltered programs than programs that support the integration of young mothers into, say, secondary schools.

Nurturing personal agency

Imagine every school day, hauling yourself, an infant or toddler, a stroller, and a bag full of school books and baby gear onto public transit, only to hear an adult lecturing you about being too young to have a baby. Even the strongest willed person under these circumstances might welcome teachers and other youth support workers who nurtured her sense of personal agency. This might take different forms. In my ethnography of City and Town Schools, I observed program-based adults encouraging young mothers to advocate for themselves by helping them practice deflecting stigma and by teaching them effective ways of communicating their views and concerns to those in positions of authority (Kelly, 2000: 112-115).

Another way to nurture personal agency among pregnant and mothering young women is through self-expressive art forms. I have written about popular theater as a potential site for young mothers to enact identity and challenge stereotypes (Kelly, 1997). Anthropologist Wendy Luttrell (2003) designed a variety of art-making activities to elicit the self-representations of pregnant girls in her study: a collaborative book of self-portraits, "Who Am I?" media collages that used pictures and words from the girls' favourite teen magazines, and improvisational role plays of the girls' "pregnancy stories." The activities provided the girls with opportunities to talk back to the "bad girl" versus "good girl" stereotypes and to explore with curiosity—rather than denial or correction—their sexuality, pregnancy, and motherhood, their changing bodies and lives (177; see also Wener, 2004). Each of these arts-based inquiries took place in relatively small, intimate settings, where educators and researchers had the time to get to know the young mothers well.

A pitfall to avoid in these strategies aimed at the goal of nurturing personal agency is the introduction of expert discourses that position young mothers as, above all, psychologically maladjusted and victims of abuse. On the one hand, many young mothers have experienced soul-crushing poverty, racism, and sexual abuse; experiences of unequal power relations may have eroded their sense of personal efficacy and agency. On the other hand, adults working to support young mothers may feel overwhelmed by the structural inequalities facing them. They may conclude that there is a more immediate need to provide individual counseling. But to the extent that programs for young mothers "redefine" the mother's "problems through the categories of expert knowledge" and "individualize the source of her problem and its solution" (Young, 1997: 84), they participate in stigmatizing dominant discourses.

Even when such programs invoke feminism, it is the strand of feminism that holds out the possibility of personal agency and independence but does not emphasize collective agency. Following Jillian Sandell (1996), I call this approach "therapeutic feminism." Therapeutic feminism rests on the "belief that society per se cannot be changed and it is futile for us to think that it can be. We have control over only our own individual acts of transformation" (Sandell, 1996: 23). But programs do not face such an either-or proposition. Individual and collective agency need to go hand-in-hand. In fact, no doubt many of the programs that exist to serve young mothers are the result of prior collective organizing and action.

Enabling collective agency

Enabling collective influence or collective agency may seem like a tall order. Pregnant girls and young mothers, however, are already perceived as a group for various political and pragmatic reasons and often find themselves physically grouped together in classrooms, government programs, or daycares. Although young mothers comprise a diverse group, they may feel a sense of "we-ness" born of "a common cause, threat, or fate" (Snow, 2001). Collective agency is the action dimension of this shared sense of "we-ness." An example of collective agency (and possibly a strategy for fostering "we-ness") is when service providers and young mothers join in small or large arenas to push for changes that they see as being in their best interest.

Another, related strategy is to give young mothers access to alternative discourses and oppositional social movements. Alternative ways of framing social problems, promoted by social movements, can provide powerful resources for individuals to counter or to reject dominant discourses that shame and blame them as individuals, thereby enhancing their sense of self and their capacity to act in the world.

Young people do not, however, have equal access to these alternative or counter-discourses. For example, in a recent, interview-based study with girls aged 12 to 16, my co-investigators and I found that the working-class and immigrant girls were much less likely to have heard of feminism or to have an accurate sense of its meaning (Currie, Kelly and Pomerantz, forthcoming). To remedy this, programs can invite guest speakers representing various groups, organizations, and movements who might help young mothers locate and think about their lives in the context of wider social issues.

Which specific discourses of social justice, in particular, might assist young mothers in their search for personal and collective agency? This depends on the particular context, of course. In Town and City Schools, the young mothers had varying degrees of access to feminist, anti-racist, anti-poverty, Aboriginal self-determination, and youth rights discourses. For example, at City School, a "welfare rights" discourse proved to be especially powerful, particularly for Teen-Age Parents Program (TAPP) participants receiving social assistance. An anti-poverty activist, invited as a guest speaker, gave practical advice on how to successfully navigate the welfare bureaucracy. She urged the young women to think of themselves as citizens, with a right to welfare; they were doing valuable work as mothers and, by working hard in school, they had the potential to become even better mothers, wage earners, or both. She noted the anti-poverty movement's belief that high levels of unemployment and low wages are not inevitable and encouraged TAPP participants on welfare to resist viewing themselves as justly stigmatized recipients of public charity. TAPP participants described this presentation as "excellent" and the speaker as an inspiring "social activist." Karry-Ann (age 18), for example, commented, "I feel more powerful now." Months later the participants were still discussing the importance of "standing up for your rights" (Kelly, 2003: 133).

An anti-poverty discourse also received some air time in the Young Parents Program at Town School, where Anna attended. In her letter to the editor (cited in the opening to this article), Anna tried to counter the dominant framing of young mothers as "welfare moms" leeching off taxpaying citizens. Anna contrasted "middle-class families" with two incomes to "single parents" who are "the sole support of their families" and whose "children lack any extras." She did not try to distance herself from other single parents as being somehow more responsible or exceptional; she spoke in a collective voice: "I am one of the many hard-working welfare moms you have degraded. We are going through a genuine struggle to be able to solely support our families." Her tone was unapologetic; she was proud of her hard work as a mother, as a student "on the honour roll for the first time," and as a future breadwinner. And she constructed an innovative twist on the dominant discourse by repositioning social assistance as a short-term bursary for low-income single mothers. Implicit in her letter is the notion that mothering work constitutes a vital social contribution.

Building capacity for such social critique and collective agency is far from easy, as I discovered the hard way during my ethnographic study at City School. The ethos of individualism is deeply rooted in our society, and many people consider collective action aimed at remedying perceived injustice as fostering what the head-teacher in TAPP (herself a single mother) called "unproductive anger" and a "we-they situation." She preferred to promote personal empowerment, by which she meant self-assertion, a psychological "inner strength," and individual upward mobility in a system she believed to be largely based on merit. So, when a group of young mothers decided, with encouragement from me, to write a collective letter to the Transit Authority with Willow's idea of rewriting the courtesy seating signs on buses to include parents travelling with small children and pregnant women, this teacher did not approve. As she explained to me: "If the students are motivated, they will do this on their own. In Communications [class], we do letters of complaint. I tell them to be polite, to carefully spell out their complaint." She felt I was hindering the young mothers' ability "to learn coping skills" by providing advice on writing together under the banner they elected to use to represent themselves, "concerned parents" (Kelly, 2000: 193).

Besides the difficulty of challenging the ideology of individualism, there is the additional challenge of acknowledging the differences and divisions that hinder coalition-building. To engage in collective action, people must first share some common goals and be able to communicate across their differences. Bonnie, one of the rare middle-class young mothers at City School, reported having an easier time integrating into regular classes than most other young mothers, who attributed the difference to Bonnie being able to afford the latest clothing styles. While Bonnie acknowledged her class privilege to some extent, she seemed unaware of how her class background provided her with verbal and other resources that gave her confidence in interacting with non-parenting students and teachers. Based on the relatively easy time she had had, she began to dismiss the other young mothers' feelings of awkwardness and class-based dislocation in the wider school. Bonnie told me in a formal interview:

> *I could understand that some of them can't afford nice clothes because they live on their own, and my mother always feeds me money for clothes.... But I mean, there are people who go out there ... and enjoy everybody, and they shop at the Salvation Army or whatever. So I dismiss that. I thought, "It's not the clothes. It really is the person that you are here [in City School] that they judge you on."*

The failure to fully recognize and acknowledge such differences within the group ended up reproducing exclusions and silences. Similarly, Aboriginal young mothers sometimes felt that White service providers and teachers as well as young mothers did not acknowledge the legacy of colonialism and racial oppression.

Yet despite all the personal pain and silencing that can result from various inequitable power relations, I have seen groups of young mothers come together and highlight their collective identity as young women raising children, and they have arrived at provisional understandings of shared concerns and commitments that can form the basis of collective action. This is crucial, because the social safety net, such as it is, has begun to unravel. Over the last number of years, for example, British Columbia has seen provincial government funding cuts to school- and community-level support for pregnant young women and school-aged parents; those receiving social assistance have had their shelter allowance cut (Ince, 2004). It will take collective resolve and action to repair these holes in the social safety net.

Conclusion and suggestions for future research

Young mothers need opportunities to practice deflecting the negative judgments of other people and effective ways of communicating their views and concerns to authority figures, thus exercising personal agency in ways aimed at promoting self-development. They also need opportunities and support for reaching out to like-minded others who share their goals and strategies for action (however small-scale) aimed at collective problem-solving with regard to poverty, economic marginalization, racism, cultural imperialism, sexism, heterosexism, and the like. Obviously, in many facets of life, most people do not have direct control over the material and social conditions and institutional practices that influence their daily lives. Sometimes they must put their faith in others to act on their behalf. And sometimes they must, in order to challenge systemic inequalities, act together with others on the basis of shared beliefs in an effort to further common interests.

Future research could seek out and explore examples of critical literacy and cases where young mothers have exercised collective agency as well as the links between critical reflexivity and collective action. As argued in the theoretical section on agency, analyzing selfhood or subjectivity as socially constructed does not mean that people do not have personal agency and the capacity for critical reflexivity. More theoretical and empirical research is needed to delineate these critical capacities and how they might be enhanced. In a feminist poststructuralist vein, Bronwyn Davies's work has been pioneering. For her, agency is signalled by a speaking subject who can move within and between discourses; can see how various discourses subject her; and can use the terms of one discourse to counteract, modify, refuse, or go beyond the other, both in terms of her own experienced subjectivity and in the way in which she chooses to speak in relation to the subjectivities of others (Davies, 1991). "Critical social literacy," therefore, "involves the development of a playful ability to move between and amongst discourses, to move in and out of them, to mix them, to break their spell when necessary" (Davies, 1997a: 29).

Various social justice discourses can be seen to invite such critical reflexivity; feminism does so, for example, by drawing attention to how particular performances of femininity work to subordinate women's interests to those of men. An empirical question arises: Which specific discourses of social justice (or feminism, anti-racism, anti-poverty, youth rights, etc.), in particular, assist and inspire young mothers in their search for control and positive social change, and in which specific contexts?

Future research might also productively identify and analyze collective projects that have been undertaken by young women for young women (most examples I have observed or read about are youth-adult collaborations). An exciting example is Sistas on the Rise, a Bronx activist group of young women of color, ages 13 to 21, created by and for young mothers (for another example, see O'Neill, 1998). Sistas on the Rise teamed up with a nonprofit community service organization to survey and interview young mothers who had been or were currently enrolled in one of New York City's pregnancy and parenting schools (Sistas on the Rise, 2005). They have publicized their findings (O'Conner, 2006) and seek to reform the system of education for young mothers. Sistas on the Rise's website lists their values. It is a fascinating and inspiring list that calls out for inquiry into the links between the group's critical literacy practices, its belief in the power of youth, its articulation of social justice, and its mission to "organize together around issues that are relevant to [young mothers and women of color]."

References

Barvosa-Carter, Edwina. 2001. "Strange Tempest: Agency, Poststructuralism, and the Shape of Feminist Politics to Come." *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies* 6 (1/2): 123-137.

Benhabib, Seyla. 1999. "Sexual Difference and Collective Identities: The New Global Constellation." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24 (2): 335-361.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Briskin, Linda. 1990. *Feminist Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning Liberation*. Ottawa: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge.

Connell, R. W. 1987. *Gender and Power*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Connell, R. W. 2002. *Gender*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Currie, Dawn H., Deirdre M. Kelly and Shauna Pomerantz. forthcoming. *Girl Power: Beyond the Slogan to Lived Feminisms*. New York: Peter Lang.

Davies, Bronwyn. 1991. "The Concept of Agency: A Feminist Poststructuralist Analysis." *Social Analysis* 30: 42-53.

Davies, Bronwyn. 1997a. "Constructing and Deconstructing Masculinities Through Critical Literacy." *Gender and Education* 9 (1): 9-30.

Davies, Bronwyn. 1997b. "The Subject of Post-Structuralism: A Reply to Alison Jones." *Gender and Education* 9 (3): 271-283.

Fraser, Nancy. 1997. "False Antitheses: A Response to Seyla Benhabib and Judith Butler." *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*. New York: Routledge. 207-223.

Holland, Dorothy C., William, Jr. Lachicotte, Debra Skinner, and Carole Cain. 1998. *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Ince, Judith. 2004, December 21. "Teen mom support fraying says report." *The Tyee*. Retrieved December 23, 2004 from: http://www.thetyee.ca/News/2004/12/21/TeenMom.

Jones, Alison. 1997. "Teaching Post-Structuralist Feminist Theory in Education: Student Resistances." *Gender and Education* 9 (3): 261-269.

Kelly, Deirdre M. 1997. "Warning Labels: Stigma and the Popularizing of Teen Mothers' Stories." *Curriculum Inquiry* 27 (2): 165-186.

Kelly, Deirdre M. 2000. *Pregnant with Meaning: Teen Mothers and the Politics of Inclusive Schooling*. New York: Peter Lang.

Kelly, Deirdre M. 2003. "Practicing Democracy in the Margins of School: The Teen-Age Parents Program as Feminist Counterpublic." *American*

Educational Research Journal 40 (1): 123-146.

Kelly, Deirdre M., Shauna Pomerantz, and Dawn Currie. 2006. "'No boundaries?' Girls' Interactive, Online Learning about Femininities." *Youth and Society* 38 (1): 3-28.

Kelly, Deirdre M., Shauna Pomerantz, and Dawn H. Currie. 2005. "Skater Girlhood and Emphasized Femininity: 'You Can't Land an Ollie Properly in Heels.'" *Gender and Education* 17 (3): 129-148.

Lovell, Terry. 2003. "Resisting with Authority: Historical Specificity, Agency and the Performative Self." *Theory, Culture and Society* 20 (1): 1-17.

Luttrell, Wendy. 2003. *Pregnant Bodies, Fertile Minds: Gender, Race, and the Schooling of Pregnant Teens*. New York: Routledge.

McNay, Lois. 2003. "Agency, Anticipation and Indeterminacy in Feminist Theory." *Feminist Theory* 4 (2): 139-148.

Nelson, Lise. 1999. "Bodies and Spaces Do Matter: The Limits of Performativity." *Gender, Place and Culture* 6 (4): 331-353.

O'Conner, Julie. 2006, January 30. "Profile of a Fiasco: New York's Pregnancy Schools." *The Columbia Journalist*. Retrieved February 9, 2007 from: http://www.columbiajournalist.org/section.asp?subj=city&issue=79

O'Neill, Kelly. 1998. "No Adults are Pulling the Strings and We Like it That Way." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 23 (3): 611-618.

Reay, Diane. 2004. "'It's All Becoming Habitus': Beyond the Habitual Use of Habitus in Educational Research." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 25 (4): 431-444.

Sandell, Jillian. 1996. "Adjusting to Oppression: The Rise of Therapeutic Feminism in the United States." "*Bad Girls"/"Good Girls": Women, Sex, and Power in the Nineties* Eds. Nan Bauer Maglin and Donna Perry. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 21-35.

Scott, Joan W. 1991. "The Evidence of Experience." *Critical Inquiry* 17: 773–797.

Sistas on the Rise. 2005. *Pregnant and Parenting School Survey Results*. Bronx, New York. Retrieved February 9, 2007 from: http://www.sistasontherise.org

Snow, David A. 2001. "Collective Identity and Expressive Forms" [Electronic version]. *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Eds. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes. Amsterdam: Elsevier. 2212-2219.

Wener, Abby R. 2004. "Don't Tell Me Who I Am: Narratives of Young Women Who Are Mothers." Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Young, Iris Marion. 1997. "Punishment, Treatment, Empowerment: Three Approaches to Policy for Pregnant Addicts." *Intersecting Voices: Dilemmas of Gender, Political Philosophy, and Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 75-94.

Lindsey Rock

The "Good Mother" vs. the "Other" Mother

The Girl-Mom

"The "Good Mother" vs. the "Other" Mother: The Girl-Mom" explores how discourses of the "Good Mother" have created a dialectically charged interdependency between this "Good Mother" and her "Other." Every "Good Mother" lives striving to achieve "good" mothering and most every "Other" mother lives in a space where her parenting skills are other than "bad." The binary logic that confines mothers to "good" or "bad" is socially constructed and propagated in western culture to serve patriarchy and the state, dividing mothers and women. In this paper I examine the discourses of the "Good Mother" related to the "Other" mother, specifically the young mother who is socially constructed as a "crisis" of epidemic proportions in modern Western culture. This paper examines the provisional and strategic use of the identity politic "Girl-Mom" to politicize and de-stabilize the "carceral continuum" of motherhood.

I am a 28-year-old mama to a wonderful, little six-year old girl. I attend the University of Alberta while my daughter attends kindergarten. I am an arts undergraduate studying as a double major in Film Studies and Women's studies. I am white, Canadian, I was brought up in a middle-class family and I think it is important to be clear that I do not mean to speak for all young mothers, but of a cultural phenomenon of devaluation and de-legitimization that I have witnessed and experienced myself as a young mom. Being a young mom, I have been particularly interested in how the "ideal" mother is produced in mainstream Western culture. This idealization is repeated to all mothers inscribing ideas about what they should strive to be like. I will refer to the "ideal" mother in this paper as the "Good Mother." My aim is to expose the culturally constructed ideals that devalue some mothers while valorizing others. These ideals of the "Good Mother" are repeated systemically to serve patriarchy and the state. Such ideals in turn become “discourses of knowledge,” they are the discourses of the “Good Mother.”

Michel Foucault (1979) said “discourses of knowledge” were the ways of coming to know. From a place of fear, in what Foucault called the “carceral continuum,” people become docile bodies. The carceral continuum is self-policing, individuals are regulated by the discourses of knowledge, behave in ways deemed “appropriate,” live in fear of being watched, seen, or exposed as something other than “good.” Mothers behave in accordance to what has been prescribed as acceptable behaviour. Being this “Good Mother” is an impossible task, and the reinforcement of this mythic ideal puts all mothers into a lose-lose situation, whereby the ways a mother comes to know how she should behave is repeated and imitated, manipulated and exalted in the media, setting a standard so high the only outcome can be a series of failures. Judith Butler explains that, “Identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes” (Butler, 1996: 13). I wish to show how Motherhood is a “regulatory regime” by which I mean that the fear of *not* being a “Good Mother” oppresses, regulates, controls, and produces docile bodies that will not resist, or question the “experts.” I am particularly interested in the way the discourses of the “Good Mother” relate to the discursive productions of the “Other” mother. One mother, unsure and scared that she is not a “Good Mother” can find value in herself by devaluing “Other” mothers who do not share her values or beliefs regarding childrearing.

Adrienne Rich (1976) worked to deconstruct the discourses of the good or natural mother, in her book *Of Woman Born*. In this paper, I will examine the discourses of the “Good Mother” related to the discourses of the “Other” mother, specifically the young mother who is socially constructed as a “problem” of epidemic proportions in modern Western culture. I will refer to the young mom as the “Girl-Mom, ” a term I have borrowed from a web-based feminist community run by and for teen and other marginalized young mothers (www.girl-mom.com).

No mother’s experience is the same. Mothering differs day-to-day, moment-to-moment. Many books and articles have expounded upon the topic of mothering: The styles of mothering, post-partum depression, the totalized identity of the mother, the deviant mom and the good mom. On occasion a book comes along that attempts to debunk the myth of the “Good Mother” and bring into public space the dark side of mothering. While there are a few books that regard young mothering as a “crisis” to be prevented, relatively few texts have touched on the experiences specific to the Girl-Mom. By “Girl-Mom” I mean a mother under, or close to the age of majority and generally unmarried, but not necessarily a teenager by exact definition.

If I can take what I see and hear to be true around me, the totalizing identity of the “Good Mother” is what Betty Freidan (1963) described in *The Feminine Mystique*, that a mother’s identity outside the world of motherhood ceases to matter or exist. A mother is seen *only* as a mother, with no other potential, needs or goals. And in 2007, this "Good Mother" is alive and well. She may be labelled by some as "1950's housewife" or "Super mom," but whatever term is used to label her, her role is instrumental in upholding (right-wing) "traditional family values." However, this paper is not just about "Good Mother" morals and values. The "Good Mother" is often produced as being predominantly white, heterosexual, married and middle or upper class. Doreen Fumia, in her paper about marginalized mothers, says, "For Whiteness, goodness, and chasteness to become the measure for the respectable bourgeois subject there had to be categories of women deviated from that standard in order to be contrasted with it. Without the contrast, there could be no deviant" (1999: 89).

I think about this idealized, romanticized notion of who this "Good Mother" is, and she is not me. I do not fit the discourses of what the "Good Mother" acts like, or looks like. So, if I am not this "Good Mother," what kind of mother am I? Am I a "Bad Mother?" I would say I am not. I know plenty of *good* mothers who are not this "Good Mother." I identify myself at times as a Girl-Mom, particularly when I was in my early 20s and my daughter was younger. I became a mother at 21. Certainly, I am privileged and can only write from my own location as such. Nonetheless, I am the "Other" mother. It is often awkward to "out" myself as a young mom. This admission is often met with shock, and awe, often followed with the glib phrase "how do you cope?" Well, as any mother might answer, I just do. My age has little to do with my coping abilities. Rather, it is the carceral continuum that affects the choices I make, the thoughts I choose to share about my experience as a mother, and the way I raise my child. Discourses of knowledge work on my body to produce the appearance and imitation of a "Good Mother." I strive to pass as the "Good Mother" though it is unlikely I am seen as anything but "Other" once I have been out-ed as a mom. Each mother has good days and bad, triumphs and failures. However, it seems that struggles with depression and other dark topics regarding mothering are strictly taboo to the Girl-Mom and "Other" mothers as the Girl-Mom and her "illegitimate" children should be punished for her immoralities.

"We hold mothers and pregnant women to a higher moral standard than we require of other members of society" (Turnbull, 2001: 132). Mothers who pass as the normalized "Good Mother" are assumed to be "fit" to have and raise children. Mothers who do not pass are vilified, called "unfit." I am fully capable of raising my child, though in most situations I do not pass. While I do not doubt my own abilities as a mother, I constantly question if I am being a "Good Mother." If I look for the "Good Mother," and strive to be like her, I fail. Butler talks of identities as performative, where behaviour is essentialized through systemic repetition until the behaviours are invisible. The "Good Mother" role is "…always in the process of imitating and approximating its own phantasmatic idealization of itself—and failing" (1996: 21). I am a derivation, an imitation, and in many spaces I do not pass. My identity as a mother is essentialized through "endless repetitions of itself" until its perfomativity becomes invisible (Butler, 1996). When I wake up I do not ask myself if I am still a mother. I do however ask myself daily, "Am I being a 'Good Mother'?"

I battle the regulatory regimes of normalized mothering and the guilt my resistance serves up daily. I work two part-time jobs, attend school full-time, and there are days upon days where I see my daughter only long enough to get her off to school in the morning. Some weeks I barely see her at all. Yes, I felt guilty. But I am doing what I need to finish my degree, while being a mother. Experts in the science and institution of motherhood repeat discourses of this "Good Mother." In 1963, Betty Freidan wrote that so-called "experts" were telling women "…how to breastfeed children and handle toilet training, how to cope with sibling rivalry and adolescent rebellion…" (1). This information and advice is still being repeated in parenting magazines, and elsewhere in mainstream western culture. "A woman who defies the truth of medical knowledge becomes a bad mother." (Turnbull, 2001: 129) Parents, especially new mothers, turn to "expert" books and magazines to reinforce their own ideas of what the "Good Mother" looks like, how she behaves, and how her children behave (Francis-Connolly, 2003). Discourses of the "Good Mother" are repeated and reinforced by doctors, lawyers, educators, and other childrearing "experts," as well as in laws and through the media. "The implicit reliance by the courts on the norm of the 'good mother' means that they are in essence applying a universal standard that ignores circumstance" (Ikemoto qtd. Turnbull, 2001: 132).

"New" categories are being created for the mother, but as Butler suggests, categories always leak (Butler, 1996). "Such methods result in exclusion and when applied to the discourses of motherhood, limit, rather than enhance, the capacity for women to mother" (Fumia, 1999: 87) Attempts to include "Other" mothers in the category of "Good Mother" only works to "out" the "Other" mothers. Coming out of one closet—the mother closet—I step directly into another closet—the Girl-Mom closet. Of course, I do not mean to speak for all Girl-Moms. A Girl-Mom who is further marginalized by race, religion, or class, faces even more adversities and is subjected to more public scrutiny than me—a white, non-teenaged Girl-Mom from a middle-class background. Mothers who are striving to achieve "Good Mother" status are pitted against "Other" mothers over every issue: i.e., breastfeeding vs. bottle-feeding, stay-at-home moms vs. working moms. Every "expert" who writes a book offers another set of "rules" that perpetuate the discourses of the "Good Mother." These "rules" are weapons meant to divide and conquer women and mothers. These tenants are polarizing tactics used by a system bound to patriarchy that oppresses not only mothers, but all women. Any resistance to these disciplinary mechanisms works as a binary showing all the ways the "Other" is deviant. "The masculine imagination has had to divide women, to see us, and to force us to see ourselves, as polarized into good or evil…" (Rich, 1976: 16).

The many discursive productions of the New Woman can be superimposed over the discourses the Girl-Mom. Both the New Woman in the late nineteenth century and the Girl-Mom are/were produced as being many of the same things: she is stereotyped as being single, sexually deviant, and promiscuous (Ledger, 1995). Single mothers, after all, have been constructed as the ultimate proof of promiscuity and sexual deviance. The New Woman was seen as women who would produce unhealthy children (Ledger, 1995), the same way the Girl-Mom is viewed in modern western culture. The Girl-Mom is also produced as being: on welfare, unemployed, uneducated, too young—or else *looks too young* (it has been my experience that looking too young is a reason for shame and guilt when the young-looking mother is assumed to be not married or is not in the presence of a man assumed to be both her husband *and* the father of her child). She is often represented as a high school drop-out that has no control of her children, and in the worst case she might be a prostitute, a drug abuser, or an alcoholic (even all three). It is ironic that the New Woman was in fact a white, heterosexual woman from the upper and middle classes, who wanted more access to libraries, to become more educated, and put off marriage and children (Ledger, 1995).

"Motherhood … has a history, it has an ideology, it is more fundamental than tribalism or nationalism" (Rich, 1976: 15). In Canada, after the First World War there was a resurgence of this pre-occupation with motherhood and those deemed unfit. Nationalist ideals were propagated by the state, patriarchy, and medicine (Commachio, 1997). The institutions of childbearing and childrearing created the science of motherhood (Commachio, 1997). Discourses were produced to let women know what it would take to be a "Good Mother." This discourse of the "Good Mother" is reinforced in modern Western culture, upholding gender roles, class relations, and racial distinctions (Commachio, 1997). Discourses of the "Good Mother" "leaves little room for consideration of class, age, race, family and other such relations comprising social identity…" (Commachio, 1997: 308). "Behaviour which threatens the institutions, such as illegitimacy, abortion, lesbianism is considered deviant or criminal" (Rich, 1976: 24). Currently, in 2007, these ideas propagate nationalism and patriotism, re-emerging in the name of right wing "traditional family values."

Girl-Moms and "Other" mothers are subjected to public scrutiny based on value-laden assumptions regarding: relationships with male partners, socio-economic circumstances, education, employment, housing, substance abuse, maturity, personal responsibility, coping skills, health and well-being, the cognitive development and behavioural problems of their children; also whether or not these mothers need to use government programs, social assistance, child tax benefits, subsidized health care, and childcare (Phoenix, 1991). Age is not relative to how well one will parent, however, age is assumed criteria for the makings of the "Good Mother." "Early motherhood does not constitute cause for general concerns. What seems to be of public concern is the repeated ideology that young mothers are 'unfit' if they are unmarried" (Phoenix, 1991: 247). Certainly 50 years ago, it was perfectly acceptable, even encouraged, for 18- and 19-year-old women to marry and begin families.

“Motherhood is ‘sacred’ so long as its offspring are ‘legitimate’” (Rich, 1976: 24). Mothers who fit the mould of proper “Good” mother have their experiences of motherhood legitimized. Mothers who are deemed misfit are excluded from speaking of motherhood, and not welcome into the “sacred”—culturally constructed—space of motherhood.

In October 2003, a U.S. federal program, “PRIDE” (Personal Responsibility and Individual Development for Everyone) a section of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) was set up to award bonuses totalling $100 million over four years. States must “establish goals to reduce the rate of out-of wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies, and establish numerical goals for reducing the illegitimacy ratio” in order to qualify for bonus money (TANF Section-101, 2003). The state oppresses Girl-Moms by imposing patriarchal norms and making value-laden judgments on any Girl-Mom that does not pass as the “Good Mother.”

Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Adrienne Rich in *Of Woman Born* (1976), and Jane Lazzare in *The Mother Knot* (1976) deconstruct the discourses of the “Good Mother”; however, none of these feminist authors speak from a place of having the Girl-Mom experience. These authors scrutinize the way mothers are encouraged to attempt to pass as a “Good Mother” but do not expound on those “Others” who cannot pass in normalized culture.

In her book *Not Our Kind of Girl*, Elaine Bell Kaplan (1997) discusses the experience and the stereotypes associated with the Black teen mother. In one section she talks about attending a support group session for teenage mothers. At this meeting several “concerned” mothers from the surrounding community attended along with Kaplan. “Teen mothers presented their experiences in a positive light, especially when they were addressing adults and certainly if white adults were in the audience” (Kaplan, 1997: 165). In other public situations she noted the “concealment of discreditable facts concerning their experiences as teenage mothers may have been their attempt to ‘pass’ as a normal teenager” (Kaplan, 1997: 166). Books such as *The Mother Trip* by Ariel Gore (2000), *You Look Too Young to Be a Mom*, edited by Deborah Davis (2004) and *Riding in Cars with Boys* by Beverly D’Onofrio, bravely expose some true experiences of young mothering in modern Western culture—both good and bad.

Research-based books, such as *Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting*, often begin with the suggestion that teen pregnancy is a “problem” (East and Felice, 1996). Another example is *Young, Poor and Pregnant*, where the author despairs that amongst Girl-Moms “it is mostly poor teens who have babies but do not go on to finish school, get married, or get good jobs. Further, they often turn their back on opportunities, deliberately sabotaging their prospects for success” (Musick, 1993: 4). Ann Phoenix (1991) criticizes methodological problems in the research studies of young mothers as being responsible for the exaggerated differences between Girl-Moms and the normalized mother in *Young Mothers?* These questionable methodologies perpetuate racism, by categorizing young moms further, in this case by way of “race.” The “inappropriate choice of comparison groups, failure to control for socio-economic status and parity, as well as lack of recognition of intra-group differences" (Phoenix, 1991: 2) creates the Girl-Mom as an "epidemic."

Any Girl-Mom who is further marginalized by race, religion, or class faces even more adversities. Meanwhile, the white Girl-Mom of a privileged upbringing is commonly thought of as potentially salvageable through marriage. I resisted the idea of marriage when I was pregnant at 21. The pressure to marry before the baby was born was intense. Everyone seemed to have an opinion about the lack of wedding ring on my finger and my swelling belly. Ultimately, I did marry the father of my daughter when she was a little over a year old. In hindsight, I wish I had resisted a little harder.

Motherhood is assumed "proof" of heterosexuality. Not unlike how "discourses of heterosexuality oppress us in the sense that they prevent us from speaking unless we speak in their terms" (Wittig, 1996: 208), the discourses of the "Good Mother" (assumed heterosexuality) prevent the Girl-Mom from speaking unless she speaks in the terms of the married, white, middle-class "Good Mother." Discourses of heterosexuality, and assumed heterosexual spaces, dismiss the experiences of the Girl-Mom. The Girl-Mom is ostracized, pathologized, and often supervised (Pietsch, 2002). When Gill Valentine said, "Heterosexual looks of disapproval, whispers and stares are used to discomfort and make lesbians feel 'out of place' in everyday spaces" (1996: 149), it could easily be re-worded as: "Looks of disapproval, whispers and stares are used to discomfort and make *Girl-Moms* feel 'out of place' in everyday spaces." But Girl-Moms can use their identity politic. "In avowing the sign's strategic provisionality (rather than its strategic essentialism) that identity can become a site of contest and revision" (Butler, 1996: 19). The Girl-Mom can destabilize the discourses of the "Good Mother" through politicizing assumed heterosexual spaces by being visible and vocal about their day-to-day struggles, as well as their accomplishments. Girl-Moms can thus shake up the notions of what "good" mothering looks like.

> Teenage pregnancy is not a "crisis" or "epidemic," like so many people would like us to believe. The only true epidemic associated with teen pregnancy is the overwhelming and universal lack of support available to young mothers. The only true crisis is the denial of the fact that teenage girls can be, are, and always have been, both sexual and maternal beings, with the capacity to love, procreate, and nurture. We love our children fiercely. We protect and care for them like any mother, of any age, would. Through Girl-Mom, I hope to slowly show that to the world. (Crews, 2003: from *The Girl-Mom Mission Statement*)

Though at times I identify as a "Girl-Mom," other times I do not fix myself as *any* type of mother. I do not end with the identity "Mother," or

“Girl-Mom.” I do not deny my mother role, or my “Girl-Mom” identity; but I allow myself to be many things. “Is it not a sign of despair over public politics when identity becomes its own policy?” (Butler, 1996: 19). By no means do I intend to normalize the experience of all Girl-Moms. But “the words are being spoken now, are being written down; the taboos are being broken, the masks of motherhood are cracking through” (Rich, 1976: 5) and the mask of the Girl-Mom can begin to break apart. Binary logic confines mothers to “good” or “bad” is socially constructed and propagated in Western culture to serve patriarchy and the state, dividing mothers and women. And the “Good Mother” and the “Other” mother, the Girl-Mom, are interdependent on each other to find value within the breadth of mothering experiences. Judith Butler might say that “Mother” itself is a slippery sign. “Good Mothers” strive to be better “good” mothers, while “Other” mothers also strive to be better “good”mothers. “…Now it was a chant which strengthened, which I believed in the bottom of my heart … you are a good mother too—it went—a good mother too” (Lazarre, 1976: 91).

References

Butler, Judith. 1996. “Imitation and Gender Insubordination.” *Material Queer.* Ed. David Morton. Boulder: Westview Press. 180-189/

Commachio, Cynthia R. 1997. “Motherhood in Crisis: Women, Medicine and State in Canada, 1900-1940.” *Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference and Women’s Lives.* Eds. Rosemary Hennesey and Chrys Ingraham. New York: Routledge. 306-327.

Crews, Allison. Ed. 2003. *EMPOWER: A Young Mama’s Guide to Taking Control.* Austin, TX.

Davis, Deborah. Ed. 2004. *You Look Too Young to Be a Mom: Teen Mothers Speak Out on Love, Learning, and Success.* New York: Perigee Books.

D’Onofrio, Beverly. 1992. *Riding in Cars with Boys: Confessions of a Bad Girl Who Makes Good.* New York: Penguin Books.

Duncan, Nancy. 1996. “Renegotiating Gender and Sexuality in Public and Private Spaces.” *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality.* Ed. Nancy Duncan. New York: Routledge. 125-143.

East, Patricia and Marianne Felice. 1996. Eds. *Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting: Findings from a Racially Divisive Sample.* Hillsdale Lawrence Erlbaum AP.

Foucault, Michel. 1979ß¡. Discipline and Punish. The Birth of Prison. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon Press.

Francis-Connolly, Elizabeth. 2003. “Constructing Parenthood: Portrayals of Motherhood and Fatherhood in Popular American Magazines.” *Journal for the Association for Research on Mothering* 5 (1): 179-185.

Friedan, Betty. 1963. *The Feminine Mystique.* New York: Norton.

Fumia, Doreen. 1999. "Marginalized Motherhood and The Mother-Lesbian Subject." *Journal for the Association for Research on Mothering* 1 (1): 86-95.

Girl-Mom. Online: www.girl-mom.com.

Gore, Ariel. 2000. *The Mother Trip: Hip Mama's Guide to Staying Sane in the Chaos of Motherhood.* Washington: Seal Press.

Kaplan, Elaine Bell. 1997. *Not Our Kind of Girl: Unraveling the Myths of Black Teenage Motherhood.* Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lazarre, Jane. 1976. *The Mother Knot.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.

Ledger, Sally. 1995. "The New Woman and the Crisis of Victorianism." *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siecle.* Eds. Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 22-44.

Musick, Judith. 1993. *Young Poor and Pregnant: The Psychology of Teenage Motherhood*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Personal Responsibility and Individual Development for Everyone (PRIDE) Act. 2003. The Joint Committee on Administrative Rule.

Phoenix, Ann. 1991. *Young Mothers?* Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.

Pietsch, Nicole. 2002. "Un/Titled: Constructions of Illegitimate Motherhood as Gender Insurrection." *Journal for the Association for Research on Mothering* 4 (1): 88-100.

Rich, Adrienne. 1976. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution.* New York: Bantam Books.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Section 101: "PRIDE." Online: http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/leg/090803pride.pdf.

Turnbull, Lorna A. 2001. "The Legal Characteristics of Pregnancy and Mothering: Does Mother Know Best?" *Journal for the Association for Research on Mothering* 3 (1): 126-138.

Valentine, Gill. 1996. "(Re)Negotiating the 'Heterosexual Street': Lesbian Productions of Space." *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality.* Ed. Nancy Duncan. New York: Routledge. 146-155.

Wittig, Monique. 1996. "The Straight Mind." *Material Queer.* Ed. David Morton. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 207-212

Tanya Darisi

"It Doesn't Matter if You're 15 or 45, Having a Child is a Difficult Experience"

Reflexivity and Resistance in Young Mothers' Constructions of Identity

The research literature and popular media predominantly establish single young motherhood as a social problem. This problem characterization of young mothers enables negative identity inferences about those for whom the category is potentially relevant. This article provides a discussion of the ways in which members of this problematic social category locally construct the meaning and relevance of the category to their own identities. Discussion groups of young mothers were recorded and analysed, revealing discursive practices by which young mothers construct the category, resist negative inferences, and establish more positive category associations. Participants negotiated the meaning and relevance of the category "single young mother," using strategies that both reinforce and undermine cultural ideologies. In so doing, they accomplished identities for themselves that allowed for an evaluation of "good" mother—an accomplishment that entailed a reworking of the cultural repertoire for understanding motherhood.

Introduction

Category membership as a resource for identity

Within mainstream psychological and public health research, the phenomenon of "single teenage mother" is frequently treated as a social problem in need of remedy. Studies cite rising incidence rates, review prevention and intervention strategies, and relate the significant risks of being and having an unmarried teen mother (e.g., Akinbami, Cheng, and Kornfeld, 2001; Coren et al., 2003; Letourneau, et al., 2004). Some of these risks include low educational achievement, poverty, disrupted identity formation and diminished life direction (Akinbami et al., 2001; Coren, *et al*., 2002; Letourneau, Stewart, and Barnfather, 2004). Children of young mothers are also reported to be at an increased risk for maltreatment, intellectual deficiencies, behavioural problems, and violent offending (Jaffee, Caspi, Moffitt, Belsky, and Silva, 2004; Letourneau et al., 2004). While this body of research has been criticized for confounding the disadvantaged circumstances of low socioeconomic status with mothers' age, for ignoring the potential benefits of parenting for adolescents, and for essentializing adolescent mothers in terms of deficiency, the social risks and harm associated with being and having a young mother continue to be promulgated by mainstream academic and media accounts (Kelly, 1996, 2000; Macleod, 2001; Phoenix, 1996; Raeff, 1996). The more negative depictions dominate conventional knowledge of the social category "teenage mother," and the attributes of being poor, uneducated, and incapable have been established as stereotypical associations.

As a social category, "teenage mother" is inference-rich and serves as a cultural resource by which to interpret and account for a young mother's conduct (Van Langenhove and Harré, 1995; Sacks, 1992). Whether one claims or is cast into membership, social categories are bound with activities, predicates, rights and obligations that members are expected to possess or perform (Widdicombe, 1998). We belong to numerous social categories that reflect our relationships and roles (e.g. daughter, student, cashier) as well as our gender, age, ethnicity, social class, etc., although all are not salient or relevant in every social interaction. Contextual and situational cues relate to the likelihood of a particular category being relevant. When one's membership in a particular social category is relevant, reliance on what is conventionally known about that category allows for subtle interactional work (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998; Sacks 1979). If a one is oriented to as a young mother, then what is known about young mothers is used to understand that individual's contribution in an interaction. The meaning and consequence, i.e., the social force, of one's contribution to a social interaction will be understood according to relevant social categories. In this way, social categories are integral to one's identity.

At times invoking our member status in a particular social group or category, i.e., our category membership, can be advantageous. We can use category membership to develop a sense of belonging or to authenticate claims (Davies and Harré, 1990; Van Langenhove and Harré, 1995). Orienting to one's status as a mother, for example, can be a way to legitimize giving advice or advocate for social change. Invoking category membership can also be disadvantageous. Associated features can be detrimental to those for whom the category is potentially relevant (Widdicombe, 1998). Conventional knowledge about category members can be used to position subjects as incompetent or without entitlements, producing exclusion and marginalization (Morgan, 2002). As well, the transgression of ideologies that bound categories can be used to warrant complaints or aggression (Stokoe, 2003). For young mothers, unfavourable category associations can occasion claims about the inappropriateness of taking on motherhood, questions about a mother's competency, and the deprivation of power to make decisions for herself and for her children (Clumpus, 1996; Croghan and Miell, 1998).

The current study

The current study examines the narratives and discussions of young mothers as an enterprise in which they construct their identity as members of a potentially problematic category. Reflecting on their experiences and understandings, these young women negotiate the meaning and relevance of the category "single young mother," using strategies that both reinforce and undermine cultural ideologies. In so doing, they construct identities for themselves that allow for an evaluation of "good" mother—an accomplishment that entails a reworking of the dominant cultural repertoire for understanding motherhood.

Analytic framework

Discursive psychology informs the analytic framework of this study, which draws on the varied work of Antaki and Widdicombe (1998), Davies and Harré, (1990), Edwards (1998) and Sacks (1979), as well as the feminist scholarship of Kitzinger (2000) and Stokoe (2004). In the psychology of selfhood and identity, discursive psychology focuses on the linguistic practices by which identities are constructed and the social functions of these constructions (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). In this framework, identity is regarded as an emerging product of socio-cultural interactions (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Harré, 1991). It becomes a complex, dynamic process accomplished through several, often overlapping, relations and systems. This constructionist orientation assumes that the self and identity are negotiated and made meaningful through a cooperative enterprise of people in relationship with others (Gergen, 1987).

Categories too are made meaningful through our interactions with others. They are constructed through an ongoing discourse of characteristics, features and generalized expectations that become associated with a group of people (Van Langenhove and Harré, 1995). This means that identities and categories are not fixed or absolute; they are negotiated and managed in our everyday talk. As such, they can be taken up or they can be resisted.

Data source

Participants in this study are all unmarried young mothers who are conventionally identified as "at risk": they live with low incomes, marginal social support networks, and in socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods of ethno-racial diversity. They participate in a literary program for young mothers offered by an organization that distinguishes itself in its focus on positive community development and empowerment. The program is held at residences and drop-in centres for pregnant and parenting teens. Participants in the program have reported that social assistance is their primary source of income. Many also have experienced violence, abuse, and homelessness. They self-identified as Black or Caribbean-Canadian, Latin, mixed heritage and white.[1]

The program includes weekly book groups or "reading circles" that encourage participants to be reflective and explore challenging issues through reading contemporary fiction. Discussions involve many different topics, such as how a heroine's attempt to resolve a conflict could be applied to a problem they are having, or how prejudice surfaces in the story and in their own interactions with others. The book group discussions were recorded for my Master's thesis research and excerpts from these discussions are used in the current analysis. Participants were introduced to myself and the research project a week before data collection was scheduled. They were informed about the purpose of the research and that an upcoming session was going to be recorded. On the day of data collection, informed consent had to have been provided by each participant in attendance before recording proceeded. Each book group had approximately seven to ten attendees, although every attendee did not necessarily participate in the discussion. All names that appear in excerpts are pseudonyms. For this article, I selected excerpts from two discussions about stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice in which participants oriented to the category "single young mother." During these discussions, participants revealed personal experiences with prejudice and stigmatization.

As I engage in this description of those whose discourse will be the focus of this research, it is not without the awareness that to do so necessarily positions them, setting expectations and meaning for their interactions prior to the observation of their own discourse. My emphasis on these young women's negotiation of the identity category "single young mother" reflects an interest in the cultural constructions of motherhood and the impact these have on the daily lives of women for whom they are relevant. My analysis is both informed and constrained by my own experiences negotiating motherhood and other ostensibly incongruent identities. However, I make no claims to speak on behalf of the women whose reflections form the basis of this study. "Single young mother" is made relevant by their contributions to the book groups, which constitute and are constituted by this identity. My intention is to bring their discourse within the broader realm of conceptualizing motherhood, speaking to both the diversity and shared experiences of those who confront this powerful and influential cultural mechanism.

Findings

In the original study, I investigated and provided a detailed analysis of the ways that the category "single young mother" was variously made meaningful by conversational participants (Darisi, 2005). In that analysis, there was careful attention to the turn-by-turn organization of talk, the indexical use of discursive strategies and to the rhetorical implications of the accounts, according to the methodology of Discourse Analysis (Edwards and Potter, 1992). Here, I present the general findings, summarizing the analysis around participants' negotiation of their identities as single young mothers. First, I provide an example of participants' construction of the category "single young mother" and the ways that the category is taken to inform judgements about, and treatment of, young mothers. I then provide examples of the ways in which the negative inferences and positions made available by this category are resisted.

Negotiating motherhood

Participating in the ongoing discourse of single young mothers

The following excerpts are taken from a book group discussion held at a community agency that provides housing and resources for pregnant teens, single young mothers and their babies. Alysha, Lydia, Teresa, Amy and Jackie are young mothers; Gail is the group facilitator. The group was asked about the stereotype associated with single young mothers. As the discussion proceeds, Gail asks for clarification and writes the group's responses on a flip chart. This first excerpt provides those responses.

> Amy: *That they're whores…*
> Gail: Whores?
> Lydia: *That they don't know who their baby's father is and they're–*
> Alysha: *They're, uh, they don't know how to raise their kid and–*
> Gail: They don't know-
> Alysha: *They waste their money on drugs and not formula…*
> Gail: Waste money on drugs.
> Alysha: *Well, not on drugs, but they waste their money on-*
> Lydia: *Foolishness*
> Gail: Anything else?
> Lydia: *They live off of welfare and they don't do nothing with their life*
> Alysha: *They're not in school and they probably don't live at home; they got kicked out…*
> Gail: Uneducated.
> Alysha: *But mostly is that they're- they're like sluts and stuff, I think…*
> Gail: So these are all negative things, right?
> Anne: *And they're also not prepared to take care of a child…*
> Alysha: *Yeah.*
> Gail: Okay, not good mothers.
> Alysha: *That we don't know that—I mean they don't know anything.*

Good mothers are defined through discourses of children's needs and of adult responsibilities and relationships (Phoenix, Woollett and Lloyd, 1991; Raeff, 1996). In constructing the generalized expectations associated with single young mother, these participants invoke behaviours and attributes anathema to the moral order of motherhood. The first descriptor, "whores," reinforces the regulatory framework of female sexual reputation (Kitzinger, 1995) in which promiscuity distinguishes the "bad girls" from the good. Following this descriptor, single young mothers are defined through failures to meet the needs of their children ("they don't know how to raise their kid"; "they waste their money on drugs and not formula"), including the taken-for-granted need of providing an identifiable and available father ("don't know who their baby's father is"). Participants relate an understanding of the stereotyped view in which single young mothers lack care and concern, and participate in selfish indulgence (whether "drugs" or "foolishness"). In addition to a characterization which strongly implies "not good mothers," single young mothers are also presented as not good adults. They are expected to fail as contributing members of society ("live on welfare and don't do nothing with their lives," "not in school") and as members in a family network ("got kicked out").

These associations relate the category to disentitlements of both knowledge and experience (MacMartin, 2002), meaning that young mothers are expected not to know or not to do certain activities by virtue of being members in a particular category. This disentitlement undermines category members' status as mothers in that it denies them a core attribute of motherhood—the knowledge of how to rear and nurture a child. In their account of the stereotype, members of this category are positioned as having neither the skills, disposition, nor virtue to adequately mother their children. By relating the deficiencies of "not good mothers" with single young mothers, this characterization enforces common cultural representations of the "good" mother as well as the exclusion of the single and young from that representation.

In this first excerpt, conversational participants maintained the social-problem storyline associated with single young mothers. However, they also avoided implicating these associations and expectations as anything personally meaningful—note the regular absence of self-reflexive pronouns ("I," "we"). In the last line of the excerpt, Alysha makes conspicuous a conversational need to maintain an other-ness quality to the construction of the stereotype with the self-initiated, self repair that changes "we" to "they" ("That we … I mean they don't know anything"). This repair attempts to dissociate the group from a sense of collective identity within this negative construction (a strategy also noted by Prettyman, 2005).

The next excerpt offers an example in which participants' own identities are made relevant. Jackie and Teresa work together to construct a typical experience of being on the bus with one's child, establishing the meaning and relevance of such an experience for a young mother.

> Jackie: *They even watch your child's head … you're holding onto your child and you're like walking by and sitting down and it just kind of moves a bit—it's like "You've got to watch their head! Hold onto their head!"*
> Teresa: *I know.*

In this account, a young mother is told with imperative force: "You've got to watch their head! Hold onto their head!" Supporting an infant's head is a skill learned early in the experience of child care. To command a mother to do something that she should already know disentitles her, positioning her as unskilled and undermining her status. Jackie implies, however, that such a command is unwarranted when she minimizes the provoking movement with the descriptors "just kind of" and "a bit." In her formulation, Jackie appeals to a common understanding. Her use of the second-person pronouns "you" and "your" is colloquial, which avoids the reflexivity of "my" and the formality of "one" yet establishes a sense of a shared general experience (Houghton, 1995). The commonality of this experience is taken up by Teresa, who supports Jackie's account ("I know") and co-constructs the meaning of the event with her completion of Jackie's next turn. Teresa also employs the first person plural, "we," thereby implicating the relevance of negative expectations and associations for herself and the other participants.

In this second excerpt, the greater reflexivity suggests that participants do see themselves positioned by the negative expectations associated with single young mother. While they may have initially avoided positioning themselves when characterizing "not good mothers," the attributes and disentitlements associated with "single young mother" are not irrelevant and may be disadvantageous to their social interactions. When asked how they respond to the comments they encounter on the bus, some answered: "I get mad," "I ignore it," and "I say something"— all accounts of their refusal to take up the undesirable positions made available to them in the actions of others.

Resisting an undesirable identity

Resistance may be a grand and orchestrated event. Or it may be a mundane practice, involving the subtle and complex use of discursive strategies that challenge and subvert an opposing view (Croghan and Miell, 1998). For individuals within marginalized groups, resistance can be accomplished through indirect strategies and delicate management of meaning (Houghton, 1995). While the social-problem characterization resonates in participants' construction of the category "single young mother," these young mothers do not take up this storyline as a legitimate resource for their own identity as mothers. They accomplished their resistance through treating the category more as a topic for discussion and by casting it in terms of stereotypes and discrimination.

As can be seen in first excerpt, participants regularly employed the third-person plural when speaking of category members, making the category an object of discussion and not a resource for identity. In the one instance "we" was used, it was immediately repaired. Retaining "we" would be problematic because it identifies conversational participants as members of an undesirable category, the "not good mothers." "They" is less threatening to participants' identities and accomplishes a dissociation with the negative identity inferences were made available. "They" also turns attention towards generalized others, a practice consistent with the common understanding of a stereotype.

The facilitator contributed to participants' resistance of the negative identities made available by the category "single young mother" by ensuring the discussion was framed in terms of stereotypes. She initially asks "so what's the stereotype" and later summarizes, "Okay so this is a stereotype," then explicitly linked these to discrimination and prejudice. Couching the accounts of "single young mother" within the discourse of stereotypes lessens the inferential impact of participants' description and undermines its value as an authentic representation of category members. In employing "stereotype" to characterize the account, these young mothers can say that single young mothers are whores, bad mothers, and uneducated because they are talking about over-generalizations of a category which do not reflect particular knowledge and which form the basis for unfair judgment. It is also advantageous in that it diminishes participants' responsibility for being originators of the features and characteristics they associate with single young mothers; these can be treated as views held to exist out there in the world, independent of the speaker. Furthermore, employing "stereotype" to characterize an account makes available negative inferences (such as being ignorant or prejudiced) about those who hold these stereotypes to be representative.

In the next excerpt, the stereotype is used to contrast the accomplishments of a young mother in an attempt to revise category associations and reposition category members in a more favourable way. Jackie suggests an alternative storyline:

> *You have to have people who have shown that they are not the stereotype … like I guess from personal experience—now I know I'm the exception to the rule Gail —but, you know, I came from you know a middle, upper middle-class background. I have very supportive family members. My son's father did disappear; I did drop out of high school before I got pregnant. I have finished doing high school, I did my GED.… I'm now taking care of my son, working full-time, taking a course. These are things that—that stereotypically—I should not be able to accomplish and that the fact that I can, along with a lot of other women who are just, you know, just as capable.…*

Jackie's solution to overcoming the social impact of negative category associations is to provide disconfirming evidence ("you have to have people who have shown they are not the stereotype"). To accomplish this task, she positions herself as both exceptional and exemplary. She accounts for being exceptional in her circumstances by invoking an "upper middle-class background" and "supportive family members" as a contrast with the association that young mothers are poor and at odds with their families. Conversely, she constructs herself as exemplary through circumstances that meet category expectations: "my son's father did disappear" and "I did drop out of high school." However these circumstances are positioned as inconsequential to her success as a young mother, as she juxtaposes the stereotype with her own accomplishment. Specifically, she lists activities ("I did my GED," "taking care of my son," "working full-time" and "taking a course") in direct opposition to the expectation that single young mothers are unable to care for their children and are non-contributing members of society. By not being/doing the stereotypical category associations, those attributes and behaviours indicative of "not a good mother," she establishes a position as a good, caring mother.

In the next excerpt, she continues her discussion by directly challenging the assumption that women are innately prepared to have and, by implication, raise a child.

> *...they're so intelligent and they have so many wonderful opinions but people don't see that because they're not willing to get past the fact that they're quote unquote kids having kids which drives me insane honestly because the one thing that I've noticed is that it doesn't matter if you're 15 or 45, having a child is a difficult experience and nobody's ever prepared to have a child.*

She first characterizes young mothers with laudatory phrases ("so intelligent" and "so many wonderful opinions") and undermines "kids having kids" as an appropriate characterization. She then makes the claim that age is inconsequential, that "it doesn't matter" to a woman's preparation for child rearing. Although an age at which bearing children is problematized, "45" is firmly within our cultural conception of adulthood and is accepted as an age at which a woman has the experience and maturity to mother her children. Jackie contests this conception, positioning "15" and "45" as equivalent in an attempt to undermine not only the disentitlement of young mothers but also the conventional understanding that women come with a natural skill to care for children ("having a child is a difficult experience" and "nobody's ever prepared to have a child").

In both these excerpts, Jackie attempts to revise category-based inferences and to challenge typical assumptions by refusing to support age and relationship status as necessary conditions for good mothering. The social force of her account is that it establishes what counts as peripheral and what counts as the central attributes of a good mother. The middle class background and supportive family members didn't prevent her from becoming a young mother. The absence of her child's father and disruption in her education didn't occasion an inability to meet her responsibilities. Age and relationship status are unwarranted considerations; adult responsibilities and meeting children's needs, however, remain at the core. Her resistance is directed against the boundaries around motherhood in which "young" and "single" preclude one from obtaining the status of "good mother."

Conclusion

We well recognize that motherhood is a powerful and influential cultural mechanism (Silva, 1996; Smart, 1996), involved in the attribution of knowledge, abilities, and obligations belonging to women (Glenn, 1994). Motherhood before the age of 20 deviates from normative expectations and frequently makes available negative attributions. However studies such as this one, which have allowed young mothers' own voices and perspectives to dominate analysis, have concluded that young mothers are invested in the good mother identity, subverting and refusing to take up the discourse of "teenage mother." Although frequently up against a background of poverty and stigmatization, they demonstrate the desire to do the best for their children (see McDermott and Graham, 2005).

In the current study, conversational participants used book group discussions to create an alternative spaces in which to resist conventional knowledge about "single young mothers" and formulate a more positive identity. Their version of the features and attributes assigned to the category was aligned with the social-problem characterization. Yet while this characterization seemingly makes available negative inferences and subject positions, speakers actively resisted and undermined this version as a legitimate resource for knowledge about single young mothers. The context of discussing stereotypes allowed them to establish an indeterminate otherness to the category and to cast associated features and expectations as over-generalizations based on ignorance and, therefore, not representative of actual young mothers (and themselves, in particular). Furthermore, book group participants negatively positioned those who hold stereotypical associations by implying ignorance and poor judgment. Stereotypical associations were made to be an inappropriate resource for making inferences about the kind of mothers or women they were.

Resistance can be understood as a strategy of resilience as these young mothers work to establish a place for themselves within the maternal story (McDermott and Graham, 2005). Jackie's speech is a way of accomplishing empowerment in that she overcomes the voices of others to establish an alternative discourse. In this storyline, young mothers are repositioned as good mothers and promoted as intelligent, competent, and caring. From the wrong side of a normative ideal, stereotypical category associations can serve as a place from which to make the move from "other" to "I," with discursive resistance as a strategy to move ideological boundaries.

This article was developed from my Masters thesis research, for which I gratefully acknowledge the guidance and support of Linda Wood, Department of Psychology and Clare MacMartin, Family Relations and Applied Nutrition, University of Guelph. I also thank Linda Wood for comments on an earlier draft. A version of this paper was presented at the at the Association for Research on Mothering conference on Young Mothers in May of 2005.

[1] The executive director of the organization expressed concern about disrupting the regular practices of the book groups, emphasizing that gaining trust and

acceptance could be a challenge. I acted as a participant in each of the groups I attended, taking my turn with each of the associated activities. I also attempted to be as minimally disruptive to the book groups as possible when collecting data. Demographic information about book group participants was thus not formally collected through the distribution of surveys but was obtained through conversations with participants and with the executive director.

References

Akinbami, L. J., T. L. Cheng, and D. Kornfeld. 2001. "A Review of Teen-Tot Programs: Comprehensive Clinical Care for Young Parents and Their Children." *Adolescence* 36: 381-393.

Antaki, C. and S. Widdicombe. 1998. *Identities in Talk.* London: Sage.

Bucholtz, M. and Hall, K. 2005. "Identity and Interaction: A Sociocultural Linguistic Approach." *Discourse Studies* 7: 585-614.

Clumpus, L. 1996. "No-Woman's Land: The Story of Non-Custodial Mothers." *Feminism and Psychology* 6: 237-244.

Coren, E. and J. Barlow. 2003. "The Effectiveness of Individual and Group-based Parenting Programmes in Improving Outcomes for Teenage Mothers and Their Children: A Systematic Review." *Journal of Adolescence* 26: 79-103.

Croghan, R. and D. Miell. 1998. "Strategies of Resistance: 'Bad' Mothers Dispute the Evidence." *Feminism and Psychology* 8: 445-465.

Darisi, T. 2005. "Reflexivity and Resistance in the Identity Construction of Single Young Mothers." Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

Davies B. and R. Harré. 1990. "Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 20: 43-63.

Edwards, D. 1998. "The Relevant Thing About Her: Social Identity Categories in Use." *Identities in Talk*. Eds. C. Antaki and S. Widdicombe. London: Sage. 15-33.

Edwards, D. and J. Potter. 1992. *Discursive Psychology*. London: Sage.

Gergen, K. 1987. "Toward Self as a Relationship." *Self and Identity: Psychosocial Perspectives.* Eds. K. Yardley and T. Honess. New York: Wiley. 53-63.

Glenn, E. N. 1994. "Social Constructions of Mothering: A Thematic Overview." *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*. Eds. E. N. Glenn, G. Chang, and L.R. Forcey. New York: Routledge. 1-32

Harré, R. 1991. "The Discursive Production of Selves." *Theory and Psychology* 1: 51-63.

Houghton, C. 1995. "Managing the Body of Labour: The Treatment of Reproduction and Sexuality in a Therapeutic Institution." *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self.* Eds. K. Hall and M. Bucholtz. New York: Routledge. 121-141.

Jaffee, S., A. Caspi, T. E. Moffitt, J. Belsky and P. Silva. 2004. "Why Are

Children Born to Teen Mothers at Risk for Adverse Outcomes in Young Adulthood? Results from a 20-year Longitudinal Study." *Development and Psychopathology* 13: 377-397.

Kitzinger, C. 2000. "Doing Feminist Conversation Analysis." *Feminism and Psychology* 10: 163-193.

Kitzinger, C.1995. "'I'm Sexually Attractive but Powerful': Young Women Negotiating Sexual Reputation." *Women's Studies International Forum* 18: 187-196.

Kelly, D. M. 1996. "Stigma Stories: Four Discourses About Teen Mothers, Welfare, and Poverty." *Youth and Society* 27: 421-449.

Kelly, D. M. 2000. *Pregnant with Meaning: Teen Mothers and the Politics of Inclusive Schooling*. New York: P. Lang.

Larson, N. C. 2004. "Parenting Stress Among Adolescent Mothers in Transition to Adulthood." *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* 21: 457-476.

Letourneau, N. L., Stewart, M. J. and Barnfather, A. K. 2004. "Adolescent Mothers: Support Needs, Resources and Support-Education Interventions." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 35: 509-525.

Macleod, C. 2001. "Teenage Motherhood and the Regulation of Mothering in the Scientific Literature: The South African Example." *Feminism and Psychology* 11: 493-510.

MacMartin, C. 2002. "(Un)reasonable Doubt? The Invocation of Children's Consent in Sexual Abuse Trial Judgments." *Discourse and Society* 13: 9-40.

McDermott, E. and H. Graham. 2005. "Resilient Young Mothering: Social Inequalities, Late Modernity and the 'Problem' of Teenage' Motherhood." *Journal of Youth Studies* 8: 59-79.

Morgan, M. 2002. "Working the Narrative Unconscious: Positioning Theory and Moral Order." *Narrative Inquiry* 12: 467-475.

Phoenix, A. 1996. "Social Constructions of Lone Motherhood: A Case of Competing Discourses." *Good Enough Mothering? Feminist Perspectives on Lone Motherhood*. Ed. E. B. Silva. London: Routledge. 175-190.

Phoenix, A., A. Woollett and E. Lloyd,eds. 1991. Motherhood: Meanings, Practices and Ideologies. London: Sage.

Potter, J. and Wetherell, M. 1987. *Discourse and Social Psychology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Prettyman, S. S. 2005. "'We Ain't no Dogs': Teenage Mothers (Re)define Themselves." *Geographies of Girlhood: Identities In-Between.* Eds. P. J. Bettis and N. G. Adams. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. 155-173.

Raeff, C. 1996. "A Cultural Analysis of Maternal Self-Conceptions." *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 17: 271-306.

Sacks, H. 1979. "Hotrodder: A Revolutionary Category." *Everyday Language: Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Ed. G. Psathas. New York: Irvington. 7-21.

Sacks, H. 1992. *Lectures on Conversation.* Ed. G. Jefferson. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Silva, E. B., ed. 1996. *Good Enough Mothering? Feminist Perspectives on Lone Motherhood.* London: Routledge. 175-190.

Smart, C. 1996. "Deconstructing Motherhood." *Good Enough Mothering? Feminist Perspectives on Lone Motherhood*. Ed. E. B. Silva. London: Routledge. 37-57.

Stokoe, E. H. 2003. "Mothers, Single Women and Sluts: Gender, Morality and Membership Categorization in Neighbour Disputes." *Feminism and Psychology* 13: 317-344.

Stokoe, E. H. 2004. "Gender and Discourse, Gender and Categorization: Current Developments in Language and Gender Research." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 1: 107-129.

Van Langenhove, L. and R. Harré. 1995. "Cultural Stereotypes and Positioning Theory." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 24: 359-372.

Widdicombe, S. 1998. "'But You Don't Class Yourself': The Interactional Management of Category Membership and Non-Membership." *Identities in Talk*. Eds. C. Antaki and S. Widdicombe. London: Sage. 52-70.

Rachel C. Berman, Susan Silver and Sue Wilson

"Don't Look Down on Me Because I Have One"

Young Mothers Empowered in a Context of Support

In this paper we discuss how a group of young mothers, some married or common-law and some single, who were participants in a focus group that was part of a larger project on participation in community-based child and family programs, engage in empowered mothering by resisting the discourse that "a young mother is a social problem." This discourse includes the components "A baby having a baby" and "A young mum=poverty=a bad mum." These young mothers describe their parents' group as a context that fosters a sense of belonging, and feelings of empowerment. These young mothers are able to resist this discourse in a context of support, a context that is vital for these, and other, young mothers.

Virtually all mothers are subject to the ideology of what it is to be a "good mother" (Ruddick, 2002). In North America this can include being "self-sacrificing, cheerful and loving" (Middleton, 2006: 73). Recent writings about mothering reject this limited discourse and offer other possibilities, or ways of constructing, what it is to be a "good mother." The alternative of "empowered mothering" is one such example (O'Reilly, 2004) and involves mothers drawing upon their agency, autonomy, authenticity, and authority.

While this discourse may be a good fit for some mothers, Amy Middleton (2006) cautions that not all mothers can easily take up empowered mothering. This may be especially true for those women mothering under duress whereby social, financial and relational issues may make this kind of mothering difficult if not impossible; "…women mothering under duress are often subject to the gaze of social support systems who monitor and regulate their mothering…" (74). This includes mothers who live in abusive relationships, mothers who experience mental illness, or women who use substances while pregnant or as mothers (Greaves, Varcoe, Poole, Morrow, Johnson, Pederson and Irwin, 2002; Middleton, 2006).

While not named as such by Middleton (2006) or Lorraine Greaves *et al*. (2002), like the aforementioned mothers, young or teen mothers, are also pathologized, and must deal with the label of "bad mother" more intensely than most other mothers since they are "overtly mothering against the societal standard of 'good mother'" (Middleton, 2006: 78).

These young mothers are constantly put on the defensive. For example, one of the dominant discourses young mothers engage in their relationships with service providers and the child welfare system includes "proving fitness" (Weinberg, 2004). According to Merlinda Weinberg (2004), the young single mothers in her study, like the women mothering under duress that Middleton discusses, had to continually prove their fitness to social service providers who engaged in surveillance of their mothering. These mothers lived under the constant threat of losing their child to a child welfare agency.

Sandra Fonseca and Janice Ahola-Sidaway (2006) demonstrate how the young/teen mothers in their study, stigmatized because of their assumed age and assumed single status, also had to continually prove their fitness to the world in general, a world that also monitors and judges their mothering.

Empowered mothering generally involves engaging in acts of resistance; however, it is difficult to engage in acts of resistance while a person (rightly) feels they are being monitored. Thus, it is not likely that young parents will feel empowered in such a context. Miriam Kaufman (1999) calls for advocacy for young parents, which would include their empowerment, as she argues, "[t]hey may think that they deserve to be treated badly" (33).

Christine Walsh (1999) makes the case that "teenage mothers have become separated from the category of 'mothers' by virtue of their age and perhaps their marital status" (165); they are constructed as a "social problem." Such a construction can be seen as consistent with an "alarmist approach" to teenage motherhood (Tyyskä, 2001: 142). In contrast to this alarmist approach, and in keeping with a critical approach to teen motherhood, which pays "attention to power relations and the interpretations of the young people going through the experience," (Tyyskä, 2001: 143) the young parents in our study were seen to demonstrate a sense of empowered mothering by resisting being positioned as a "social problem." We argue that this resistance was able to take place in a context of support, a context that is vital for these, and other, young mothers.

More specifically, this resistance takes place amongst a group of young parents who know each other via a young parents program they attend together in their local community, and is based on an analysis of a focus group conducted with young mothers—including one young father—in their early 20s in Toronto in 2003. The focus group was conducted as part of a larger study on participation in community-based child and family programs across Canada. A book containing stories of participation has been published, as have a set of evaluation indicators based on those stories (see www.ryerson.

ca/voices for more detail). Some of the parents had partners others did not. Some were married. While the focus group was transcribed verbatim, all names, programs, street names and so forth have been changed for reasons of confidentiality.

The first part of the discussion that follows outlines how the young mothers in our study resist the discourse "a young mother is a social problem." This discourse includes "A baby having a baby" and " A young mum=poverty=bad mum." These parents then describe how the community-based parents' group is a context that enables acts of empowerment and promotes a sense of belonging for young parents. While one of the participants noted felt "Looked down on within the parenting program," he was able to voice this concern in the focus group, which we point out is also (or can often be) a supportive context in and of itself. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the importance of support networks for young parents.

"A young mother is a social problem, or 'looked down on'"

Although not asked to do so by the facilitator, the participants in the focus group explain why they like having a program just for young parents (under 25 years).

> Jenny: *Barb [the staff person who created the program] knew that it would really benefit like a lotta people here to be able to just come 'n have their own time, when there wasn't people that are like 40 years old and just don't get the things that you're going through. Or you know, like…* (Paula finishes Jenny's sentence).
> Paula: *You just feel like you're being looked down…*
> Casey: *… And to understand that, we might not be a minority, because there are lots and lots of single mothers. But we, I feel a lot of the time like I'm being looked down upon, just because…*

Given the negative encounters these young mothers describe it is not surprising that they talk about feeling looked down on, therefore, it was important for these mothers to have a space where they could be together and not have to feel like there was something wrong with them because they are young mothers, or young single mothers. These encounters, and the parents' resistance to be being positioned as a social problem, are outlined in the sections that follow.

"A baby having a baby"

The young mothers in this study are positioned as "social problems" through acts of open hostility because of their youthful appearance. Paula describes the enmity she encounters because she looks young, and, resists this positioning of herself as a social problem and one who should not be a mother in the following excerpt:

> Paula: *Yeah, people ask me all the time "How come you're a baby having a baby?"*
> Facilitator: People what?
> Paula: *People ask you, like "Oh, you're a baby having a baby?" It's like, "No, I'm 21, you know." It's not like I'm eleven years old, walking around with a baby* (everyone laughs).

In Paula's response to this comment, a comment she "hears all the time," she resists being positioned as a social problem/too young to parent. She does so by constructing her identity as that of an adult, and by constructing the people who make this comment to her as fools who cannot tell the difference between her and a "real" child. The group's laughter can be viewed as a demonstration of support for her construction. This discussion of being positioned as a social problem because of a youthful appearance continues with Brenda who states:

> Brenda: *Well, someone walked up to me a couple days ago "Why is a 13-year-old having a baby?"*
> Paula: "…*You little slut, you had a baby when you were 12?" Sometimes I get* so *mad. Oh my God!*
> Jenny: *I have never had anybody say that to me!" And I would probably like…*
> Paula: *Yeah, but you look your age.*

Paula's statement brings in another feature of the "a young mother is a social problem" discourse: young mothers are assumed to be mothers because they are promiscuous, and thus, of poor character. They have deviated from what Kathryn Pyne Addleson (1999) calls the "good-girl life plan," which she asserts is society's "normal" way of procreation. She outlines this plan as follows: education, dating, work, courtship, marriage, sex, family, and then grandchildren. Jenny escapes this derision as she does not look as young as Paula and, therefore, people do not assumed she has deviated from "the plan."

The first author encountered this facet of the social problem discourse first-hand in a park in a middle-class neighbourhood when she was 31 years old. While sitting with her newborn son, she was approached by a woman who told her how disgusting it was that she had a baby and how she had ruined her life by having a child at such a young age!

The one young father in the group talks about the treatment his wife received in the health care system early on in her pregnancy because of her youthful appearance.

> Kevin: *[My wife looks much younger than she is.] And when we went to the doctor's they treat her like she's young. In fact, when we went to the clinic here, the lady, when we, when she got pregnant with my son, the lady*

> *told her "You're too young; have an abortion. I'll give you the clinic number* today. *Have an abortion, because you're too young to have a kid."*
> Paula: *They try to persuade you that way though.*

In their (hostile) attempts to prevent a "social problem," these health care providers can do a great deal of damage. For example, after being treated this way, young parents may chose to miss and rarely schedule regular check ups for themselves (Marialdo and Gutierrez, 2005). Further, such treatment "limits the choices that young parents are given about the type of services they receive and generally makes them feel like they have no say or control over what happens to them" (28).

Just like "looking too young" made some mothers a target for the discourse of "a young mother is social problem," other parents discussed how being considered "chronologically too young" also made them a target. What would be "chronologically too young?" Kaufman (1999) points out that cultural norms for childbearing vary widely, but "[i]n Canada, a young woman is often considered to be an early parent if she is not of an age to have finished high school." (26). Casey describes how the stigma of being considered chronologically too young is ever present.

> *Being a young parent, it's always something that's there. Because whether or not you're a good parent, there's always that person going, "Well oh, you're a young mother…."*

In a more dramatic example, Judy explains what happened to her friend because of her age while she was in labour at the hospital, again a health care context.

> Judy: *My friend was giving birth. In labour for her kid! The nurses at [name of hospital] were telling her to give it up* (there was a pause at this point as no one in the group spoke). *When she was in labour!*
> Erica: *If I was there, I'd slap 'em in the face.*
> Judy: *The whole time she was in labour, because she was a young mum, they were trying to convince her,* the whole time she was in labour, *the whole 18 hours she was in labour, they tried to convince her to give her baby up for adoption.*

The silence of the group is powerful; people are literally at a loss for words. Then, Erica's angry response shows both resistance and support.

Another participant states later in the focus group, "I was 18 when I gave birth, an' they bugged me 'cause I wasn't 19. I had a husband at the time. Whatever." Her statement demonstrates how powerful an "inappropriate" chronological age can be; it even over-rode her marital status. She also demonstrates in her statement how arbitrary a "proper" age for giving birth is. Her demonstration of the arbitrariness of the "proper age" to give birth, and her "whatever," are both ways of resisting.

While a feeling of being positioned as a social problem may fade as young mothers get older, their age still remains salient. For example, at their child's high school graduation they are often the youngest parent there by many years; they are still "out of sync" with other parents (Moody and Ennis-Gregory, 2006).

"A young mum=poverty=a bad mum"

Some of the mothers felt that their age combined with their social class made them open targets for derision in the community, which these participants resist together in the following excerpts.

> Ann Marie: *You do your best and try to be responsible and be the best mom I can be, an' it's like "Why do you have to be poor?" It's like "Did you see me plan that? Am I God?" But now that he's here I have to take care of my responsibilities, so don't look down on me because I have one. Just be thankful that …*
> Karen: *Yeah.*
> Rhonda: *And plus, a lot of us are on assistance or whatever, so, I mean, you have people even "Oh, you have a child…."*

Other participants also discuss the stigma regarding age and social class attached to the centre for parents as voiced by both the larger community, and by some family members.

> Jenny: *I do have something to say though. Actually, it was kind of, a couple minutes ago where you said like, what we think would make the centre better or whatnot. One thing that I find, that my husband and I do have a struggle with, sometimes, is … I think that a lot of … like, I don't like how a lot of, how this place is* classed, *necessarily. Like, you know, if, all of a sudden, you go to "Lots To Do," so you are, like, you don't have a job, you don't do this, you don't do that.*
> Paula: *Oh yeah! I've heard that one personally.*
> Rhonda: *And they look at you like you're like the filth on the ground outside.… like we're trying to beg like a free ride, because they do help us here. They give us stuff here. So a lot of people, even this woman I seen outside. She doesn't look like the high class person. Like, she just looks average like me. But…*
> Facilitator: Who? Who is this?
> Rhonda: *This woman outside one day. And, she knew a couple people that came to this program, and I heard her making a comment down the street…*
> Jenny: *Well, that's the thing. My husband gets really mad sometimes when*

> *I come here, because, he's been on the bus hearing people go [saying negative things about the program]….*

It's important to point out that Jenny demonstrates agency, an aspect of empowered mothering, by resisting her husband's and the wider community's judgments against the program and continuing to attend. Nevertheless, why Jenny's husband and the larger community look at the program as "filth on the ground" needs further discussion.

In Britain, working-class women consistently come up against the discourse that a "good mother is a middle class mother … aspiring and competent mothers with careers and 'successful' children" (Hey and Bradford, 2006: 55). The same could be said for mothers in Canadian society, as is evident by the treatment of these young mothers. They are derided for not living up to the standard of "the good *middle-class* mother." A "good mother" is not poor; a "good mother" is not on social welfare. These parents are perceived as a drain on the public purse, and hence are simultaneously viewed as both bad mothers and a social problem (race was not an issue raised by the participants in our focus group, but see Tyyskä 2001 for further discussion).

Kevin, later in the focus group, concurs that the program has a certain negative reputation in the community, but ties this only to age: "But I'm saying when people in the community see signs with an age on it, they immediately, boom…." He also asserts that this powerful stigma is not going to go away any time soon. Kevin: "There's no way you're gonna change it, from now to 50 years from now."

"Looked down on within the parenting program"

Kevin felt that he was also judged *within* the program. He, not his wife, was the parent who consistently brought his children to the centre, but he now needed/wanted to go back to work, and felt the staff did not see his wife as competent enough to look after their two young children, and were pressuring him to put the children in childcare or not return to work. However, he did not tie this judgement on the part of staff to her age. Rather it appeared to be tied to their perception of her mental health.

This young father, an honourary or "certified" mum as he called himself, also constructed phone calls to his home from staff as surveillance, while many others in the group saw such actions as demonstrating concern or care. He felt further that the staff were policing his parenting, calling Children's Aid when it was unwarranted. He was able to speak up about these concerns in the context of the focus group, and many in the group rallied to support him.

"Speaking up within the program"

However, the majority of participants describe how *within* the program, there was a context of support, a context where participants are able to speak with authority, "having confidence that one's own voice will be listened to"

(Middleton, 2006, 75), an aspect of empowered mothering.

> Rhonda: *Everybody's, no, everybody's feeling is basically out in the open, where, if somebody does have a problem, they're not gonna hide it. Everybody here I know does have a mouth on they'll be like "No, this ain't right."*
> Paula: *Yep.*
> Rhonda: *We all know we're not children. They know they're not our parents. So when we say something they do take it seriously.*

Rhonda constructs the parent-child relationship as one in which the parent does not listen to the child, and contrasts that hierarchical relationship with the kind of relationship the participants and the staff in the program share; a relationship that facilitates the participants both speaking their minds and being heard. What makes this program a context where participants, who are so often objects of derision, who so often feel like "outsider mothers" know that not only can they speak their minds, but that their opinions are important? The facilitator asks the participants to describe the ideal staff person for a program for young parents.

> Facilitator: I wonder if you could describe, for me, what would be sort of the *ideal* worker.
> Paula: *Somebody who has kids. Who is at least, late 20s, early 30s.*
> Brenda: *Who understand what you are going through.*
> Karen: *Someone who's done it by themselves.*
> Erica: *Someone who listens before they judge.*
> Casey: *Exactly. Someone who's done it by themselves. Like Cheryl* [a staff member at the program].
> Jenny: *The older one with glasses, with short hair.*
> Erica: *She was a young mother?*
> Brenda: *Yes, she was a* single *mother.*

They can relate to a staff member who is or was an "outsider mother" too.

Karen explains how the staff help create a context of support:

> *It's not in a sense that they judge either. They listen an' they try to understand, an' they try to help. If there's something wrong, then of course they may judge, but besides that they don't.*

> Facilitator: How would you wanna be told, if something may not feel right?
> Karen: *As a peer, not as an authority figure.*

Participants clearly value the sense of connection and belonging that they feel at the program/centre. They are able to establish meaningful friendships in which the level of trust is such that they can share or expose their vulnerabilities, unlike in contexts outside the program where they often feel under attack. Participants describe the non-hierarchical relationships with staff that evoke a sense of power "with" and not power "over" (Cohen, 1998).

"A sense of belonging"

In this program, the young mothers did not feel like social problems or outsiders. Some of them talked about how they felt when they first came to the centre, how it felt to belong.

> Bethany: *Yeah, when I first came here, I was pregnant 'n everybody was pregnant, and I was in the "Expectant Moms' Nutrition" group, and people would be like "So how far are you? When are you due? Do you have a boyfriend? And you just talk n', like friendly and…*
> Karen: *You don't feel, like everybody's in the same situation….*

As we found in our larger study, these community-based child and family programs effectively create cohesive environments and opportunities for meaningful participation, something that is key for these young mothers. Other researchers have also found staff at these programs work to facilitate relationships among participants, and that these bonds eventually result in feelings of belonging to the community, mutual aid, and spinoff projects (Dunst, 1995; May-Chahal *et al*., 2003; Smythe, 2004).

However, while the participants in this focus group did talk about mutual aid (sharing transportation, babysitting), given the stigma that the participants felt was attached to this program, building a sense of belonging in the community would need to involve the larger and rather monumental task of changing the discourse that "a young mother is a social problem."

The facilitator did not ask about issues of age, the participants raised it. They shared their frustration and anger at being positioned as "social problems." Most described how in contrast to this, in this program, they could speak up and were not judged, but supported. The staff treated them as people worth listening to, which is a key aspect of empowered mothering, and a philosophy of practice that guides most staff in these programs (Silver, Berman & Wilson, 2005). This was a group of people who knew each other and were used to speaking their minds.

It is also worth noting that a focus group is a context where participants may be empowered to speak up (Gibbs, 1997). Thus, the program of mutual support they belonged to *and* the data collection method may have helped to facilitate the participants' group resistance to this oppressive discourse.

Conclusions

Like all mothers, these young mothers need support from family, from friends, from peer groups, and/or neighbourhood groups, however, support is particularly important for these young mothers given that they are mothering under duress by being positioned as a "social problem." As we have attempted to demonstrate in this paper, a young parents group can provide a context of support where parents are able to resist this positioning together. However, many young parents are isolated, disconnected and lack the kind of support network that the young parents in this focus group had (Marialdo and Gutierrez, 2005).

Walsh (1999) argues, "[t]he creation of supportive environments in the form of support groups or neighbourhood groups is an important health promotion strategy [for young mothers]" (173). However, Walsh also points out that "…this strategy poses some risk for young mothers who have incorporated the negative stereotypic image of teenage motherhood and have difficulty becoming part of a group characterized by social stigma" (174). Ironically, the discourse "a young mother is a social problem" may prevent young mothers from becoming involved in groups for young mothers, the very place where they may find the mutual support they need to help them resist and move out of the marginalized space they are thrust into by this prevalent discourse. Efforts must be made by the larger society, in particular by health care workers, teachers, family members, and social service workers, not only the young mothers in this focus group, to resist this discourse.

References

Cohen, M. 1998. "Perceptions of Power in Client/Worker Relationships." *Families in Society* 79 (4): 33-443.

Dunst, C. J. 1995. *Key Characteristics and Features of Community-Based Family Support Programs*. Chicago: Family Resource Coalition.

Fonseca, S. and J. Ahola-Sidaway. 2006. "Mothering Through Prejudice and Stigma: A Strain on the Emotional Health and Well-Being of Teen/Young Mothers." Paper delivered at the 10th Annual Association for Research on Mothering Conference, "The Motherlode: A Complete Celebration of Mothering." Toronto, Ontario, October 26-29.

Gibbs, A. 1997. "Focus Groups." *Social Research Update* 19. University of Surrey. Online: www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU19.html.

Greaves. L., C. Varcoe, N. Poole, M. Morrow, J. Johnson, A. Pederson and L. Irwin. 2002. *A Motherhood Issue: Discourses on Mothering Under Duress*. (Cat.No.SW21-99/2002E-IN. Ottawa, ON: Status of Women Canada. Online: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/0662326791/200210_0662326791_e.pdf.

Hey, V., and S. Bradford. 2006. "Re-engineering Motherhood? Sure Start in the Community." *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 7 (1): 53-67.

Kaufman, M. 1999. "Day-to-day Ethical Issues in the Care of Young Parents and Their Children." *Teen Pregnancy and Parenting: Social and Ethical Issues.* Eds. J. Wong and D. Checkland. Toronto: University of Toronto

Press. 25-37.

Marialdo, L. and R. Gutierrez. 2005, May. *Young Parents Sexual Health Consultation Report*. Toronto: Planned Parenthood of Toronto.

May-Chahal, C., I. Katz and L. Cooper. 2003. "Social Exclusion, Family Support and Evaluation." *Evaluating Family Support: Thinking Internationally, Thinking Critically.* Eds. I. Katz and J. Pinkerton. West Sussex, England: John Wiley and Sons Ltd: 46-69.

Middleton, A. 2006. "Mothering Under Duress: Examining the Inclusiveness of Feminist Mothering Theory." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 8 (1, 2) (Winter/Summer): 72-82.

Moody, L. and M. Ennis-Gregory. 2006. "Celebrating Teen Mothering from Shame to Empowerment." Paper delivered at the 10th Annual Association for Research on Mothering Conference, "The Motherlode: A Complete Celebration of Mothering." Toronto, Ontario, October 26-29.

O'Reilly, A. 2004. "Introduction." *Mother Outlaws Theories and Practices of Empowered Mothering*. Ed. A. O'Reilly. Toronto Ontario. Canadian Scholars Press. 1-28.

Pyne Addleson, K. 1999. "How Should We Live? Some reflections on Procreation." Eds. J. Wong and D. Checkland. *Teen Pregnancy and Parenting: Social and Ethical Issues* Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 81-98.

Ruddick, S. 2002. *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Silver, S., R. Berman and S. Wilson. 2005. *What Participants' Value: Practices and Outcomes at Family Resource Program*s. Toronto: Ryerson University. OnLine: www.ryerson.ca/voices.

Smythe, S. 2004 "Understanding Family Support Programs." *Perspectives in Family Support* 1 (1): 5-14.

Tyyskä, V. 2001. *Long and Winding Road. Adolescents and Youth in Canada Today*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Walsh, C. 1999. "Young Mothers: A Poverty of Support." *Women's Voices in Health Promotion.* Eds. M. Denton, M.A. Hadjukowski-Ahmed, M. O'Connor, and I. U. Zeytinoglu. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. 164-177.

Weinberg, M. 2004. "Young Single Mothers: The Work of Proving Fitness for Parenting." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering.* 6 (2) (Fall/Winter): 79-89

Janice Ahola-Sidaway and Sandra Fonseca

When Schooling is Not Enough

Support, Empowerment and Social Regulation of the Teen Mother in Contemporary Canada

Teen mothers in contemporary Canada face many complex challenges. They are often living in poverty and parenting alone, and are also expected to be working toward completion of their high school education. Some teen mothers are working toward high school completion by accessing specialized community-based organizations offering comprehensive (educational, social, clinical, childcare) day support for themselves and their children. This paper provides a glimpse into the extensive everyday "work" of service providers that goes on behind-the-scenes to help the teen mothers manage the tensions between their maternal role and student/worker role under conditions of poverty. We consider two examples: the popular co-operative education course, which is directly linked to students' academic work and requires them to gain firsthand employment-related experience out in the workplace; and the day-to-day challenges of dealing with State-funded social assistance caseworkers. By focusing on the intersection of gender, education, and class, we highlight how staff worked with and for the young mothers to help them cope with, participate in, and at times be protected from and regulated by, social contexts that were heavily controlled and shaped by others who had greater access to economic, social, and cultural capital.

Teen mothers in contemporary Canada face many complex challenges. They are often living in poverty and parenting alone, and are also expected to be working toward completion of their high school education. Specialized high school programs that aim to help teen mothers to complete their education recognize the importance of offering multidisciplinary support so they can be successful in school. Some teen mothers are continuing their education by accessing specialized community-based organizations offering broad-based support that is designed to serve their varied needs. This paper provides a glimpse into the nature and extent of the everyday "work" carried out by staff within one such organization to help the teen mom manage the inevitable tensions arising from her oftentimes disadvantaged social location as she pursues the goal of high school completion.

This research is part of a larger research program, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, that is exploring the everyday worlds of several welfare state organizations implicated in the lives of young mothers. One aspect of this research initiative considers how state supported welfare-to-work education programs operate as sites of potential tension wherein young women's complex identities as mothers, students, and (future) labour force participants are both constructed and fragmented.

The present paper considers the intersection of gender, education, and class within the context of one specialized community-based organization whose primary mission is to help the teen mother to earn her high school diploma by offering a comprehensive (educational, social, clinical, childcare) day support system for her and her child. The analysis is based on a qualitative case study of one community-based organization in Ontario Canada that provides full-time schooling to approximately 50 eligible young mothers from 16-21 years of age. Over a three-month period data were collected via semi-structured interviews with a range of organizational participants (director; a majority of the teachers and student support workers; mental health counselors, and a sample of students), strategic participant observation, and organizational documents made available to us by the organization. In this paper we limit the focus to two important examples of everyday challenges that illustrate the extensive "work" of service providers that goes on behind-the-scenes to support formal schooling. Our discussion draws from the perspectives of a range of service providers working at the Centre who were most closely involved in the two examples provided.

In this paper we draw from three literature threads: social systems theory, feminist scholarship on classed maternal identities, and neoliberal welfare policies impacting teen mothers' access to social assistance. A social systems perspective helps us to not lose sight of how life inside the organization is simultaneously separated from, connected to, and an integral part of the larger social environment. Such a perspective also draws attention to how organizational policies and practices created and maintained by social actors construct and manage an organization's multiple links to its external environment as well as its own multiple goals, diverse services, and core shared values (Hoy and Miskel, 2005).

The analysis is also informed by feminist scholarship on classed maternal identities. In particular, we draw on current scholars who expand the work of French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu by incorporating a more textured gender lens into his treatise on social class as a generative, lived, embodied construct. Bourdieuian theory helps spotlight inequities in power and privilege linked to social class that are sustained through an individual's relative access to as well as embodiment and deployment of economic capital (money, property), social capital (valuable social connections), and cultural capital (education, socialization within the family, knowledge, certifications) (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, 2002). In the paper we highlight how staff worked with and for the young mothers to help them cope with, participate in, and at times be protected from and regulated by, social contexts that were largely controlled and shaped by others who possessed a greater amount of these forms of symbolic capital.

The paper is also informed by current Canadian work-centred and means-tested social policy that attempts to address poverty among young mothers through welfare-to-work strategies that are intended to help them complete their high school education and become economically self-sufficient. In 1999 the province of Ontario launched the "Learning, Earning, and Parenting" (LEAP) program, a targeted strategy within Ontario Works (Ontario's employment assistance initiative) that is intended "to help young parents aged 16-21 years old complete their [high school] education and to help them and their children become self-reliant" (Government of Ontario, 2001: 5). As implied by its title, the program supports three broad types of activities: schooling activities, activities that support the development of employment-related skills, and activities that foster successful parenting skills. Some LEAP funding is deployed to provide stable institutional supports that have been negotiated at the broader municipal or organizational level—for example, the cost of running shoes in order to participate in a recognized physical education course or the hiring of a certified educational assistant to enhance educational support. Some funding is also available to individual caseworkers to help the young mother client succeed with her individual service plan and fulfill her obligations to the State.

The two examples presented below highlight some of the "work" involved in helping the teen moms cope with competing urgencies and demands linked to their maternal role and student/worker role under conditions of poverty. Our first example provides a specific schooling example—the co-operative education course; and the second example provides a look at how the Centre helped mediate the relationship between the teen mom and LEAP caseworkers.

Co-operative education courses

A very popular form of academic credit at the Centre was the co-operative education course. It provided firsthand employment-related experience out in the workplace. Unlike other academic courses, co-op courses require Ontario students to be out in the workplace and for an extended time (approximately 200 hours) in addition to approximately 30 hours of class time spent preparing for and debriefing about their placement[1] (OME, 2000). Ontario co-op students receive no pay during their placement; and in many ways, the co-op course serves as a kind of gendered and middle-class apprenticeship into the role of "worker citizen."

During their in-school time at the Centre, the co-op teacher would support students in completing a range of employment-related activities designed to help them reflect on possible career options more generally, obtain necessary work credentials, create written documents about their capabilities and past accomplishments, and practice interpersonal skills. She helped the students to access and explore career options websites; she brought in speakers working in specific occupations; and she helped the students to obtain their age of majority card and a police record check (for some jobs), and to prepare for a health and safety test. She also helped the students develop personal resumes and portfolios, complete placement log sheets about their work, practice writing thank you notes, and prepare for their job placement interview through role-playing exercises.

The students tended to "choose" placements located in the service industry, for example, in offices, schools, retail stores, daycare centres, hospitals, and within public or third-sector services. They looked forward to being out in the workforce; and they were also always quite "excited" and "enthusiastic" about their upcoming job and the idea of getting dressed up for work. They "exude an aura, they are bright and shiny" as they get ready for their interview, one staff member remarked.

But once the placement became part of the day's work, tensions could easily start to creep in. Mornings that were already demanding became even more so. Prior to co-op, "just the day-to-day routine is a lot for these women," a counselor observed. She went on to explain:

> *A lot of [the moms] have to get up really early to get themselves together, get their child together, get themselves [and their child] on the bus and get to school … doing what needs to be done every day.… So that's not an easy thing to do. I can barely get here on time and I only have myself to take care of.*

As highlighted above, the field placement component of co-op required students to pay greater attention to their dress and grooming, drop their child off at the Centre, spend additional time traveling to the job, and get to work on time. Also, when they or their baby were ill, they were expected to phone the daycare, the teacher, and the placement. "With the co-op, missing a few days of work without calling in is a big thing; you're fired," a counselor explained. Staff tried to "teach them not just to follow through with the school expectations but [also] the work expectations. That's a heavy load. And that's difficult for students." What's more, being out on co-op meant they were cut off from daily Centre support, for example informal contact with the student support workers, supportive peers, and subsidized lunch. Roberta Hamilton, among others, argues that there is a "fundamental incompatibility between reproductive labour and childcare, on the one hand, and paid work on the other… [and there are] profound consequences of this incompatibility" (2005: 134). In many ways, the teen moms who were working to complete their co-op credits, and the Centre staff who tirelessly supported them, lived this fundamental incompatibility and its consequences on a daily basis.

Over the years the Centre had also worked hard to reduce co-op planning uncertainties by establishing favourable linkages with cooperating organizations. Students could more easily be placed, and the receiving workers were familiar with and more tolerant of the demanding circumstances of the students. For example, if a student had a problem with body odor or dental hygiene, employers were kind and tolerant. Nonetheless, the co-op placement itself could sometimes still become a source of tension. Some students found themselves in a situation they felt was unfair and unjust and they would quit. Service jobs requiring them to work with the public, for example in a retail store or interacting with the larger community, could create tension. A counselor explained:

> *When you go to work you're expected to dress in a certain way. And when you [work in] a store, you're expected to dress in … the clothes [that] the stores sell. They don't have a lot of money to go out shopping for a wardrobe. So that creates problems in the workplace, coming inappropriately dressed. Another problem is a job where they have to interact with the community; [or] if their co-op is in a store, their problem [might be] dealing with clients.… So social skills … may create a problem for them. Their lack of social skills. So those sorts of things … they have difficulty with, and that's why they're here; to be able to learn what the expectations are.*

The above excerpt spotlights how a seemingly straightforward co-op placement can bring to the surface latent gendered and class-related tensions that need to be managed by the young workers. Research into women's experiences in frontline service work, particularly low-status low-paid jobs, has highlighted the hidden "emotional labour" challenges experienced by female workers (e.g., Paules, 1991; Wharton, 1999). By emotional labour we mean "the effort involved in displaying organizationally sanctioned emotions" by the worker when interacting with clients or customers that is considered an "important component of their work" (Wharton, 1999: 160). Specific to young women, a recent study involving middle-class teen women working in frontline retail jobs found that employers and even customers monitored and regulated the young workers' gender "performance" in ways that sometimes undermined the young workers' sense of authenticity and power (Ahola-Sidaway and McKinnon, 2003). In the present study, the comments by the staff member suggest that the young women may experience similar tensions in their frontline service-related co-op placements. What's more, these tensions appear to be exacerbated by noticeable clues that are attributed to a perceived deficiency in their class status ("inappropriate" dress and "lack" of social skills). Steph Lawler (2005), drawing from Bourdieu's concept of habitus (an individual's embodied and preconscious beliefs, appreciations, dispositions that are both durable and generative), makes this point more generally. She argues that classed femininities become socially embodied within individuals through our manner of speaking, the way we dress and carry ourselves, our attitudes, and so on, which in turn help confer or (in the present case) deny authority.

For the co-op students, perhaps one of the most cathartic group activities taking place at the Centre was the weekly co-op debriefing session. A staff member described the time as an opportunity to reflect on "the good, the bad, and the ugly." The tone of the sessions seemed particularly conducive to building trust and sharing challenges. Discussions unfolded alongside relaxing nonacademic activities such as rug making, sewing, doll-making and the like.

Relations with Ontario Works (social assistance)

One of the major stressors for Centre students was the ongoing struggle of living far below the poverty line while trying to complete their high school education. "They're not making enough money to be able to come to school and live their life … the holistic approach is very important…. It's not just about education here," explained a staff member. Most students were on social assistance, a meager monthly allowance made worse by high rental costs and a waiting list for social housing that was measured in years. Centre students, because they were young parents enrolled in a high school program, qualified for some very limited additional support (through the province's Learning, Earning, and Parenting Program) to help defray personal schooling-related costs (e.g., additional school supplies, transportation). At the same time, this supplement was not a fixed entitlement. It was instead parceled out at the discretion of the student's Ontario Works caseworker generally on an ad hoc case-by-case month-by-month basis for a specific purpose that could be interpreted by the caseworker as a necessary positive incentive to foster schooling persistence and successful parenting. This ambiguity made it difficult for the client to know what services the program might support, a finding also reported by Mary Anne Jenkins (2003) involving other young mothers participating in the LEAP program in another Ontario city.

Each student on social assistance had her own Ontario Works caseworker. For its part, however, the Centre had long recognized the importance for its success of intervening in the caseworker-client relationship. It went to great lengths to cultivate a trusting working relationship with the local offices and specific caseworkers; and new students were encouraged to get reassigned to one of these caseworkers. One staff member, who had worked at the Centre for several years, was permanently assigned as liaison. Each week the students were encouraged to prepare their questions for their caseworker prior to her weekly visit to the Centre. Although the student remained the primary contact, this batch-processing strategy meant that Centre staff came to know the caseworkers; it helped local staff stay more aware of tensions; it reduced the number of phone calls by clients to their caseworker; and it reduced the amount of time students would have otherwise spent away from the Centre meeting with their caseworker.

The staff liaison's role involved much more than the time and place coordination, however. The following excerpt highlights the pivotal and complex role she played within this client-caseworker relationship that relied so much on an informal means-tested model:

> *We have a partnership with [the LEAP caseworkers]. They trust us; I trust them. It's based on individual need, so it's not…cut and dry… it's based on request. There's still things that I'm not 100 percent aware of, but there's still things that we can be questioning and asking for our moms. When a girl…asks "Do you think LEAP will cover it?" I always say, "Just ask your worker; don't be shy; always ask." They will get on the phone and bug and bug and bug. It's a great advocacy skill, [and] if they're asking every month for the same thing, it's going to be permanently put on [as a legitimate form of support]…. It can be difficult sometimes [to convince the LEAP worker there is a need], especially since a lot of these mums are so poor … can't make ends meet. So when they ask and they're denied and I really feel it's a cause I could advocate for them, I don't mind picking up the phone and saying, "really, anything you could do for this mum…." Again it's making sure they don't take advantage of the system; but if I know they're not coming to school because they spent their bus pass money on food that month, and they're going to lose their spot here because they're not in school, I don't mind picking up the phone and saying, "Okay, for this month, let's try and help her out a bit more." And I think that's what [the caseworkers] need, another professional working closely with them to make them feel like, "Okay, sure, we'll give them the little bit extra this month."*

As illustrated above, being dependent on social assistance meant the teen moms were, to borrow from Amy Middleton (2006), "under the scrutiny and gaze of these external [state] bodies which often view [recipients] as cases" rather than as autonomous individuals (77). What's more, the caseworker appears to have had considerable discretion in deciding whether a request had merit, so much so that even an experienced Centre worker did not feel completely knowledgeable about what would be deemed a reasonable request. We also observe that the Centre staff member had cultivated a privileged social location vis-à-vis the caseworker, allowing her to bridge the class and age divide by serving as a knowledge and power broker between the government bureaucracy worker and the young client. At times she became a compelling advocate for ad hoc client support ("…anything you could do for this mum…") an active coach ("…don't be shy; always ask…"), and even a catalyst for policy change on behalf of the local client population ("…it's going to be permanently put on…"). Notably, she felt that her privileged social location as a trusted professional was authoritative enough to sometimes reverse a claim made by a student that had been disqualified by the caseworker, implying that she was able to find common linguistic and social ground with the caseworker as a discussion among professionals. Lawler makes this point more generally when she writes:

> Speech (authoritative or otherwise) goes on between the speaker and the listener. It is in this relationship… that authority either inheres or fails to inhere. Authority cannot simply be claimed by the speaker; it must also be granted by the listener. This is not a question of individual choice, but of doxic rules [shared core values, beliefs, discourses]: there must be sufficient legitimation granted to the speaker. (2005: 123)

The excerpt also highlights how the staff member served as a kind of first-level monitor and regulator of the LEAP policy by sorting out in her own mind what she believed was a "real" need among clients whom she knew were living in persistent poverty and "can't make ends meet." In other words, she had cultivated what Bourdieu calls a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) or what Terry Lovell calls "'the practical sense—the ability to function effectively within a given social field" (2000: 12). What's more, she had learned, and was attempting to teach the young moms, how to participate in this field of action that operated according to its own sense of inner logic which could oftentimes be quite arbitrary and contingent (McNay, 2000).

Concluding comments

This paper has considered the intersection of gender, education, and class by focusing on some of the everyday challenges facing teen mothers and their service providers within one specialized multi-service community-based centre designed to help the teens complete their high school education. We have considered two examples, one directly linked to their academic work and the other directly linked to their social location as individuals receiving social assistance. Through these examples we have attempted to highlight some of the ways that the Centre and its staff managed important tensions and contradictions as it worked to serve its clientele.

Contemporary Canadian society rests on a work-centric ideology, which in large measure defines good citizenship and social contribution in terms of one's ability to be financially self-sufficient. This ideology is reflected in high school co-operative education programs that provide students with firsthand workplace experience. It is also reflected in State welfare policies that attempt to manage poverty through means-tested welfare-to-work programs. For teen mothers, and the professionals who serve them, this prevailing ideology introduces numerous tensions that require persistent effort, struggle, and courage. This paper has attempted to offer glimpses into how staff at one centre serving teen mothers undertook this very challenging mission.

An earlier and substantively different version of this paper was presented at the Canadian Association for the Study of Women and Education (CASWE) Institute

Sixth Bi-annual Conference at York University, Toronto, May 30-June 1, 2006.

[1] These figures are referring to two-credit cooperative education courses. The Ontario Ministry of Education encourages multiple-credit courses "because they afford the additional learning time at the placement that is often necessary to enable students to gain the practical experience and the practice they need to fully achieve course expectations" (2000: 29).

References

Ahola-Sidaway, J. and M. McKinnon. 2003. "Keeping a Happy Face: Managing Emotions in Teen Jobs." *Atlantis* 28 (1) (Fall): 36-47.

Bourdieu, P., and L. Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Government of Ontario. 2001. "Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) Directive 39.0." Ontario Works. September. Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services. Online: www.mcss.gov.on.ca/NR/MCFCS/OW/English/39_0.pdf. Accessed October 15, 2006.

Hamilton, R. 2005. *Gendering the Vertical Mosaic: Feminist Perspectives on Canadian Society.* 2nd ed. Toronto: Pearson-Prentice Hall.

Hoy, W.K., and C.G. Miskel. 2005. *Educational Administration: Theory, Research, and Practice*. 7th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Jenkins, M. A. 2003. "Young Single Mothers and Welfare Reform." *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work* 18: 163-173.

Lawler, S. 2005. "Rules of Engagement: Habitus, Power and Resistance." *The Sociological Review* 52 (S2): 110-128.

Lovell, T. 2000. "Thinking Feminism With and Against Bourdieu." *Feminist Theory* 1 (1): 11-32.

Middleton, A. 2006. "Mothering Under Duress: Examining the Inclusiveness of Feminist Mothering Theory." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 8 (1, 2): 72-82.

McNay, L. 2000. *Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Ontario Ministry of Education (OME). 2000. "Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning." Online: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/coop/cooped.pdf. Accessed October 15, 2006.

Paules, G. F. 1991. *Dishing It Out: Power and Resistance Among Waitresses in a New Jersey Restaurant.* Philadelphia: Temple University.

Webb, J., T. Schirato and G. Danaher. 2002. *Understanding Bourdieu.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Wharton, A. S. 1999. "The Psychosocial Consequences of Emotional Labor." *Emotional Labor in the Service Economy. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Eds. R. J. Steinberg and D. M. Figart. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 158-176.

Gemma Briggs, Marni Brownell and Noralou Roos

Teen Mothers and Socioeconomic Status

The Chicken-Egg Debate

It is well established that the prognosis for teen mothers is bad. They experience lower levels of educational attainment, lower income potential, and poverty. What remains unknown is the extent to which these poor outcomes stem from the teen birth or from the disadvantage faced by these young mothers prior to childbearing. This is termed the chicken-egg controversy and evidence pertinent to sorting out this controversy is reviewed. Should programs focus on efforts to delay child birth or should they target the more substantive socioeconomic issues that surround those who become teen mothers? Effective strategies for addressing both tactics are summarized. Findings suggest the need to broaden teen pregnancy prevention approaches to include efforts to engage students academically. We conclude that the chicken-egg controversy is unresolved, and importantly, that determining which came first is not imperative for public policy efforts. Teen pregnancy and parenting must be accorded a firm position on any Canadian policy agenda focused on improving outcomes for Canada's youth.

Key sequence-related controversies evidenced in the current literature focus on the outcomes of early childbearing: Do teen mothers' lower levels of educational attainment stem from dropping out of school before or after becoming pregnant? Do poverty and its related consequences precede or follow teen motherhood? These controversies are important and make the literature in this area somewhat confusing as the optimal time and the most advantageous strategies for intervention are unclear.

The purpose of this review is to summarize the literature as it pertains to these two controversies, to provide a review of the precursors to young motherhood, and describe effective strategies for improving outcomes for teenage mothers. Background information is included to frame the problem of teenage pregnancy in Canada and describe common consequences. The outcome-oriented strategies that are presented encompass preventing teen pregnancy and teen mothers' further pregnancies, welfare reform and raising socioeconomic status (SES) levels. This paper seeks to bring the above controversies to the forefront for further consideration by academics, government, policy makers, and program planners. To anticipate our conclusion: the resolution of these controversies is not necessarily essential to the development of targeted policies and programs to benefit this subpopulation of at-risk youth.

Methods

Multiple databases were searched using identical search terms including: Biological Abstracts, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, CINAHL (nursing and allied health), EMBASE Pediatrics, EMBASE Rehab and Physical Medicine, ERIC (Education), General Sciences Full Text, PsycInfo, PubMed, Social Sciences Full Text, Social Work Abstracts, and Web of Science. Search restrictions included a publication year of 1985 or later and restricting keyword searches to the title or abstract. Sample key words include "age at first birth", "teen* mother", "adolescen* mother", behavio*, "socioeconomic status", and income. Use of an asterisks permits all possible endings after the last letter. Searches were also conducted using medical subject headings [MeSH], Google and Google Scholar, and targeted websites were visited.

Background

National statistics

Statistics Canada data report (1992-2002) a stable decline in pregnancy rates for younger (15-17) and older (18-19) teens (Dryburgh, 2002). The teenage birth rate has also fallen over the past decade and the proportion of children born to teenagers has never been very high. Although one-fifth of First Nations births are to teens, the national proportion of teen births is much less (Health Canada, 2003). While trends are moving in the desired direction it is clear that teenage parenting often has very negative impacts on both the mother and child.

General outcomes for teen mothers

In general, young mothers relative to older mothers (i.e., in their 20s) have been found to have less favourable outcomes in terms of education, economics, family and personal variables. Compared with girls from similar backgrounds, teen mothers who had one child reported lower levels of educational attainment and employment (Bradley, Cupples and Irvine, 2002). Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school (Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn, 1994; Hotz, McElroy and Sanders, 1997), have less formal education (Hardy *et al.*, 1997; Hotz, McElroy and Sanders, 1997; Nanchahal *et al.*, 2005), and are less likely to enrol in post-secondary education (Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn and Morgan, 1987; Luster and Mittelstaedt, 1993). They are less likely to be employed, to have stable employment, or have high earnings; and more likely to be living in poverty or receiving welfare, and to experience welfare over long periods (Attico and Hartner, 1993; Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn, 1994; Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn and Morgan, 1987; Hardy *et al*., 1997; Hayes, 1987; Luster and Mittelstaedt, 1993). Adolescent mothers are more likely to have subsequent children, and larger family size contributes to the scarcity of resources within the family (Downey, 1995; Maynard, 1997). Teen mothers are also less likely to be happily married/in a stable marriage and spend more time as a lone parent (Attico and Hartner, 1993; Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 1998; Hardy *et al*., 1997; Hotz, McElroy and Sanders, 1997; Maughan and Lindelow, 1997). In Canada, lone parents were identified as a subgroup vulnerable to persistent poverty (Hatfield, 2004). Psychological factors for teenage mothers include an increased likelihood of mental or general health problems relative to older mothers, and higher rates of depression and psychiatric symptoms (Leadbeater, Bishop and Raver, 1996; Maughan and Lindelow, 1997; Williams *et al*., 1997).

Precursors to adolescent pregnancy and childbearing

Negative circumstances may result from teen pregnancy or drive teens to become pregnant (Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 1998). Background factors that can predispose adolescents to become pregnant include socioeconomic status (Abrahamse, Morrison and Waite, 1988; Brewster, Billy and Grady, 1993; Hobcraft and Kiernan, 2001; Quinlivan *et al*., 2004). For instance, young women who live in poverty, deprived conditions or come from less privileged upbringings are more likely to become pregnant while a teenager (Botting, Rosato and Wood, 1998; Hobcraft and Kiernan, 2001). Many family and individual factors can contribute to teen pregnancy likelihood including having a parent with low levels of education, having lower expectations for the future, and having less confidence in the likelihood of high school graduation (Young *et al*., 2004). In addition, a teen's behaviour (e.g., low educational performance, conduct problems, sexual risk-taking, behavioural problems) can play a role in her teenage parenting likelihood (Woodward, Horwood and Fergusson, 2001). Other individual variables contributing to teen pregnancy and parenting in girls include being in foster care, idealizing pregnancy, illicit drug or alcohol use, and mental health problems (Quinlivan *et al*., 2004; Wellings *et al*., 1999).

Additional family factors can impact non-marital childbearing among girls including a history of parental separation or divorce (Cherlin, Kiernan and Chase-Lansdale, 1995; Quinlivan *et al*., 2004). Being raised in a lone parent family, being exposed to family violence in early childhood, and having a teen mother (Maynard, 1997; Quinlivan *et al*., 2004; Wellings *et al*., 1999) also increases the risk of adolescent pregnancy and childbearing for young women.

Current Controversies

Controversy 1: Teen Childbearing and Educational Achievement

Adolescent mothers are more likely to have an interrupted education, and some drop out of school permanently. Less than a third of teen moms in the U.S. complete high school and only 1.5 percent receive a college degree prior to 30 years of age (Hotz, McElroy and Sanders, 1996). A key issue with teen mothers' truncated education is sequence. It remains unclear whether teenage mothers are more likely to have been performing poorly, dropped out and then become pregnant or whether becoming pregnant is a catalyst for quitting school.

In one study, a third of teen mothers were reported to have quit school *prior* to becoming pregnant (Maynard, 1995). A study that controlled for lack of expectation of education or training, expectation of parenting, sexual knowledge and confidence, found dislike of school to be associated with an increased risk of teen pregnancy (Bonell *et al.*, 2005). In the United States, teens who dropped out of school had a greater likelihood of early sexual initiation, not using contraception, becoming pregnant, and having a child (Brewster, Billy and Grady, 1993; Manlove, 1998; Mauldon and Luker, 1996). Young women who become teenage parents tend to have lower grade point averages, more school absences, and more trouble with school work—prior to pregnancies, than their peers, which is indicative of school disengagement (Manlove, 1998; Moore and Manlove, 1998). Many later obtain their General Education Diploma (GED) yet this does not completely close the gap (Henshaw, 1998). A 20-year follow-up of school-aged mothers found factors important to long-term success (education and employment/spousal support) included completing more school prior to the pregnancy, remaining in school at 26 months post-partum without further pregnancy, more active participation in an intervention program, and only having one to two more children overall (Horwitz *et al.*, 1991). Furthering their own education enables teenage mothers to provide a better learning environment for their children (Kinard and Reinherz, 1987).

Controversy 2: Teen Childbearing and Poverty

Poverty stems in part from the fact that teen mothers are less likely to graduate from high school and have fewer employment options (Campaign for Our Children Inc; The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1999). If employed, teen mothers work more hours at lower wages than older mothers (Hoffman and Foster, 1997; Hotz, McElroy and Sanders, 1997). Teenage mothers have been shown to be twice as likely to be dependent on welfare (Maynard, 1997; Olausson *et al.*, 2001), relative to older mothers, even when comparing those of the same SES level.

With poverty, it is again difficult to isolate sequence: did disadvantage lead to pregnancy or does teen motherhood result in impoverished life chances? Teens living in poverty and deprivation are more likely to become pregnant and teen parents often have lower lifetime earnings (Botting, Rosato and Wood, 1998; Combs-orme, 1993; Singh and Darroch, 2000). Clearly, early pregnancy and poverty are closely correlated (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2000). Some studies attribute poverty to early childbearing (Attico and Hartner, 1993; Hayes, 1987) and others conclude that teen mothers are more likely to come from economically or socioeconomic disadvantaged families (Abrahamse, Morrison and Waite, 1988; Geronimus and Korenman, 1992; Young *et al.*, 2004). For the latter, a selection bias may be operating with poorly functioning youth more prone to view parenthood as a viable option (Fessler, 2003). UK Census data illustrate that teen motherhood is ten times more likely for girls from the lowest compared to the highest social class (Botting, Rosato and Wood, 1998).

Improving outcomes

Strategies to improve the outcomes for teen mothers have been suggested in many jurisdictions.

Teen pregnancy prevention

In Canada, reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy, particularly for unintended pregnancies, would benefit families, society, and the economy. Some teens view early childbearing as a logical solution to their current predicament of disadvantage and narrow perceived options for the future (Furstenberg, 2003; Quinlivan, 2004; SmithBattle, 2005, 2000; Stevens-Simon and Lowy, 1995). Here, countering teens' perceptions of the benefits of early motherhood and helping them find meaning in their current lives is important, as is targeting academic underachievers early on (Stevens-Simon and Lowy, 1995). Prevention programs promote academic success by enhancing perceptions of future options, focusing on empowerment, and providing a realistic alternative to teen childbearing (Bissell, 2000; Young *et al.*, 2004). Programs that engage high school students in activities such as volunteering have proven beneficial in reducing teen pregnancy relative to teen controls (Allen *et al.*, 1997). Strategies that target abstinence, safe sex practices and condom use are relevant for teen girls who do not wish to become pregnant (Rogers and Dilworth, 2002). Abstinence is strongly encouraged by the US federal government yet a systematic review of randomized controlled trials showed that it is not sufficient as a single method; it can be beneficial when paired with providing information on contraception (Bennett and Assefi, 2005; National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2002). Efforts to identify and engage at-risk youth in their education while providing them with hope for a successful future show promise. A framework proposed by Health Canada focuses on "pro-action" (building resilience for the disenfranchised), "postponement" (delaying sexual initiation, promoting safe sex, access to condoms for those not wanting to get pregnant), and "preparation/support" (for teenage mothers to postpone further pregnancies and maximize healthy child development) (Rogers and Dilworth, 2002). Relevant to the latter, providing parental support and school-based child care showed promise for keeping parenting teenage girls in school, academically engaged, and discouraging further pregnancies soon after (Sadler *et al.*, 2007).

Effective programs included those targeting education, youth development initiatives, school and community clinics, and providing contraceptive education with broad sexuality education and skills training (Elfenbein and Felice, 2003; Franklin and Corcoran, 2000; National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2002). Other beneficial teenage pregnancy prevention programs are providing information, advice and skill building, providing access to effective contraception, community coalition programs and collaborative efforts (As-Sanie, Gantt and Rosenthal, 2004; Ayoola, Brewer and Nettleman, 2006; Card, 1999; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002).

Welfare-based solutions

In the past, income assistance has been viewed by welfare opponents as promoting subsequent pregnancies (Stewart, 2003). The 1996 U.S. welfare policy act, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa) restricts benefits to unmarried teen parents and provides state bonuses for decreases in non-married births. After two years of receiving assistance, individuals must work 20 or more hours per week, often in low wage jobs given their educational level and lack of work experience, and young teen mothers must reside with their parents in order to continue receiving welfare. The rationale behind forced co-residency is that teen mothers living at home are more likely to return to school, graduate high school, be employed and not be on welfare (Cooley and Unger, 1991). This living arrangement has been shown to be beneficial in the child's early years; yet it can increase conflict in the home and result in poorer parenting (Chase-Lansdale, Brooks-Gunn and Zamsky, 1994; Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 1998; Horwitz *et al.*, 1991), likely more so when cohabitation is mandated for welfare receipt as opposed to desired by both parties. The forced employment provision may be detrimental to teen mothers furthering their education and finding decent employment. Early interruption or termination of a teen mother's education begets a lower earning potential and poverty (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2000). Canada recently introduced a Universal Child Care Benefit which provides $100 per month for each child less than six years of age, and is intended to support family child care choices via direct financial support. However, families are not held accountable for how the money is spent.

Raising socioeconomic status

Others argue that effective policies and programs must focus on the socioeconomic adversity faced by young women to reduce adolescent pregnancy rates and improve the outcomes experienced by these mothers and their children (Bissell, 2000). Reducing poverty would represent a significant undertaking. However, given the potential of this strategy to not only lower the number of adolescent pregnancies (World Health Organization, 2004) but to enhance well-being for the population (Hertzman and Power, 2006), it should not be discounted.

Limitations of the Literature

Measurement issues, including selection bias and uncontrolled heterogeneity (e.g. family factors), have plagued both cross-sectional and controlled studies relevant to teenage childbearing (e.g. Grogger, 1997; Hotz, McElroy and Sanders, 1997; Maynard, 1995), making the findings less potent (Fessler, 2003). More recent studies that control for family factors have been questioned in terms of whether the controls applied are adequate. Also, the use of multiple methods for defining young mothers is a limitation of the literature as it clouds the ability to draw concrete conclusions across studies. Many researchers favour the use of mother's age at first birth (Hoffman, Foster and Furstenberg, 1993; Jaffee, 2002; Maynard, 1996) yet others calculate mother's age at the birth of the study child.

Conclusions

Early childbearing typically jeopardizes the trajectory to adulthood by either interrupting the mother's education, or by making it difficult for a high school dropout to return to school, thereby limiting her income earning potential and necessitating welfare use or low-level employment. In addition, a young mother living in poverty is likely to experience difficulties in trying to provide her child(ren) with a good start in life, particularly if she is also undereducated and has few resources available to her. Some researchers have concluded that the link between teen mothers' poor outcomes and early childbearing has been overstated (Fessler, 2003; Hotz, McElroy and Sanders, 1996). While recent research attributes less of the disparity to being a teen parent per se and more to background and SES factors, teen mothers have a poor prognosis, and early childbearing remains a significant policy issue.

The strategy that seems to have the most merit is to prevent young girls from becoming pregnant in the first place. Similarly, The American Academy of Pediatrics (2005) stresses primary prevention of initial pregnancy and secondary prevention of subsequent pregnancies for adolescents. Although, would strategies aimed at delaying childbirth have a significant impact on outcomes for young mothers? Some researchers state that increasing the average age at first birth is not likely to significantly enhance the SES of disadvantaged mothers and their children (Bailey, 2005; Geronimus and Korenman, 1992). However, there is not enough solid evidence to justify abandoning this policy avenue, and delaying births may help narrow the poverty gap (Hoffman, 1998).

This review clearly shows that teen motherhood is a multi-faceted issue that extends beyond sexual matters to include the need for educational qualifications and educational goals to curtail early childbearing (Wellings *et al.,* 2001; Nanchahal *et al.* 2005). The significant proportion of teens that becomes pregnant before school leaving and the research supporting family background as a precursor highlight the need to move beyond sexual education. One strategy would be to address levels of educational attainment and academic engagement. Providing teen mothers with the resources and assistance to succeed academically makes sense (SmithBattle, 2006). Youth development programs are proving to be an effective means to prevent teen pregnancy (Brindis,, 2006). These programs seek to foster in youth a positive future outlook within a supportive environment. Policy makers should also direct attention to current teenaged parents and their need for further education and subsequent pregnancy prevention.

It is evident that background and socioeconomic factors play a role in both teenage pregnancy and adolescent childbearing. Further research is needed to clarify the relative contribution of teen motherhood to a teen's long term economic outcomes compared with the contribution of her own family background (often of poverty and low educational expectations). However, the development of effective policy directed at at-risk adolescents, teenage mothers, and preventing teenage pregnancies is not contingent on the resolution of the chicken-egg debate. Multiple strategies—delaying parenting, increasing and improving educational opportunities, targeting the disenfranchised, and tackling poverty—all hold potential for improving outcomes for Canada's young women choosing to parent.

References

Abrahamse, A.F., P.A. Morrison, and L.J. Waite. 1988. "Teenagers Willing to Consider Single Parenthood: Who Is at Greatest Risk?" *Family Planning Perspectives* 20: 13-18.

Allen, J. P., *et al.* 1997. "Preventing Teen Pregnancy and Academic Failure: Experimental Evaluation of a Developmentally Based Approach." *Child Development* 68: 729-42.

American Academy of Pediatrics. 2005. "Adolescent Pregnancy: Current Trends and Issues." *Pediatrics* 116: 281-286.

As-Sanie, S., A. Gantt, and M. S. Rosenthal. 2004. "Pregnancy Prevention in Adolescents." *American Family Physician* 70 (8): 1517-24.

Attico, N.B., and J.A. Hartner. 1993. "Teenage Pregnancy: Identifying the Scope of the Problem." *Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants* 6: 711-8.

Ayoola, A. B., J. Brewer, and M. Nettleman. 2006. "Epidemiology and Prevention of Unintended Pregnancy in Adolescents." *Primary Care* 33 (2): 391-403.

Bailey, P. 2005. "Teenage Pregnancies: Is the High Rate of Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood in the UK a Public Health Problem?"*Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care* 31 (4): 315-9.

Bennett, S. E., and N. P. Assefi. 2005. "School-Based Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Programs: A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36 (1): 72-81.

Bissell, M. 2000. "Socioeconomic Outcomes of Teen Pregnancy and Parenthood: A Review of the Literature." *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 9 (3): 191-204.

Bonell, C., *et al*. 2005. "The Effect of Dislike of School on Risk of Teenage Pregnancy: Testing of Hypotheses Using Longitudinal Data from a Randomised Trial of Sex Education." *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 59 (3): 223-30.

Botting, B., M. Rosato, and R. Wood. 1998. "Teenage Mothers and the Health of Their Children." *Population Trends* 93: 19-28.

Bradley, T., M. E. Cupples, and H. Irvine. 2002. "A Case Control Study of a Deprivation Triangle: Teenage Motherhood, Poor Educational Achievement and Unemployment." *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health* 14 (2): 117-23.

Brewster, K.L., J.O.G. Billy, and W.R. Grady. 1993. "Social Context and Adolescent Behavior: The Impact of Community on the Transition to Sexual Activity." *Social Forces* 71: 713-40.

Brindis, C. D. 2006. "A Public Health Success: Understanding Policy Changes Related to Teen Sexual Activity and Pregnancy." *Annual Review of Public Health* 27: 277-95.

Campaign for Our Children Inc. *The Effects of Teen Pregnancy.* Maryland: Accessed September 2006 at http://www.cfoc.org/EducatorRes/index.cfm?ID=2662&binShowBack=True&idContentType=670.

Canadian Institute of Child Health (K. Dilworth). 2000. *Appendix A: Literature Review (Teen Pregnancy).* Ottawa, ON: Public Health Agency of Canada.

Card, J. J. 1999. "Teen Pregnancy Prevention: Do Any Programs Work?" *Annual Review of Public Health* 20: 257-85.

Chase-Lansdale, P. L., J. Brooks-Gunn, and E. S. Zamsky. 1994. "Young African-American Multigenerational Families in Poverty: Quality of Mothering and Grandmothering." *Child Development* 65 (2): 373-93.

Chase-Lansdale, P. L., and J. Brooks-Gunn. "Correlates of Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood." 1994. *Applied Developmental Psychology.* Eds. C. B. Fischer and R. M. Lerner. New York: McGraw-Hill. 207-236.

Cherlin, A. J., K. E. Kiernan, and P. L. Chase-Lansdale. 1995. "Parental Divorce in Childhood and Demographic Outcomes in Young Adulthood." *Demography* 32 (3): 299-318.

Coley, R. L., and P. L. Chase-Lansdale. 1998. "Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood. Recent Evidence and Future Directions." *American Psychologist* 53 (2): 152-66.

Combs-orme, T. 1993. "Health Effects of Adolescent Pregnancy: Implications for Social Workers." *Families in Society* 74 (6): 344-54.

Cooley, M. L., and D. G. Unger. 1991. "The Role of Family Support in Determining Developmental Outcomes in Children of Teen Mothers." *Child Psychiatry and Human Development* 21 (3): 217-34.

Downey, D. 1995. "When Bigger Is Not Better: Family Size, Parental Resources, and Children's Educational Performance." *American Sociological Review* 60: 746-761.

Dryburgh, H. 2002. "Teenage Pregnancy." *Health Reports* (Statistics Canada, Catalogue 82-003) 12 (1): 9-18.

Elfenbein, D. S., and M. E. Felice. 2003. "Adolescent Pregnancy." *Pediatric Clinics of North America* 50 (4): 781-800, viii.

Fessler, K. B. 2003. "Social Outcomes of Early Childbearing: Important Considerations for the Provision of Clinical Care." *Journal of Midwifery and Womens Health* 48 (3): 178-85.

Franklin, C., and J. Corcoran. 2000. "Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy: A Review of Programs and Practices." *Social Work* 45 (1): 40-52.

Furstenberg, F. F., Jr. 2003. "Teenage Childbearing as a Public Issue and Private Concern." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 23-39.

Furstenberg, F. F., Jr., J. Brooks-Gunn, and S. P. Morgan. 1987. "Adolescent Mothers and Their Children in Later Life." *Family Planning Perspectives* 19 (4): 142-51.

Geronimus, A. T., and S. Korenman. 1992. "The Socioeconomic Consequences of Teen Childbearing Reconsidered." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 107: 1187-214.

Grogger, J. 1997. "Incarceration-Related Costs of Early Child Bearing." *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy.* Ed. R. A. Maynard. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press. 231-255.

Hardy, J. B., *et al.* 1997. "Self-Sufficiency at Ages 27 to 33 Years: Factors Present Between Birth and 18 Years That Predict Educational Attainment Among Children Born to Inner-City Families." *Pediatrics* 99 (1): 80-7.

Hatfield, M. 2004. "Vulnerability to Persistent Low-Income." *Horizons* 7 (2): 19-26.

Hayes, C. D. 1987. *Risking the Future: Adolescent Sexuality, Pregnancy, and Childbearing.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Health Canada. 2003. *A Statistical Profile on the Health of First Nations in Canada for the Year 2000.* Ottawa, ON: Health Canada.

Henshaw, S. K. 1998. "Unintended Pregnancy in the United States." *Family Planning Perspectives* 30 (1): 24-9, 46.

Hertzman, C., and C. Power. 2006. "A Life-Course Approach to Health and Human Development." *Healthier Societies: From Analysis to Action*. Eds. J. Heymann, M. L. Barer, and M. G. Evans. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hobcraft, J., and K. Kiernan. 2001. "Childhood Poverty, Early Motherhood and Adult Social Exclusion." *British Journal of Sociology* 52 (3): 495-517.

Hoffman, S. D. 1998. "Teenage Childbearing Is Not So Bad after All … Or

Is It? A Review of the New Literature." *Family Planning Perspectives* 30 (5): 236-9, 43.

Hoffman, S. D., and E. M. Foster. 1997. "Economic Correlates of Nonmarital Childbearing among Adult Women." *Family Planning Perspectives* 29 (3): 137-40.

Hoffman, S. D., M. E. Foster, and F .F. Furstenberg. 1993. "Reevaluating the Costs of Teenage Childbearing." *Demography* 30: 1-13.

Horwitz, S. M., *et al*. 1991. "School-Age Mothers: Predictors of Long-Term Educational and Economic Outcomes." *Pediatrics* 87 (6): 862-8.

Hotz, V. J., S. W. McElroy, and S. G. Sanders. 1996. "The Costs and Consequences of Teenage Childbearing for the Mothers and the Government." *Chicago Policy Review* 1 (1): 55-94.

Hotz, V. J., S. W. McElroy, and S. G. Sanders. 1997. "The Impacts of Teenage Childbearing on the Mothers and the Consequences of Those Impacts for Government." *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy.* Ed. R. A. Maynard. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. 55-94.

Jaffee, S. R. 2002. "Pathways to Adversity in Young Adulthood among Early Childbearers." *Journal of Family Psychology* 16 (1): 38-49.

Kinard, E .M., and E. Reinherz. 1987. "School Aptitude and Achievement in Children of Adolescent Mothers." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 16 (1): 69-87.

Leadbeater, B. J., S. J. Bishop, and C. C. Raver. 1996. "Quality of Mother-Child Interactions, Maternal Depressive Symptoms and Behavioural Problems in Preschoolers of Adolescent Mothers." *Development Psychology* 32: 280-8.

Luster, T., and M. Mittelstaedt. 1993. *Adolescent Mothers. In T. Luster and L. Okagaki (Eds.). Parenting: An Ecological Perspective.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Manlove, J. 1998. "The Influence of High School Dropout and School Disengagement on the Risk of School-Age Pregnancy." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 8 (2): 187-220.

Maughan, B., and M. Lindelow. 1997. "Secular Change in Psychosocial Risks: The Case of Teenage Motherhood." *Psychological Medicine* 27 (5): 1129-44.

Mauldon, J., and K. Luker. 1996. "The Effects of Contraceptive Education on Method Use at First Intercourse." *Family Planning Perspectives* 28 (1): 19-24.

Maynard, R. A., ed. 1996. *Kids Having Kids: A Robin Hood Foundation Special Report on the Costs of Adolescent Childbearing.* New York: Robin Hood Foundation.

Maynard, R. A., ed. 1997. *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy.* Washington, DC: The Urban Press Institute, 1997.

Maynard, R. A. 1995. "Teen Childbearing and Welfare Reform: Lessons from a Decade of Demonstration and Evaluation Research." *Child Youth Services Review* 17: 309-32.

Moore, K. A., and J. Manlove. 1998. "Nonmarital School-Age Motherhood: Family, Individual, and School Characteristics." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 13 (4): 433-57.

Nanchahal, K., *et al*. 2005. "Changes in the Circumstances of Young Mothers in Britain: 1990 to 2000." *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 59 (10): 828-33.

National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. 2002. *Not Just Another Single Issue: Teen Pregnancy's Link to Critical Other Social Issues*. Washington, DC: NCPTP.

Olausson, P. O., *et al*. 2001. "Teenage Childbearing and Long-Term Socioeconomic Consequences: A Case Study in Sweden." *Family Planning Perspectives* 33 (2): 70-4.

Quinlivan, J. A. 2004. "Teenagers Who Plan Parenthood." *Sexual Health* 1 (4): 201-8.

Quinlivan, J. A., *et al*. 2004. "Impact of Demographic Factors, Early Family Relationships and Depressive Symptomatology in Teenage Pregnancy." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 38 (4): 197-203.

Rogers, D., and K. Dilworth. 2002. "Reducing the Rate of Teen Pregnancy in Canada: A Framework for Action." *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health* 14 (2): 97-100.

Sadler, Lois S., *et al*. 2007. "Promising Outcomes in Teen Mothers Enrolled in a School-Based Parent Support Program and Child Care Center." *Journal of School Health* 77 (3): 121-30.

Singh, S., and J. E. Darroch. 2000. "Adolescent Pregnancy and Childbearing: Levels and Trends in Developed Countries." *Family Planning Perspectives* 32 (1): 14-23.

SmithBattle, L. 2005. "Examining Assumptions About Teen Mothers: Priorities and Policies Must Set Example for Change." *American Journal of Nursing* 105 (4): 13.

SmithBattle, L. 2006. "Helping Teen Mothers Succeed." *Journal of School Nursing* 22 (3): 130-5.

SmithBattle, L. 2000. "The Vulnerabilities of Teenage Mothers: Challenging Prevailing Assumptions." *Advances in Nursing Sciences* 23 (1): 29-40.

Stevens-Simon, C., and R. Lowy.1995. "Teenage Childbearing: An Adaptive Strategy for the Socioeconomically Disadvataged or a Strategy for Adapting to Socioeconomic Disadvantage?" *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 149: 912-5.

Stewart, J. 2003. "The Mommy Track: The Consequences of Gender Ideology and Aspirations on Age at First Motherhood." *Journal Sociology and Social Welfare* 30 (2): 3-30.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute. 1999. *Facts in Brief: Teen Sex and Pregnancy,*

1999. New York: AGI.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2002. *Preventing Teen Pregnancy.* Washington, DC: HHS, Press Office.
Wellings, K., *et al*. 2001. "Sexual Behaviour in Britain: Early Heterosexual Experience." *Lancet* 358 (9296): 1843-50.
Wellings, K., *et al*. 1999. "Teenage Fertility and Life Chances." *Reviews of Reproduction* 4 (3): 184-90.
Williams, S., *et al*. 1997. "Level of Education, Age of Bearing Children and Mental Health of Women." *Social Science and Medicine* 45 (6): 827-36.
Woodward, L. J., L. J. Horwood, and D. M. Fergusson. 2001. "Teenage Pregnancy: Cause for Concern." *New Zealand Medical Journal* 114: 301-3.
World Health Organization. 2004. *Adolescent Pregnancy: Issues in Adolescent Health and Development.* Geneva: WHO, Departments of Child and Adolescent Health and Development and of Reproductive Health and Research.
Young, T., *et al*. 2004. "Examining External and Internal Poverty as Antecedents of Teen Pregnancy." *American Journal of Health Behaviour* 28 (4): 361-73.

Linda Hunter

Young Mothers in Canadian HIV Awareness Posters

Underrepresentation and Concerns

Although the number of HIV-prevention programs targeting youth has increased in recent years, little attention is paid to the particular issues that confront adolescent pregnant women and young mothers in this regard. Despite an alarming increase in infection rates among this population, there are very few prevention and support posters produced which focus on young mothers who are at risk and those who are HIV positive. Further, there has been little or no commentary about this absence of posters and little analysis or critical commentary about the very few existing HIV prevention and support posters that do target pregnant women and young mothers. This paper proposes that posters providing educational information for young mothers about HIV prevention and awareness, and posters that specifically target HIV positive mothers would have educational value because they would supply information to young mothers that are relevant to their particular concerns and they would supply information to young mothers about appropriate support services. This paper examines young mothers' realities and the representation, albeit limited, of young mothers in the HIV awareness posters produced between 1986 and 2006 by Health Canada, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Ontario Ministry of Health, and by the community-based AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT). Positive models of sexuality or models of communication about safer sexuality are lacking in the visual and textual representation of women and mothers in HIV awareness posters. There is an urgent need for HIV awareness and prevention posters targeting young mothers and there is a pressing need for prevention and support services for young mothers.

Introduction

Although the number of HIV prevention programs targeting youth has increased in recent years, little attention is paid to the particular issues that confront adolescent pregnant women and young mothers in this regard. Because of unique life circumstances and various contextual issues, HIV prevention and support programs targeting young mothers are crucial. A number of researchers have found that pregnant adolescents and young mothers are at risk for acquiring HIV due to a number of socio-economic factors, some of which include poverty, a lack of educational resources, initiation of sexual activity at an early age, a history of unprotected sexual relations, having high risk sexual partner(s), a lack of power in insisting on safer sexual activity, a history of physical or sexual abuse for some, and for others a history of drug dependence (Koniak *et al.,* 2003a, 2003b; Lesser, Oakes, and Koniak-Griffin, 2003). Globally, one third of women who are living with HIV are between the ages of 15 to 24 (UNAIDS, 2005). In Canada, 75 percent of the positive HIV test reports among adult women are from those in their child bearing years (Health Canada, 2005). As the rates of HIV infection in women rise, the risk of perinatal transmission also increases. Further, it is estimated that 30 percent of the HIV infected population in Canada are unaware that they are even infected (Health Canada, 2005). Until diagnosed, these individuals are not accessing support, treatment or services that could help manage illness and prolong life. These facts have significant implications for HIV education, health care, mothering and the lives of young mothers.

HIV/AIDS service organizations have commonly used poster campaigns as accessible tools for communicating preventive and educational messages. Well designed and well placed HIV awareness posters have the potential to be very effective in communicating messages about HIV transmission and prevention, safer sex negotiation, and in communicating information about the different support services available in particular communities (Marchand and Filiatrault, 2002). HIV awareness posters have the potential to broaden the understanding of the experiences of young mothers in the context of HIV and AIDS. Yet, despite an alarming increase in infection rates among this population, there are very few prevention and support posters produced which focus on young mothers who are at risk and those who are HIV positive. Further, there has been little or no commentary about this absence of posters and little analysis or critical commentary about the very few existing HIV prevention and support posters that do target pregnant women and young mothers.

In the posters produced by governmental organizations positive models and representations of sexuality and models of healthy communication about safer sexual relations are lacking in the visual and textual representation of young mothers. HIV awareness posters have not addressed issues of women's sexuality, communication around safer sex, and the numerous socio-economic issues facing young mothers. In the realm of HIV awareness campaigns produced in Canada, the questions remain, why are young mothers represented so rarely, and when they are, why are they represented in such a limited way?

This paper advances the research findings of a previous study I conducted comparing gender representation in 70 HIV/AIDS awareness posters produced between 1986 and 2006 by Health Canada, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Ontario Ministry of Health, and by the community-based AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) (see Hunter 2005, 1996). This paper moves the topic forward and specifically focuses on young mothers' realities and the representation, albeit limited, of young mothers in the HIV awareness posters produced by these four organizations. This paper also addresses the complex issues which factor into the urgent need for accessible HIV prevention and support services for young mothers as well as education and support for young mothers who are HIV positive.

Young mothers' experiences often revolve around the connections between childcare responsibilities, poverty, illness, stigma, isolation, and the lack of power in negotiations around safer sex. HIV information and educational prevention programs contribute to enabling young mothers to make empowered choices and decisions about their health by focusing on healthy lifestyles and issues of sexual health. Posters providing awareness and educational information about HIV prevention to young mothers, and posters that specifically target and support HIV positive mothers would have educational value because they would supply information that is relevant to their particular concerns, including information on lifestyle issues and negotiation of safer sex, as well as supply information about appropriate support services.

Theoretical focus and methodology

Lack of agency around female sexuality and sexist assumptions about female sexuality and motherhood are major feminist concerns. Examining HIV awareness posters from this critical perspective can be useful in understanding posters as texts, as means of communication about HIV and as means of communication about gender, sexuality, health, and motherhood. By highlighting some of the differences and engendered inequalities in the way HIV awareness campaigns target and represent women and young mothers compared to the way they represent men, inequalities of opportunity become evident.

The framework developed for the analysis of differences in representation utilizes contextual analysis, interviews, content analysis and concepts borrowed from semiotics. The application of content analysis and the incorporation of some concepts from semiotics assisted in uncovering the structure and underlying assumptions of the posters. Semiotic analysis provided a structure for analyzing the way in which signs in texts function within a particular environment. Within this framework, the following questions guided the analysis: What do these posters symbolize and signify? Who produces the posters? Who is the assumed audience or target population? How do these posters represent gender, sexuality and motherhood?[1]

Information gathered from interviews conducted with key informants from twenty-two different governmental and community-based HIV/AIDS organizations in the Toronto area during the years 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2003, 2004 and 2006 were an important part of this research. Interviewees included representatives from the federal government (Health Canada, Canadian Public Health Association, Canadian AIDS Society), the provincial government (the Ontario Ministry of Health), provincial organizations (Haemophilia Ontario), health departments (Toronto Public Health Department), medical clinics (HIV Clinic, Addiction Research Foundation), and educational leaders from fifteen community-based HIV/AIDS organizations, including the AIDS Committee of Toronto, Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention, Prostitutes' Safer Sex Project, Street Outreach Services, 2-Spirited People of the First Nations, and Voices of Positive Women. Of the 22 organizations represented in the interviews, four organizations provided enough posters for full contextual analysis. The realities of the life experiences and needs of young mothers are absent in the posters produced by Health Canada, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Ontario Ministry of Health, and by the community-based AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT). Governmental posters targeting women and motherhood focus less on sexuality and less on communication around safer sex compared to posters produced by the community-based AIDS Committee of Toronto, which focus on issues of communication and sexuality targeting men who have sex with men as well as women in relationships with women. There is no representation of HIV and motherhood.

Young mothers' realities and poster depictions

Young mothers are affected by HIV in many ways due to gender inequalities. Growing rates of HIV infection among young women and young mothers reflect the evidence that women are biologically, economically, socially and culturally more vulnerable to HIV infection than men because they lack the resources, social status and power to protect themselves (CPHA, 2005; UNAIDS, 2005; Koniak-Griffin *et al.*, 2003a). Young mothers' abilities to negotiate safer sexual practices is a vital component of HIV prevention yet gender based power imbalances continue to affect this negotiation. Though young mothers may have some basic knowledge of the risks involved in unsafe sexual activity, general inequalities of power are often further exacerbated by limited educational and occupational opportunities, poverty, sexual abuse, racism and culturally devalued gender roles. The general inequalities of power in the heterosexual community are such that young women and young mothers cannot always convince their male partners to take the necessary precautions for safer sex, without fear of losing their relationship with their partner or fear of violence. In fact, adolescents do experience a higher incidence of abuse during pregnancy than adult women when pregnant (Koniak-Griffin *et al.*, 2003b). Often, young mothers not only feel powerless to insist on safer sex options but powerless to even discuss condom use with a male partner. For many young mothers, empowerment is only a word and the threat of abandonment and/or violence is more immediate than the reality of HIV transmission (De Oliveria, 2000; Dowsett, 2003; Godin, Gagnon and Lambert, 2003; Gómez and Marín, 1996; Kumar, Larkin and Mitchell, 2001; Loppie and Gahagan, 2001; Sacks, 1996; Tharao and Massaquoi, 2001; Wingood and DiClemente, 2000).

Further, many pregnant adolescents or young mothers in steady relationships do not insist on condoms because of their desire to understand their relationship as a committed one, without concerns about partner monogamy. Some women may be financially dependent on a partner who is engaging in high-risk behaviours. Maintaining a relationship with a partner often overshadows worries about health issues. Even if concerned or suspicious about the trustworthiness of their partner, some young mothers wish so desperately to preserve a relationship with the father of their baby and maintain a family dynamic that they risk their own health. Wanting to believe they are in a monogamous relationship with a trusted partner, many young mothers avoid safer sex practices and discussions of safer sex (Koniak-Griffin *et al.*, 2003). More immediate life concerns such as raising children, managing relationships, securing affordable housing, food, finances, transportation, and for some, staying drug-free or maintaining personal safety make negotiating safer sex even more problematic (Lesser *et al.*, 2003; Brackis-Cott, Block and Mellins, 2003).

Young mothers, following childbirth, often choose, or may be pressured to choose, oral or injectable contraceptives that do not protect against HIV (Koniak *et al.,* 2003b). Condom use is lower in long term users of oral contraceptives especially in steady relationships lasting more than a few months (Lesser *et. al* 2003). Adolescent mothers do not use condoms or use them inconsistently often due to the belief that condoms interfere with sexual pleasure, particularly the sexual pleasure of their male partner(s). Many young women also admit an unwillingness to use condoms because of a lack of skill in incorporating condoms in their sexual lives (Brown *et al.*, 1998; Koniak-Griffin *et al.*, 2003b). Women, even if motivated to incorporate safer sex may have difficulty incorporating these changes with their partners who are resistant to condoms. Traditional norms of masculinity often prevent many men from seeking information about HIV prevention. This results in unsafe sexual experimentation, particularly during youth where men generally report higher rates of partner change and more risk of HIV infection due to risky sexual behaviour (Mane and Aggleton, 2001). In addition, the intimate male partners of young mothers may share needles for drug use, body piercing or tattooing. The link between drug and alcohol use and sexual risk behaviour is well established (Lesser *et al.,* 2003; Mane and Aggleton, 2001).

Although the majority of women living with HIV are in their childbearing years (Health Canada, 2005), there is a dearth of HIV awareness posters which target mothers. One poster produced in 2002 by Health Canada and the Canadian Public Health Association however did address some concerns of mothers in the poster "How Could Someone Like Me be HIV Positive?," which depicts a quizzical young woman looking up toward the viewer. We are not aware from the image that the woman is an HIV positive mother, but the text states: "sends emails to her sister, eats yogurt for breakfast, single mother, loves throwing surprise parties, wants to be a grandmother, worries about her family's future, likes to take her kids camping in the backyard, always knows how far away a washroom is, enjoys reading to her kids, gets angry when she hears people say that HIV/AIDS isn't a big deal anymore." Although the poster makes clear that HIV affects women with children, there is no information presented that is relevant to the particular concerns of mothers; no information provided on communication strategies with partners or families and no information provided on support resources for mothers and their children.

Prevention programs and services appear to be more concerned with women's reproductive function than with focusing on women's health, sexuality, and communication around safer sexual relations (Connell, 2001; Loppie and Gahagan, 2001). The recently produced Ontario Ministry of Health poster centres on a contemplative photograph of a pregnant woman and states "HIV testing is important for you and your baby" and asks, "Have you been tested?"(2003). Although pregnant women may be represented in awareness posters due to concerns about infections to their babies, there is a lack of representation of services that would improve the health outcomes and overall physical and social support for young mothers themselves.

While female sexuality has been marketed profusely for commercial ends to sell everything from toothpaste to kitchen cupboards, it is denied and repressed in most Canadian HIV prevention campaigns where positive representation of sexuality could be used to promote safer sex. HIV/AIDS posters targeting women and young mothers do not evoke a sense of self assurance or self confidence around safer sex issues, leaving a sterile and vague message about sexuality for young mothers. As in the wider cultural context, women and young mothers are not empowered in their communication and negotiation efforts around safer sex, their decisions to use condoms, or in their decisions to explore other sexual experiences and options. Contradictory messages around these issues force women into what Deborah Ingram and Sally Hutchison (2000) refer to as "double bind situations" when it comes to HIV prevention. Women and young mothers are expected to take responsibility for HIV prevention yet they are often unable to do so because of their lack of power in intimate relationships. Heterosexual women are still in the situation of negotiating sexual relationships with men in a society where sex is largely defined in terms of men's needs (Holland *et al.*, 1992). The paradox is that in safer sex campaigns, women have been told to be responsible, such as in the poster, "If Mr. Right refuses to wear a condom … he's Wrong" (Health Canada)— in a world that constructs women as passive receptors of male desire and sexuality (Mane and Aggleton, 2000). Further, although the text in this poster, "if you care for one another, take care of one another," addresses both men and women, the male was invited to tune out in this poster campaign, diminishing his responsibility for caring. Condoms appear to be an inconvenience for a resistant partner. The male in the poster, presumably wants to have sex without a condom, which is why the woman knows that he is Mr. "Wrong." This poster, still displayed today, raises doubt and anxiety in visual and textual form without offering practical suggestions about ways to communicate with one's partner(s) about safer sex. This utilization of fear delivers a heightened sense of panic, suspicion and helplessness. Fear can have an inhibiting influence on the viewer of a health promotion poster. If the level of fear is too high in a health campaign the viewer may feel attacked and deny or avoid the educational message intended to benefit the viewer (Marchand and Filiatrault, 2002). As a result of the content of messages such as these, women may become overwhelmed with the magnitude of HIV without receiving any practical advice about how to avoid HIV or how to communicate about safer sex practices with their partner(s).

HIV and AIDS continue to threaten young mothers of colour, particularly black and aboriginal women, at astonishing rates (CPHA, 2005). There is a need for greater healthcare services and posters targeting black and Aboriginal women, who face multiple forms of oppression and discrimination. Many HIV-related issues need to be addressed in culturally relevant environments with regard to risk behaviours and cultural beliefs. It is crucial to examine socio-cultural and institutional factors that intersect with gender, race, class and political and economic conditions. As Esther Tharao and Notisha Massaquoi (2001) point out, experiences of racial discrimination can have a devastating effect on the health and well-being of women and young mothers of colour. Gender, culture, race, power, and sexuality are intimately connected with negotiations around safer sex (Bain, 2001; Dowsett, 2003; Gavey, McPhillips and Doherty, 2001; Kumar, Larkin and Mitchell, 2001; Mane and Aggleton, 2001; Tharao and Massaquoi, 2001). Gender differences in communication strategies around safer sex and condom use are important to consider for poster development. According to Amy Lam *et al.* (2004), women apply more non-verbal, indirect styles of communication and persuasion around safer sex then men do; for example placing or situating condoms in view of their partner. Non-verbal, direct styles of communication, such as taking a condom out of a wrapper and putting it on a partner, are also negotiation strategies that women incorporate for safer sex practices. Non-verbal, indirect and direct styles of communication may be particularly useful to portray in posters targeting young mothers who have difficulty in verbally communicating the importance of condom use or verbally insisting on their use.

Very recently, the Canadian Public Health Association produced a very progressive and empowering poster entitled, "Change the World" (2005) targeting young women (and young mothers). This poster incorporates some of the suggestions made by Lam *et al.* (2004) with regard to nonverbal, direct styles of communication. The poster depicts a young woman lying beside a young man in a bed. In this photograph the woman is holding a transparently wrapped, bright yellow condom in her hand. It is apparent from the photograph that it is she who has taken the condom out of her purse which is sitting next to her in the forefront of the photograph. Although there is no apparent depiction of verbal communication between the couple photographed, the implication

Poster courtesy of the Canadian Public Health Association.

is clear—the young woman intends to integrate the condom into the sexual activity. This poster depicts the woman taking charge of her own sexual health. It empowers women at a time when research reveals that for some men (and some women) there is still a strong stigma associated with the idea of a woman having condoms available and ready for use; the idea that if a woman insists on condom use by her male partner, then she must be sexually aggressive, sexually experienced and even promiscuous (Kumar, Larkin and Mitchell, 2001).

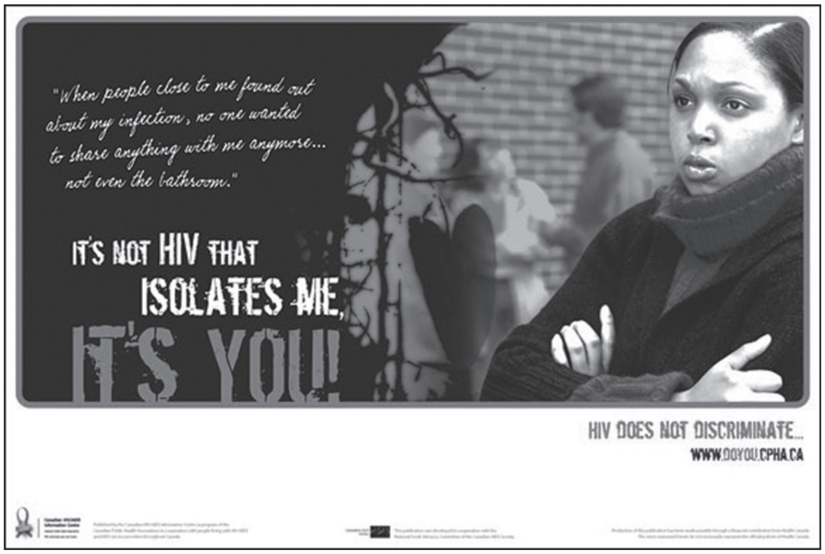
An effective sexual health promotion strategy would include positive images of young women and young mother's sexuality, where women convey a desire to be self responsible without being pushed by fear or guilt (Marchand and Filiatrault, 2002). Yet, few HIV awareness posters produced in Canada portray women's and mother's sexuality and agency. With the exception of some recent posters from ACT targeting women in sexual relationships with other women and the "Change the World" poster from the Canadian Public Health Association, posters targeting women do not provide room to explore a positive model of female sexuality where a woman is presented on her own behalf, making demands and taking control of her own life. This is a very different approach from the posters targeting men who have sex with men, produced by ACT, where men are represented as comrades and allies in efforts to develop safer sexual relations, and where the message to 'take control' of men's sexual lives and sexual health is reinforced. Posters targeting men who have sex with men emphasize safer sexuality and communication about safer sex.

Governmental posters have not addressed the absence of the portrayal of women's sexuality, motherhood or communication strategies with partners about prevention and safer sex options. Posters produced by ACT simply do not target or portray heterosexual women and mothers. In order for women to negotiate safer sex options with men, it is necessary to promote communication between partners around safer sex rather than presenting men and women as opponents. A positive model of female sexuality and communication about sexuality is needed to ensure that young mothers have a greater chance of safer sexual encounters risk free from HIV (Bird *et al.*, 2001; Connell, 2001; Fenaughty and Namyniuk, 2004; Goméz and Marín, 1996; Holland *et al.*, 1992; Marchand and Filiatrault, 2002; Miles, 1993; Triese *et al.*, 1999). Overall, there is reluctance to present heterosexual women and mothers as empowered in their communication with friends, lovers, partners, and families.

For women and young mothers to adopt and sustain protective behaviours they need knowledge about risks, ways of protecting themselves, a personalized sense of vulnerability to risk, a belief system that includes the idea that they should and can take action to protect themselves, skills to adopt and maintain protective behaviours, skills to communicate with and to influence partners to adopt protective behaviours and a feeling of reinforcement when they use protective behaviours (ACT 2004). HIV prevention, awareness, and support posters targeting young mothers, which include these criteria, would be an important contribution to achieving these goals. Messages in HIV prevention materials have the most meaning when the viewers of the posters see themselves in the images and texts (DeMarco and Norris, 2004). As June Marchand and Pierre Filiatrault (2002) recommend, young women not only need to be adequately informed about HIV transmission and prevention but effective prevention campaigns should aim to convince women and young mothers that the issues presented in the posters are issues that matter personally to them, rather than issues simply for others.

HIV positive mothers: Support services and posters

Stigma and discrimination often prevent many young mothers from accessing HIV educational prevention programs and health services, as they often fear a lack of confidentiality or fear judgement from health care providers. Young people must be assured a safe and caring environment in order to effectively receive the information and services they need such as access to basic HIV prevention information, counselling, harm reduction programs, condom distribution, testing and treatment. Young HIV positive mothers face many personal and societal inequalities and challenges as they struggle to make ends meet and live a healthy lifestyle. Yet, despite the complex health related factors, some adolescent mothers have described having a child as a positive experience that motivates them toward a healthy lifestyle. Due to feelings of maternal protectiveness during pregnancy and early motherhood, some young mothers may be more receptive to health services as well as more likely to adopt healthy lifestyles and sexual behaviours (Koniak-Griffin *et al.*, 2003b, 1997). The prenatal period and the period of young motherhood then



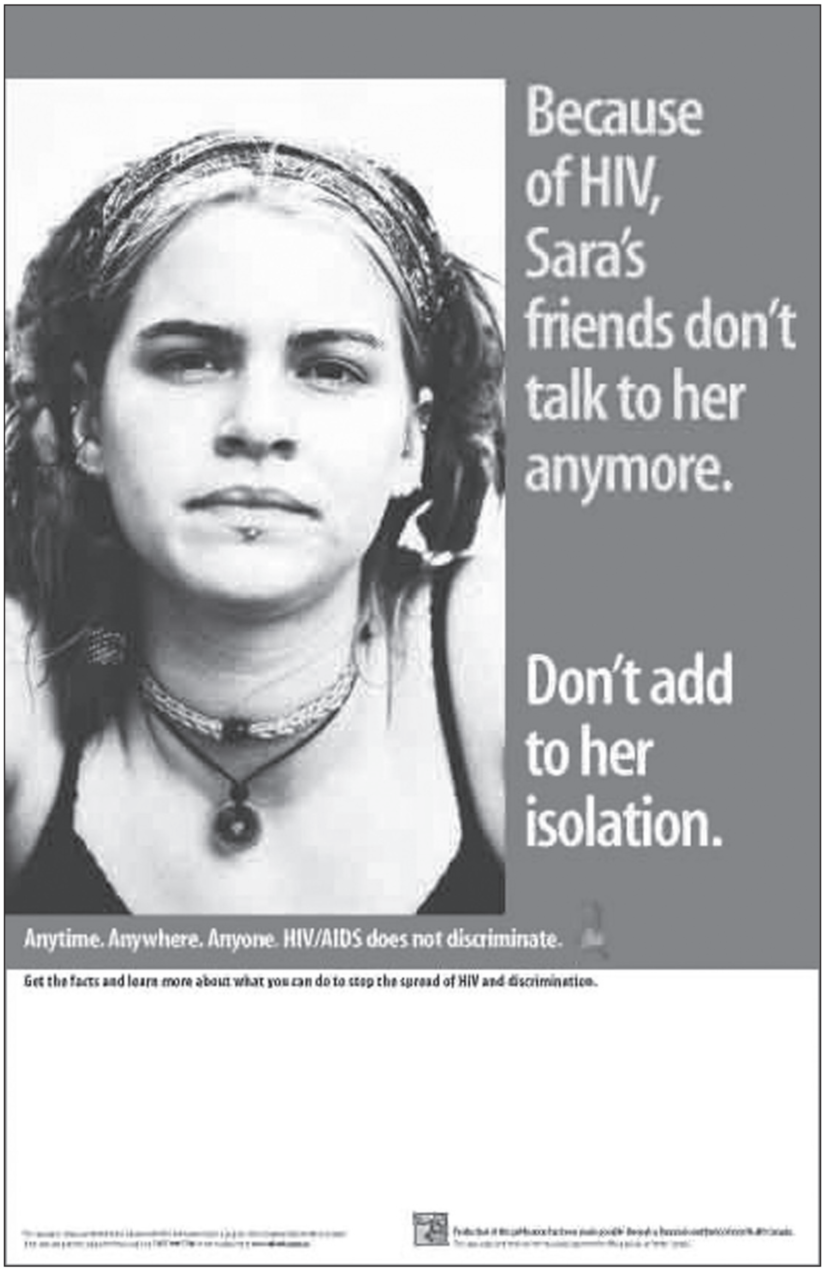
Poster courtesy of the Canadian Public Health Association.

can offer unique opportunities for health promotion interventions, including HIV prevention and support, and for making a positive impact about health related matters for young mothers (Lesser *et al*., 2002).

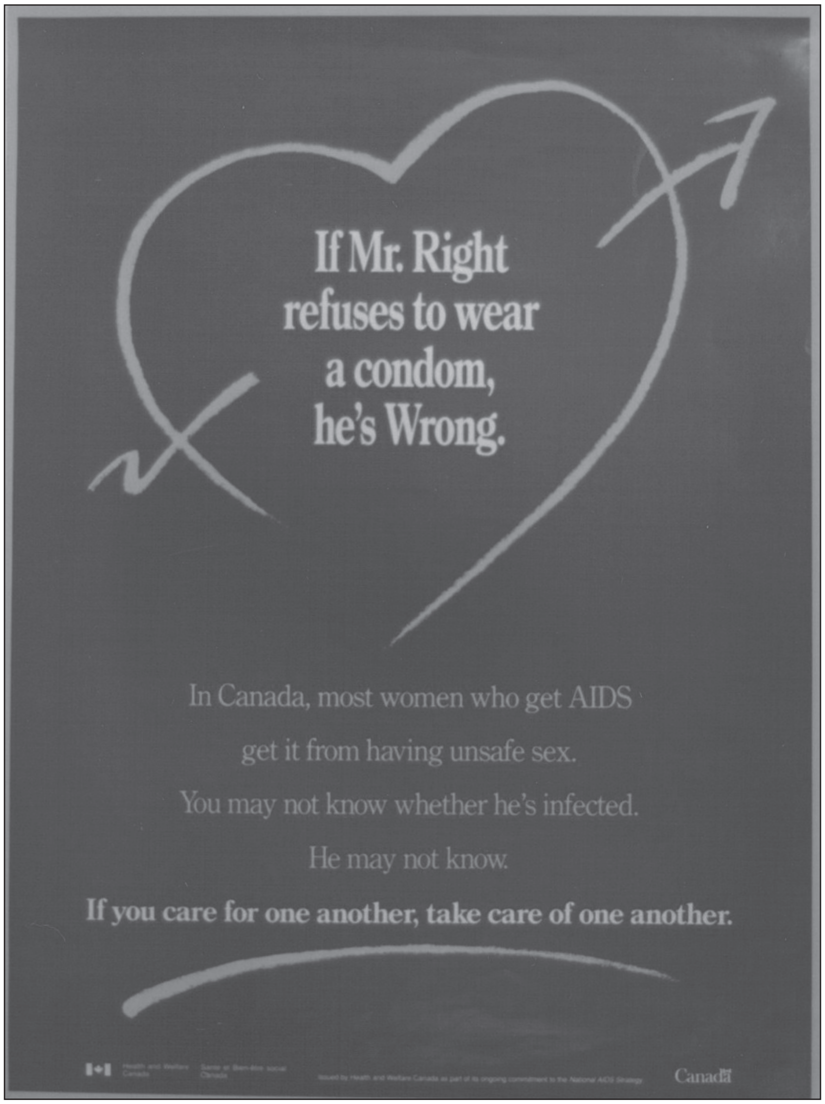
Focused efforts directed towards HIV positive pregnant women and young mothers could include a variety of interactive experiences such as the use of games for demonstrating practical advice around safer sex, role playing exercises to help build sexual negotiating skills, and guided communication to practice interpersonal communication skills (Koniak and Brecht 1997). Visual and textual messages within awareness and prevention posters could assist in facilitating such discussions. Young HIV positive mothers require continual support in the challenges of mothering, in discussions around sexuality and in the importance of practicing safer sex during and after pregnancy. Practical advice and information on the myths and realities about breastfeeding and HIV infection, the realities of drugs, alcohol and HIV, and the complexities of empowerment in relationships are also crucial issues to address in the support of young mothers.

Accessing support services for HIV positive mothers and their children is often dependent on the mother's disclosure and is highly complicated because HIV is still a stigmatized disease. Stigma, in other words, is a major reason for secrecy around HIV and AIDS for many women and mothers (Hough *et al.*, 2003; Murphy, Johnston Roberts and Hoffman, 2003; O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2005; Van Loon, 2000). In recent years, governmental HIV posters targeting women focus on this issue of stigma by depicting images of people who experience daily isolation and discrimination because of their HIV positive status. In 2003, the text alongside the image of a young woman states, "Because of

HIV, Sara's friends don't talk to her anymore. Don't add to her isolation." In the 2004 campaign, "It's Not HIV That Isolates Me, It's You! HIV Does Not Discriminate. Do You?," a young black or young white woman is set apart



Poster courtesy of the Canadian Public Health Association.



Health Canada (1990). Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2007.

from a group of classmates. The personal handwritten text of one of these posters states "When people close to me found out about my infection, no one wanted to share anything with me anymore … not even the bathroom." Although the intention of these posters is to reduce the discrimination and isolation faced by women living with HIV/AIDS, it is that very discrimination which is portrayed in the images, along with a fear based mentality which was typical in the first wave of governmental poster campaigns. In keeping with the theme of the campaign, acceptance and support by family and friends may be a more suitable and positive way to depict these women living with HIV and AIDS rather than reinforcing fear and discrimination.

These posters are of little practical use to HIV infected mothers who struggle with decisions about disclosing their infection to their children. In studies exploring the impact of HIV on the ability of HIV positive mothers to raise their children, the disclosure of serostatus was reported as a main concern, along with fear of infecting their children through casual contact and concern about the impact of grief on their families (Murphy, Johnston Roberts and Hoffman, 2003). Although some HIV positive mothers are particularly motivated to initiate discussions with their children or address their children's questions about HIV; wanting to educate their children about HIV themselves, wanting their children to hear the information from them, and wanting their children to be prepared for what the future may bring (Schrimshaw and Siegel, 2002), many other mothers are resistant to disclosure. Factors preventing mothers' disclosure of their HIV positive status to their children include the desire to preserve the innocence of childhood, the belief that the news would impose an emotional burden or inflict psychological harm on their children, and concerns about their children's ability to understand the news, other children rejecting their child, the impact of the news on the family in general, and about their children fearing the loss of their mother (Murphy, Johnston Roberts and Hoffman, 2003; Schrimshaw and Siegel, 2002; Van Loon, 2000). Disclosure of a positive diagnosis often also involves disclosure of a socially stigmatized behaviour (drug use, high risk sexual behaviour). Mothers often feel shame, anger or guilt about becoming infected and are not willing to disclose their status or discuss with their children the behaviours that led to their infection (Brackis-Cott, Block and Mellins, 2003). Providing information and assistance to mothers in overcoming their own inhibitions to communicate with their children may promote more positive family communication and understanding. This may in turn help to break a cycle of silence within and between generations and create better opportunities for communication among families about the realities of HIV transmission and living with HIV (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2005). Posters are an effective and an accessible way of providing information on workshops and support for HIV positive mothers.

Posters have the potential to raise awareness in the larger community in general, and raise awareness for HIV positive mothers in particular, about the issues facing them. An empowering representation of young mothers and of HIV positive mothers may further encourage healthy behaviour changes. Posters have the potential to inform and encourage HIV positive mothers to participate in support programs, which would aid them in their struggles with health, practical issues, stigma, and isolation. It is well documented that greater availability of social support is associated with fewer depressive symptoms in HIV positive women (Van Loon, 2000; Hough *et al.*, 2003). As well, Edythe Hough *et al.* (2003) argue that the psychosocial adjustment of a child of an

HIV positive mother appears to be related to the mother's emotional distress which is itself related to the mother's social support. Representation of young mothers' experiences with HIV, including issues of secrecy and stigma, difficulties and realities of drug therapies, as well as advice and information about resources and support after a positive diagnosis, surviving with and living with HIV, would be of great benefit to mothers and their children. A factual approach puts the issue of HIV and motherhood on the public agenda and helps to create an environment that may change public perceptions and attitudes of stigma and discrimination.

Conclusion

HIV infection rates are rising among women and mothers in Canada and throughout the world. HIV education and support services must meet the needs of young mothers, including those who live in vulnerable circumstances. The social and economic factors that contribute to the issues that face young mothers need to be addressed. Young mothers require information, skills and services in order to prevent or cope with HIV. Overall, there is an urgent need for resources which will provide HIV prevention programs, support programs and educational and informative posters for young mothers, a high-risk population for HIV. Strengthening and reinforcing the abilities of women, mothers and their partners to protect themselves from HIV is a priority.

This examination of HIV awareness posters that target women and mothers has been useful as a means of understanding the ways through which HIV, AIDS, gender, sexuality, motherhood and related social, political, and cultural issues are constructed and represented in public discourse. The conflicting discourses of gender, motherhood and HIV have serious implications for public attitudes, personal beliefs systems, sexual health, the formation of public policies around HIV/AIDS educational programs, support programs, and treatment, and most importantly, reducing the rate of HIV transmission among young pregnant women and mothers.

Past and present HIV awareness campaigns may have reached part of the population, but clearly a more effective strategy for addressing young women and mothers in promoting safer sex is needed if there is to be any hope of reversing this trend. A more positive portrayal of women's sexuality, communication of information about awareness and prevention, and the provision of information on support services for those women and mothers who are at risk and those who are HIV positive must be incorporated into the HIV awareness posters produced in Canada. Increasing the images of women respecting their bodies, taking active roles in decisions about their health, and communicating these messages would be a positive step in posters targeting young women and mothers. It is hoped that with more awareness of motherhood and HIV further educational initiatives and political resources will be provided to support women and mothers who face the many interconnected issues surrounding HIV and AIDS.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Ken Menzies and Renee Sylvain for their very useful comments and suggestions for this paper.

[1] An extended analysis of themes associated with culture, race, ethnicity, poverty, HIV testing, drug use, harm reduction, sex workers, and breastfeeding, although interesting and relevant are beyond the scope of this paper, which specifically focuses on HIV awareness campaigns and representation of young mothers.

References

Bain, B. 2001. "HIV/AIDS: Challenging a Monster." *Journal of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Education for Adolescents and Children* 4 (2/3): 3-21.

Bird, S., S. Harvey, L. Beckman and C. Johnson. 2001. "Getting Your Partner to Use Condoms:

Brackis-Cott, E., M. Block and C. A. Mellins. 2003. "Influence of Maternal HIV on Current Life Concerns of HIV Positive Mothers and Their Early Adolescent Children." *Journal of Early Adolescence* 23: 51-77.

Brown, L.K, K.J. Lourie, P. Flanagan and P. High. 1998. "HIV-related Attitudes and Risk Behavior of Young Adolescent Mothers." *AIDS Education and Prevention* 10 (6): 565-573.

Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA). 2005. "Leading Together: Canada Takes Action on HIV/AIDS (2005-2010)." *Canadian Public Health Association* October: 1-54.

Connell, E. 2001. "Bridging the Gap: Integrating HIV Prevention into Sexual and Reproductive Health Promotion." *Canadian Woman Studies* 21 (2): 68-71.

DeMarco, R. and A. Norris. 2004. "Culturally Relevant HIV Interventions: Transcending Ethnicity." *Journal of Cultural Diversity* 11 (2): 65-68.

DeOliveira, D. L. 2000. "Adolescent Women's Ways of Seeing Sexual Risks and the Epistemological Dimension of 'Risky Sex." Online: http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ccs/conference2000/papers/pde/papers/ Accessed: 07/01/01.

Dowsett, G. 2003. "Some Considerations on Sexuality and Gender in the Context of AIDS." *Reproductive Health Matters* 11 (22): 21-29.

Fenaughty, A. and L. Namyniuk. 2004. " 'Here's What I'd Do ….': Condom Promotion Strategies Proposed by High-Risk Women in Anchorage, Alaska." *Qualitative Health Research* 14 (1): 23-28.

Gavey, N., K. McPhillips and M. Doherty. 2001. "'If It's Not On, It's Not On' – Or Is It? Discursive Constraints on Women's Condom Use." *Gender and Society* 15 (6): 917-934.

Godin, G., H. Gagnon and L. Lambert. 2003. "Factors Associated with Maintenance of Regular Condom Use Among Single Heterosexual Adults: A Longitudinal Study." *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 94 (4): 287-291.

Gómez, C. and B. Marín. 1996. "Gender, Culture, and Power: Barriers to

HIV-Prevention Strategies for Women." *The Journal of Sex Research* 33 (4): 355-362.

Health Canada. 2005. "HIV/AIDS Epi Update. May 2005." Ottawa: Health Canada.

Holland, Janet, Caroline Ramazonoglu, Sue Sharpe and Rachel Thomson. 1992. "Pleasure, Pressure and Power: Some Contradictions of Gendered Sexuality." *The Sociological Review* 40 (4): 645-674.

Hough, E.S., G. Brumitt, T. Templin, E. Saltz and D. Mood. 2003. "A Model of Mother-Child Coping and Adjustment to HIV." *Social Science and Medicine* 56: 643-655.

Hunter, L. 2005. "The Writing on the Wall: HIV/AIDS Awareness Posters Targeting Women"

Canadian Woman Studies 24 (1): 178-185.

Hunter, L. 1996. *The Writing on the Wall: An Analysis of the Discourse of AIDS Awareness Posters.* Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. York University, Canada.

Ingram, D. and S. Hutchinson. 2000. "Double Binds and the Reproductive and Mothering Experiences of HIV-Positive Women." *Qualitative Health Research* 10 (1): 117-132.

Interviews with Men and Women at Risk of HIV/STDs." *The Journal of Sex Research* 38 (3): 233-240.

Interviews with spokesperson for *The AIDS Committee of Toronto.* 2004, 1997, 1995, 1994, 1993.

Interviews with spokesperson for *The Canadian AIDS Society.* 2004, 1997, 1995, 1994, 1993.

Interviews with spokesperson for *Health Canada.* 2004, 1997, 1995, 1994, 1993.

Interviews with spokesperson for *The Ontario Ministry of Health.* 2004, 1997, 1995, 1994, 1993.

Koniak-Griffin, Deborah and M. Brecht 1997. "AIDS Risk Behaviors, Knowledge, and Attitudes among Pregnant Adolescents and Young Mothers." *Health Education and Behavior* (24) 5: 613-624.

Koniak-Griffin, Deborah, J. Lesser, G. Uman and W. Cumberland. 2003a. "Project Charm. An HIV Prevention Program for Adolescent Mothers." *Family and Community Health* 26 (2): 94-107.

Koniak-Griffin, Deborah, J. Lesser, G. Uman, A. Nyamathi. 2003b. "Teen Pregnancy, Motherhood, and Unprotected Sexual Activity." *Research in Nursing and Health* 26 (1): 4-19.

Kumar, N., J. Larkin and C. Mitchell. 2001. "Gender, Youth and HIV Risk." *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme* 21 (2): 35-40.

Lam, A. G., A. Mak, P. Lindsay and S. Russell. "What Really Works? An Exploratory Study of Condom Negotiations Strategies." *AIDS Education and Prevention* 16 (2): 160-171.

Lesser, Janna, R. Oakes, and Deborah Koniak-Griffin. 2003. "Vulnerable

Adolescent Mothers' Perceptions of Maternal Role and HIV Risk." *Health Care for Women International* 24 (6): 513-528.

Loppie, C. and J. Gahagan. 2001. "Stacked Against Us: HIV/AIDS Statistics and Women." *Canadian Woman Studies* 21 (2): 6-9.

Mane, P. and P. Aggleton. 2001. "Gender and HIV/AIDS: What Do Men Have to Do With It?"

Current Sociology 49 (6): 23-37.

Marchand, June and P. Filiatrault. 2002. "AIDS Prevention Advertising: Different Message Strategies for Different Communication Objectives." *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 7 (3): 271-287.

Miles, L. 1993. "Women, AIDS, and Power in Heterosexual Sex: A Discourse Analysis." *Women's Studies Int. Forum* 16 (5): 497-511.

Murphy, D. A., K. Johnston Roberts and Dannie Hoffman. 2003. "Regrets and Advice from Mothers Who Have Disclosed Their HIV+ Serostatus to Their Young Children." *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 12 (3): 307-318.

O'Sullivan, L. F., C. Dolezal, E. Brackis-Cott, L. Traeger and C. A. Mellins. 2005. "Communication About HIV and Risk Behaviors Among Mothers Living With HIV and Their Early Adolescent Children." *Journal of Early Adolescence* 25 (2): 148-167.

Sacks, V. 1996. "Women and AIDS: An Analysis of Media Misrepresentations." *Soc. Sci. Med.* 42 (1): 59-73.

Schrimshaw, Eric W., and K. Siegel. 2002. "HIV-infected Mothers' Disclosure to Their Uninfected Children: Rates, Reasons, and Reactions." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 19 (1): 19-42.

Tharao, E. and N. Massaquoi. 2001. "Black Women and HIV/AIDS: Contextualizing their Realities, their Silence and Proposing Solutions." *Canadian Woman Studies* 21 (2): 72-80.

Triese, D., M. Weigold, A. Gotthoffer and C. Prolman. 1999. "Responsibility and Risk: Understanding How PSA Messages Can Encourage Condom Use." *Health Marketing Quarterly* 16 (3): 65-95.

UNAIDS 2005. "At the Crossroads: Accelerating Youth Access to HIV/AIDS Interventions." *Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS* :1-10.

Van Loon, Ruth Anne. 2000. "Redefining Motherhood: Adaptation to Role Change for Women with AIDS." *Families in Society* 81 (2): 152-161.

Wingood, G. and R. J. DiClemente. 2000. "Application of the Theory of Gender and Power to Examine HIV-Related Exposures, Risk Factors, and Effective Interventions for Women." *Health Education and Behavior* 27 (5): 539-565.

Corinne Wilson

An Inappropriate Transition to Adulthood?

Teenage Pregnancy and the Discourses of Childhood in the UK

Teenage pregnancy has long been viewed as a social problem, and over the past three decades those who become pregnant during their teens have been subject to varying degrees of scrutiny. However, it is possible to argue that those young women experiencing teenage pregnancy and motherhood in the UK at present are being scrutinised more than ever before. Coupled with discourses that surround lone motherhood, discourses around childhood are informing discourses on teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. The focus by the present government on ensuring that every child makes a "successful transition to adulthood" alongside other policies introduced by the current UK Government have impacted on how pregnant teenagers and young mothers are viewed by society in general. This paper will highlight how current discourses of childhood reflect historical ideas and reaffirm negative stereotypes of pregnant teenagers and young motherhood.

This paper will focus on the historical development of discourses of childhood and explore how these discourses inform the primarily negative understandings of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood. In Great Britain, teenage pregnancy has long been viewed as a social problem and over the past three decades those young women experiencing pregnancy in their teens have been subject to varying degrees of scrutiny. However, it is possible to argue that young women experiencing teenage pregnancy and motherhood in England and Wales are being scrutinised more than ever before. Negative discourses dominate debates on teenage pregnancy and the overwhelming focus of policy is prevention. Many discourses inform debates on teenage pregnancy, lone motherhood, childhood, family discourses and constantly reaffirm the negative stereotypes of teenage mothers and their children.

The current Government, and the Prime Minister himself, have made no secret of how they perceive teenage pregnancy as "a cause and consequence of social exclusion" (Blair, 1999). The introduction of the Teenage Pregnancy Unit, with a specific remit to halve teenage pregnancy rates in England and Wales by 2010, further reaffirms the status of teenage pregnancy as a social problem. The constantly quoted statistics, not only by the Government but also by many academics, health professionals, the media and social commentators, that the UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Europe, justifies government intervention. Research in the area frequently focuses on the prevention of teenage pregnancy and very rarely questions why it appears imperative to reduce teenage pregnancy rates (Monahan, 2002; Collins, Lane and West Stevens, 2003; Eaton, 1998). More importantly in regards to this paper much of the existing work on teenage pregnancy makes connections with the social construction of lone motherhood but does not explore the connections between the social construction of childhood and discourses of teenage pregnancy.

Childhood: Under construction

In regards to the negative discourses of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood it is important to explore the beginnings of the construction of childhood as something distinct and separate from adulthood.

The construction of childhood and how we understand this concept at the beginning of twenty-first century Britain has its roots in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Today, a dominant and enduring Western representation of childhood is one where children are thought to inhabit a space that has been called a "walled garden" (Holt, 1975: 22). This "walled garden" protects children from the harsh realities of the outside world and children, it is argued, need protecting because they are essentially "innocent." This protection is provided by the adult who is responsible for the child's welfare. Adulthood is defined as in opposition to childhood. Children "grow up." Growing up is a process in which something—a child—turns into its opposite—an adult (Lee, 2001). As Nick Lee suggests we have become used to thinking that adults and children are in some way fundamentally different. The notion that adults are complete and children are some way incomplete gives adults the power and authority to decide how far a child has to go before counting as a person in their own right, deserving of rights, responsibilities and recognition.

Adulthood, with its associated notions of completeness, has operated as a kind of standard model by which we can measure a child's incompleteness (Lee, 2001). This notion of the incompleteness of the child acts as a justification for the distribution of power and authority, and the rights of adults, whether they are policy makers, teachers, parents, health professionals, carers etc., to make decisions about children, and sometimes make decisions on behalf of children or in the child's "best interests." Adults sometimes even make decisions about whether children are capable of making decisions for themselves.

The historical legacy

It is possible to chart the emergence of this specific construction in the UK to the early nineteenth century. The disappearance of children as active citizens was initiated by the restriction of child employment under the *Factories Act* of 1833. Prior to this time, Philippe Aries (1962) suggests, the ideology of childhood did not exist as once the child moved from the biological dependency of "infancy" they belonged to adult society. Their behaviour, dress and interaction were the same as adults. Children were actively engaged in paid employment and contributed to the domestic and national economy, and to some extent actively participated in social life. It is possible to argue that the restriction of child working conditions in nineteenth-century Britain was the result of a growing concern about the working conditions under which many children were employed and what was regarded as exploitation of child labour. But as Helmut Wintersberger (1994) argues, the disappearance of the child's contribution to both the national and domestic economy resulted in the disappearance of children as both subjects and actors. So while it is possible to interpret the *Factories Act* as a humane Act that reflected a genuine concern for child welfare and, in particular, the horrendous conditions under which many children were employed, the Act also served to marginalize many children and consign, in particular working class children, to a life of poverty. The numbers of children seeking work far outnumbered the opportunities available to them. This resulted in the abandonment of many working-class children, swelling the poor population, with petty offending as the only means of survival. Harry Hendrick (1994) argues this led to the replacing of the "factory child" with the "delinquent child." What developed in this period is a shift in focus from the exploitation of children, to the scrutinisation of the very "essence" of childhood.

One aspect of this increased scrutiny led to growing concern over juvenile delinquency, and this concern was influential in the strengthening of the "child rescue movement" and the development of Reformatories (1854) and Industrial Schools (1857). The Reformatories and Industrial schools were responsible for an institutional regime that concentrated on "saving" children through the imposition of a dominant middle class-based Victorian moral order. However, there was a distinction in the type of child accepted into Reformatories and Industrial schools. Barry Goldson (1997) views the Reformatories and Industrial schools as institutional responses to justice and welfare needs, which separated the "depraved" from the "deprived" or the "deserving" from the "undeserving." Reformatories took children from the "dangerous classes," aged 16 years and under, who had been convicted of an offence that was punishable by either imprisonment or penal servitude. The Industrial schools took children who were found begging or receiving alms, wandering and not having a home or any means of subsistence, the "perishing classes." More importantly, however, as Hendrick (1990) suggests, what was under construction was a carefully defined nature of childhood.

Underpinning the Reformatories and Industrial schools was not only the notion that children had to be "saved" and turned once again into children, but also that society needed "protecting" from these "delinquent" children. There is a clear development of the notion that children are different from adults and the innocence of children is something that should be protected and, perhaps more pertinently, when childhood "innocence" is lost, society itself is under threat.

By 1870, with the introduction of the *Education Ac*t, the processes of re-socialisation and moral correction initiated by the Reformatories and Industrial schools were consolidated with the state taking responsibility for "educating" all able-bodied children (Goldson, 1997). With the introduction of the state into child rearing practices the conceptualisation of a national childhood begins to emerge. By the end of the nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century childhood became an increasingly important focus for the whole of adult society. This is clearly seen in the approach of the current British government, where children occupy a central position in social policy, and as Hendrick argues,

> From an historical perspective government investment in children for the greater good of the nation has many antecedents, what is novel, is the way in which New Labour has "put children at the *centre* of a social investment strategy" and of social policy making. (1994: 8)

So, a key goal of policy in twenty-first century Britain is to ensure that children make a "successful" transition to adulthood. However as Allison James and Adrian James (2001) argue many of the policies introduced under the current Government represent an attempt to increase social control of the young as they are viewed as "spiralling out of control" and damaging the social and moral fabric of society. This is clearly illustrated in the current response to teenage pregnancy.

Every child matters?

Over the past nine years, in the UK, two ideas have dominated social policy, combating social exclusion and making work pay (Levitas, 2001). Ruth Levitas argues that these ideas identify two gendered groups that are particularly problematic for "social cohesion and social order"; "they are unemployed, unemployable and actually or potentially criminal young men, and sexually delinquent young women" (451). With particular reference to pregnant teenagers and young mothers, Jean Carabine (2001) furthers this argument by suggesting that it is the "sexually delinquent young woman" who is perceived as particularly threatening to the moral fabric of society. As Gillian Schofield (1994) suggests, motherhood takes place within a prescribed framework and motherhood outside this framework has negative connotations and can be seen as deviant,

> The marital status of a mother has become less a source of stigma but the age of a mother is seen as significant, not just in terms of individually deviant behaviour but as a source of social pollution. (xii)

So it appears that teenage mothers are inappropriate mothers because they are having sex outside marriage, children they cannot afford to support, but more importantly they are too young to be having sex let alone having babies (Carabine, 2001). I would suggest that not only are young mothers defined as "inappropriate" mothers but are also condemned as "inappropriate" children. What lies behind many of the concerns regarding teenage pregnancy and young motherhood is the contrast between young mothers and an idealised view of what life holds for other teenage girls (Schofield, 1994). So, young motherhood falls outside the expected gendered and class-based transition to adulthood for young women. The expected trajectory is for a young woman to gain an education, acquire a vocational skill and enjoy their youth before starting a family (Aapola, Gonick and Harris, 2005). Motherhood is traditionally at the heart of adult female identity; however, early motherhood is often described as an experience of lost opportunities (Erikson, 1980).

The importance of ensuring children become "successful" adults constructed in the early nineteenth-century has arguably reached a new peak at the beginning of the twenty-first century in current social policy in the UK. An example of this is the Connexions Agency, which tracks all 13–19 year olds with the aim of ensuring that all young people make a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood and working life (DofEE, 2000). In regards to teenage pregnancy and young motherhood, the Connexions Agency is the agency with which most young pregnant women and young mothers will come into contact. Alongside generic Personal Advisors, specialist Young Parent Advisors working within Connexions are seen as the key point of contact for all young parents. The Connexions Agency's underpinning ideology of the "successful transition to adulthood" and the explicit linking of successful adulthood with paid work is problematic. This ideology is essentially gendered. Historically, it is men who have been associated with paid work, and entry into paid work has traditionally been the signifier of adulthood in young men (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). However, while acknowledging the significant increase in women engaging in paid work and the current Government's attempts to de-gender paid work through limited policy initiatives, historically the transition to adulthood for women has been motherhood and arguably motherhood is still the most significant identifier of young women's transition to adulthood.

It is possible to suggest that the dominant discourse for interpreting the experiences of the vast majority of 13–19 year olds has been the transitions discourse. The Connexions Agency's stated aims are located within this discourse (Fergusson *et al.,* 2000). The transitions discourse suggests that the period from 13–19 years is constituted as a linear transition from school to employment or further education/higher education and this transition is secured through the assessments, judgments and interventions of teachers and careers staff. So the Connexions Service "assists" young people in making "realistic choices" and "right decisions" (DofEE, 2000). Pregnant teenagers and young mothers by implication are not making the "right decisions" or "realistic choices" and more significantly are making these decisions unaided. They will not follow this linear progression that is seen as imperative to making a "successful" transition to adulthood.

If an adult can decide how far a child has to go before they are deemed a person in their own right, I am suggesting that young pregnant women have taken this decision for themselves by choosing to become pregnant, continuing with a pregnancy, or choosing to become sexually active. Arguably this can be understood as an attempt to gain control and power on the part of the young woman, an attempt to make a transition to adulthood. However, they are deemed "inappropriate adults" as appropriate adults have, for example, financial security, a home, and are married before having a child. Thus, these young women do not achieve adult status. The pregnancy is a signifier of their immaturity, as Schofield suggests, "It is acceptable to be intellectually in advance of chronological age but other behaviours and roles are only acceptable at certain ages" (1994: 13).

This arguably results in their childhood status being prolonged through the intervention of agencies such as the Connexions Agency and justifies coercion to "help" young pregnant women and mothers make the "right decisions." If, as Anthony Giddens argues, "the prime motto for the new politics is no rights without responsibilities" (1998: 66), then pregnant teenagers and mothers do not meet the "responsibility" criteria. This is the clear message from the Connexions Agency through the identification of "at risk" target groups, pregnant teenagers and young mothers being one of these groups (see Social Exclusion Unit, 1999).

In 2001, the Children and Young People's Unit published the consultation document *Building a Strategy for Children and Young People* in which the government articulated its vision for the young, arguing the need to ensure that:

> Every child and young person deserves the best possible start in life, to be brought up in a safe, happy and secure environment, to be consulted, listened to and heard, to be supported as they develop into adulthood and maturity, and be given every opportunity to achieve their full potential. (2001: 2)

State intervention into teenage pregnancy and young motherhood highlights how achieving full potential in maturity is an uncertain term and ignores the gendered, class, and "race" implications of adulthood.

Young pregnant women and young mothers are perceived as being unable to make a successful transition to adulthood and they are always perceived as "unsuccessful" children. The recently published Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (2003), I would suggest, further adds weight to the argument I am putting forward regarding the ambiguous status of young pregnant women and mothers. The Green Paper sets out the Government's proposals to reform and improve children's care. The document includes several references to teenage pregnancy but again the language reflects prevention discourses:

> The policies set out in the Green Paper are designed both to protect children and maximise their potential.… It aims to reduce the numbers of children who experience educational failure, engage in offending or anti-social behaviour, suffer from ill health, or become teenage parents. (DofEE, 2003: 5)

The identification of certain "at risk" groups of children reproduces the tensions between protection and punishment, deserving and undeserving. Teenage mothers are "undeserving" of adult status, "undeserving" of protection (by the very fact that they have engaged in sexual activity) and "deserving" of "punishment" through the prolonging of their childhood status.

Negative discourses of teenage pregnancy are informed by the social construction of childhood. As Aapola, Gonick and Harris (2005) suggest,

> It is difficult for young women to make the "right" reproductive choices; if they become pregnant early, they are easily seen as educational failures and "welfare cheats," but again, if they postpone motherhood, they are seen as "selfish" and too career-orientated. (105)

So it is possible to argue that all women make their reproductive "choices" against the backdrop of "appropriate" motherhood; however, young women who become pregnant in their teens make their reproductive "choices" not only against a backdrop of "appropriate" motherhood but also constructions of "appropriate" childhood.

Conclusion

It is important to recognise that the current UK Government have placed children and young people at the centre of public and social policies like no previous government. This has the potential for positive outcomes for all children and young people. However, the Government has approached the issue of children and young people in a way that reflects rather than challenges traditional white middle class constructions of childhood.

In February 2007, the UNICEF annual report on *The State of the World's Children* placed the UK bottom of a league table for child well being across 21 industrialised countries. In defence of the current UK Government's record on children and young people, Jim Murphy, the Welfare Reform Minister, asserts: "If you look at the teenage pregnancies issue, for example, we are now at a 20-year low on teenage pregnancy levels … so there is an awful lot we have achieved."

This clearly demonstrates how teenage mothers fall outside the socially constructed notion of a "successful" childhood. Dominant discourses of teenage pregnancy in the UK always construct young motherhood in the negative. I would suggest we need to open up understandings of what a "successful" childhood is and challenge the indicators of a "successful" transition to adulthood. We then have the possibility of providing alternative discourses that counter the prevailing and dominant negative discourses of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood.

References

Aapola, S., M. Gonick and A. Harris. 2005. *Young Femininity: Girlhood Power and Social Change.* Houndsmill: Pelgrave Macmillan.

Aries, P. 1962. *Centuries of Childhood.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Blair, T. 1999. "Foreword." *Teenage Pregnancy.* Social Exclusion Unit. London: HMSO.

Carabine, J. 2001. "Constituting Sexuality Through Social Policy: The Case of Lone Motherhood 1834 and Today." *Social and Legal Studies* 10 (3): 291-314.

Children and Young People's Unit. 2001. *Building a Strategy for Children and Young People: A Consultation Document* London: CYPU.

Collins, M. E., T. S. Lane and J. West Stevens. 2003. "Teen Living Programs for Young Mothers Receiving Welfare: An Analysis of Implementation and Issues in Service Delivery." *Families in Society* 84 (1): 31.

Department for Education and Employment (DofEE). 2000. *The Connexions Service: Prospectus and Specification.* Nottingham: DofEE.

Eaton, L. 1998. "Why are children having children?" *Community Care* 16-22 April.

Erikson, E. 1980. *Identity and the Life Cycle.* New York: W. W. Norton and Co.

Every Child Matters. 2003. Norwich: Chief Secretary to the Treasury, HMSO.

Fergusson, R., D. Pye, G. Esland, E. McLaughlin and J. Munice. 2000. "Normalized Dislocation and New Subjectivities in Post 16 Markets for Education and Work." *Critical Social Policy* 20 (3): 283-305.

Giddens, A. 1998. *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy.* Cambridge: Polity

Goldson, B. 1997. "'Childhood': A introduction to Historical and Theoretical Analyses." *Childhood" in Crisis?* Ed. P. Scraton. London: UCL Press. 1-27.

Hendrick, H. 1990. "Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretative Survey, 1800 to the Present." *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood.* Eds. A. James and A. Prout. London: Falmer Press.34-62.

Hendrick, H. 1994. *Child Welfare in England 1872–1989* London: Routledge.

Holt, J. 1975. *Escape from Childhood.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

James, A. L. and A. James. 2001. "Tightening the Net: Children, Community and Control." *British Journal of Sociology* 52 (2): 211-228.

Lee, N. 2001. *Childhood and Society: Growing up in an Age of Uncertainty.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Levitas, R. 2001. "Against Work: A Utopian Incursion into Social Policy." *Critical Social Policy* 21 (4): 449-465.

Mac an Ghaill, M. 1994. *The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexualities and Schooling.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Monahan, D. J. 2002. "Teen Pregnancy Prevention Outcomes: Implications for Social Work Practice" in *Families in Society* 83 (4): 431-439.

Murphy, J. 2007. *Newsnight.* BBC Broadcast, 13th February.

Schofield, G. 1994. *The Youngest Mothers: The Experience of Pregnancy and Motherhood among Young Women of School Age*. Aldershot: Avebury.

Social Exclusion Unit. 1999. *Teenage Pregnancy.* London: HMSO.

UNICEF. 2006. *The State of the World's Children 2007: Women and Children, the Double Dividend of Gender Equality.* New York: UNICEF.

Wintersberger, H. 1994. "Costs and Benefits: The Economics of Childhood." *Childhood Matters, Social Theory, Practice and Politics.* Eds. J. Qvortrup *et. al.* Aldershot: Avebury. 213-247.

Deborah Keys

Complex Lives

Young Motherhood, Homelessness and Partner Relationships

Research has focused on identifying commonalities amongst women who give birth whilst young. This article, which reports on how young mothers experience and understand their relationships with the fathers of their children, seeks to convey the heterogeneity of young mothers and their lives. It draws upon interviews with 24 young women who experienced motherhood within the context of homelessness in Australia. For some, motherhood had preceded, or indeed provoked, homelessness; for others pregnancy had occurred during, or subsequent to, a period of homelessness. This article explores the ways in which partner relationships intersected with the experience of motherhood. The interviews highlighted the diverse and shifting nature of young women's relationships with the fathers of their children and demonstrated that categorizing young mothers as single or partnered obscures the more complex reality of lived experience. Expectations of partners varied greatly. Most of the young mothers grew up in single parent households and some regarded partners as extraneous. A key feature of many of the young mothers' stories was that of "growing up" and fulfilling the responsibilities of parenthood. The fathers were similarly expected to take on the role of fatherhood. For several young women, motherhood was associated with a newfound sense of agency and independence which impacted on their existing relationships and their views about relationships in the future.

Nicole and Tim* have been together since Nicole was 14. Nicole says they were both rejected by their parents as children. They were homeless at 15 and stuck together during hard times while Nicole completed school and Tim did his apprenticeship. Nicole says "Me and Tim really wanted to have kids together because we always knew that, regardless of our relationship together, we'd always be friends—best friends…. He was my one constant." At 18 Nicole became pregnant. "We just, you know, brushed it under the rug because we were in denial.… It wasn't really reality for Tim, like, it didn't really hit home with him until I had her." However, they prepared for the baby together and Tim attended the birth. But a few months after the baby was born they "stopped being partners" for a while. In Nicole's words "we grew up together, we grew apart at the same time … we decided it was best for the baby if we didn't live together full on." Tim continued to see his daughter, however, and when Nicole found accommodation he offered to move back in to help with the rent. "He wanted to be closer to the baby anyway." Nicole isn't sure whether they are a couple. The relationship isn't sexual but she says she falls into the role of housewife. She wants to become more independent in case Tim finds a new partner and can no longer share the rental costs and says if she found a new partner, "Tim would have a mental breakdown." Their future is unclear, although they seem to be becoming closer. "He's talking about getting married. I think it's too late for that … we've had a baby together. We've been together for such a long time, we share everything. So I don't think you can get much more married than that."

Introduction

All too often the categories "young mothers," "teen mothers," and "adolescent mothers" are employed in the community, in the media, in research, and in policy and practice in ways that obscure the individual circumstances of those young women who give birth when young. Only recently have researchers in the field highlighted the importance of unpacking these terms and recognizing the wide variety of circumstances in which young women give birth and parent (Kelly, 1999; Luker 1996; McMahon, 1995; Schofield, 1994). Differences in relation to pregnancy intention, socio-economic situation, culture, age and developmental stage, understandings of self, world views, life trajectories, and of course relationships, interconnect and contribute to the ways young women experience motherhood. These aspects are played out within the broader context of social, economic and political landscapes.

Little has been written about those who father children to young mothers. When fathers do become the subject of research, the focus has tended to be on their demographics (Kiernan, 1997; Tan and Quinlivan, 2004) and ongoing involvement with or support of their children (Gavin *et al.*, 2002; Rhein *et al.*, 1997). Some studies have focused on whether young single mothers are likely to establish lasting relationships in later life, others have looked at whether partnered young mothers fare better, socio-economically, and in relation to wellbeing, than those who are sole parents (Bunting and McAuley, 2004; Coley, 1998; Roye and Balk, 1996). The dynamics of the relationships has received scant attention.

In this article I focus directly on the relationships of young mothers with their babies' fathers. Inevitably this touches upon relationships between the fathers and their children, however this subject is too extensive to be dealt with here. I will draw upon stories told by 24 young mothers in order not only to uncover any common findings regarding relationships with men but also to illustrate the complexity of these relationships in the lives of this group of young women and how this intersected with their experience of motherhood.

Description of the study

This article draws upon a one-year study undertaken in Melbourne, Australia, in which semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 young mothers (aged between 17 and 26 at the time of interview) who had experienced homelessness. The key focus of the study was the impact of motherhood upon homelessness. The participants were recruited through homelessness accommodation and support services. In Australia, the term "homelessness" is commonly employed to encompass a range of situations from street-based living to unstable housing. Histories of homelessness among the young women varied greatly, with some experiencing only a brief period of homelessness and others cycling in and out of homelessness over a longer period. A minority spent extended periods without stable accommodation. Most had left home by the age of 16. All of the young women were relatively stably accommodated at the time of interview, although most were in temporary supported "transitional" accommodation. Previous research with young people experiencing homelessness found that they identified living in such accommodation as a form of homelessness (Mallett *et al*., 2006).

Of the 24 young women interviewed, most had one child (n=18), two had two children, three had three and one was pregnant with her first child. Of those who were already mothers, five were also pregnant. They were aged between 15 and 23 at the time their first baby was born, although many had had earlier miscarriages, stillbirths or terminations. The average maternal age at first birth was 19.

Relationship status: Shifting and complex

Intimate partner relationships are infinitely various, differing in form, meaning, longevity and stability, intensity, importance, and provision of emotional rewards or deficits, to name but a few varying aspects. However, this diversity is often overlooked when we speak of young mothers' relationships. When we attempt to conceive of these relationships we immediately confront the risk of over-simplification at the most fundamental level—that of partnership status. Studies commonly note young women's partnership status; however, stating numbers of single and partnered women masks the complexity that is lived experience, reducing a continuum of intimacy and a range of living circumstances to a misleading binary division. Such a reduction also obscures the fluidity of relationships. Young women experience and conceive of relationships in widely disparate ways. Here I take young mothers' nominated partner status as a starting point to explore the complexity of their lived experience.

Eleven of the 24 young women interviewed reported having partners at the time of the interview, 12 described themselves as single, and Nicole, whose story begins this article, was unable to say whether she was single or partnered. Nine of the eleven said they were in a relationship with the father of their youngest child (five mothers had children to two different men) and two said they were with a new partner. This article focuses on the relationships young women shared with the fathers of their children.

Nicole's story highlights the complexity of relationships between young mothers and the fathers of their children. Nicole's relationship with her baby's father has waxed and waned and changed in nature over five years, during which period, as Nicole says, they have grown up. They share a continuing bond forged through a long relationship and a lack of connection to others. This was one of the most lasting, albeit transforming, relationships represented in the study; however, several other young women had ongoing or "off and on again" relationships based upon similarly strong bonds and in the context of minimal or absent family relationships.

For the young women in the study, maintaining an intimate partner relationship with the fathers of their children did not always correlate with living together, and living apart was not always indicative of a lack of romantic attachment. In a quote that provides an example of the less than conventional ways in which relationships were enacted, one young woman who described herself as partnered said: "So when he hasn't got anywhere to stay, he pretty much stays at our house. And I sleep in the same room as the baby.… He's there pretty much every day"(Amy).

Of the eleven women who defined themselves as partnered, six—two of whom were married—lived with their partners at the time of the interview. A further three had partners who lived with them some of the time. These shifting accommodation arrangements were sometimes due to periods of incarceration—six said that the fathers of their children were currently, or had in the past been, in jail. Their own or their partners' homelessness also affected whether they lived jointly or separately. The constraints of government funded youth accommodation led to involuntary separation in some cases. Pragmatism, emotional ties, or a combination of both (as in Nicole's case) commonly played a part in decisions about living arrangements. Where pragmatism led to shared accommodation between ex-partners, this sometimes led to the renewal of sexual or romantic relationships. An ex-partner's vulnerability to homelessness adds to the likelihood of a less clear break, as even separated women felt an obligation to accommodate homeless partners for short periods when asked. This was sometimes at significant cost, for example when the fathers had problematic patterns of drug use or exhibited violent behaviour that caused distress and jeopardized the accommodation, throwing young mothers back into homelessness.

Living apart from partners was also sometimes the result of other practical barriers, usually associated with poverty, such as overcrowding (if sharing the family home) or inability to access affordable housing. Loss of jobs in the unskilled labour market has created an environment where many of the fathers struggled to find employment and secure rental accommodation. Few of the mothers were attempting to enter the job market due to the age of their children, but they were similarly poorly positioned in the rental market due to poverty and discrimination.

Given that many of the pregnancies occurred during the years when relationships are often relatively short-term it is unsurprising that more than half of the mothers were no longer in relationships with the fathers of their children. Other studies have found similar rates of relationship breakdown (e.g. Speak, Cameron and Gilroy, 1997). Of course relationships continued or ended for many reasons but the advent of parenthood, with its subsequent expectations of roles and its responsibilities, figured strongly as a contributing factor in the reports of several young women.

Roles and responsibilities

Children were conceived within the full range of intimate relationships and young women entered into motherhood with a wide variety of expectations around the roles and responsibilities of the fathers of their children. Most of those who described themselves as partnered spoke of their relationships in fairly positive terms; three were planning or contemplating marriage. In a couple of cases, young women attributed their exit from homelessness to their establishment of relationships with their partners. A few of the young women reported that their partners were very supportive; others were less effusive and appeared less emotionally connected with their partners. Several were critical of the level of support they received with parenting, although they appeared to be resigned to the situation. Of course, some men were unaware that they had fathered children or had absented themselves during the pregnancy or soon after the birth.

> *Tyson's father doesn't know he exists. Jarrah's father, he took off I think I was about six months pregnant. Okay, he still messages and stuff.... He promised to come and see him when I gave birth, and he didn't do that.* (Yasmin)

For some of those who described themselves as single, initial expectations of an ongoing relationship had not been realized.

> *I thought "why not"... at the time I thought that me and him would be really good together "cause we just got back together and everything was fine. And we loved the idea of being pregnant, so in the end it was grouse, but ... as soon as I had the baby, he just started going out and taking drugs and that was it.* (Kim)

Those who had been in less secure relationships suspected from the start that the fathers would play little or no role in their lives or those of their children.

> *It was pretty easy deciding to keep him. I just decided I really didn't care what his father was going to do. He's already got a two-year-old daughter and he doesn't see her much.* (Natasha)

Natasha was just one of several young mothers who spoke of partners as extraneous, views they had formed in response to their recent experience with their partners or ex-partners or had held over time.

> *I do remember as a child always saying and envisioning myself, well being a young mum and a young single mum I think mainly because having only grown up with my single mum.* (Holly)

Almost all of the young women in the study had grown up without their fathers. Nineteen had parents who had separated while they were children; several had either no knowledge of their birth fathers or had only met them in later life. Most had little or no contact with their fathers and only four out of 24 gave an unequivocal yes when asked whether they could turn to their father for any kind of support—16 responded with a flat "no." One young mother observed that there weren't any male role models in her life and commented "I don't know how to take men, how to handle men." These family backgrounds may have contributed to their view of fathers/partners as unnecessary. However, some young women said that their own fatherless childhoods had led them to view the presence of fathers in children's lives, if not partners in their own, as important. The men who father children with young women commonly come from similar backgrounds to those women (Coley and Chase-Lansdale, 1998; Pirog-Good, 1995; Tan and Quinlivan, 2004). Young mothers often reported that the fathers of their children came from disrupted and often violent family backgrounds where negative experiences of fathering or a lack of fathering were common; this is a frequent finding (Quinlivan and Condon, 2005; Tan and Quinlivan, 2004). Further research is needed to ascertain how this may contribute to young fathers' views on partnering and parenthood.

A key feature of young women's stories was that of "growing up" and becoming responsible. In discussing their own process of maturation young women often made comparisons between themselves—taking on responsibility—and the fathers of their children—being irresponsible and immature. A few young women, including Nicole, told a slight variation of this story—wherein she and her partner were growing up together. However, in all these narratives, young mothers still commonly felt they had taken on their new roles and responsibilities before the fathers had.

> *I said, "Look, if you want to put drugs and friends and partying first that's fine, I can deal with the independence of being a mum on my own". But it took him a few months to realize that "oh, she's right this time."* (Tamara)

Agency and independence

Tamara was only one of several young women who issued their partners with ultimatums in regard to what they deemed irresponsible or unacceptable behaviour. Termination of the relationship when the partner failed to change his behaviour was not uncommon. Clearly, the view of young mothers as being routinely abandoned by their babies' fathers is an over-simplification that fails to take account of the agency of young women (Davies, McKinnon and Rains, 1999). The findings of this research support Davies, McKinnon and Rains's contention that "pregnancy and motherhood became a frame within which [young mothers] engaged in an active reassessment of the baby-father as a partner and a father" (1999: 40).

Some young mothers were better placed than others to take action in the light of negative re-assessments. The nature of the relationship, the young mother's circumstances, in particular the availability of resources and alternate support, together with levels of self-confidence, self-esteem and sense of agency all affected their ability to exert some control within their relationships. Those with a strong supportive connection with at least one parent tended to be better positioned to take an active role. Alyssa had a very close relationship with her mother and sisters. She demonstrated a strong sense of self-entitlement and independence when she ended a long-term relationship after her partner's infidelity resulted in concurrent pregnancies. She stated:

> *I know he felt "She's having my baby, she's not going anywhere" so I thought I can't have anyone walk over me like that. I want to show my daughter to be strong as a woman, to walk away even though you do love that person. I needed him at that time and he wasn't there for me so I thought he will never be there for me.* (Alyssa)

Some of the young women had been able to exercise little control in their lives, including their sexual and reproductive lives, over a long period. Several had grown up in State care and had felt disempowered by the experience. Many had grown up with violence—three disclosed sexual abuse from stepfamily members and eight reported family violence. Eight also reported violence from the fathers of their children. Two pregnancies were known to be, and two others were suspected to be, the result of rape. One young woman whose partner had regularly raped her felt she had no choice but to have the baby.

> *He didn't give me a choice. He goes he doesn't want me to have an abortion because he'll regret it in the end. But then he's not ready for a baby but he might be nine months down the track.* (Yasmin)

Yasmin said that her past drug dependence had contributed to her sense of a lack of control over life so far. In her case, rape and family rejection had preceded her heroin addiction. She told of having a series of boyfriends, some violent, to whom she'd felt obligated in a narrative in which relationships (and four pregnancies) were things that happened to her rather than events involving active engagement. Other studies have reported similar passivity around ability to affect the course of life (Morehead and Soriano, 2005). Given the backgrounds of the young women in this study, in which poverty severely constrained opportunities and family breakup and violence were commonly experienced, low expectations around ability to impact on life's direction or outcomes would not be surprising. However, Yasmin's story was not typical; a number of young women had demonstrated considerable levels of agency. This was so even in cases where relationships had been characterized by mutual drug dependence and/or violence,

> *I couldn't handle being slammed against walls anymore … and I didn't want my girls growing up remembering everything … I want them to have a good life.* (Hannah)

Motherhood became the frame for re-assessment and the impetus for action. Several mothers described an often newfound belief in their ability to be independent.

> *It's been on and off for years. It took me to stand on my own two feet and realize I didn't need him or the crap that came with him. I learnt to walk away—I'd had enough* (Megan)

Even Nicole, whose relationship was in a kind of limbo, identified the need to be independent and had taken steps towards establishing financial independence.

Future relationships

Overall, the young women interviewed expressed the view that their children were the most important people in their lives now and caring for them and providing them with opportunities took precedence over all other aspects of life. When asked about hopes for the future those who were without partners appeared disinterested in forming new relationships. Only one expressed a desire to have a partner, reflecting that it was difficult to go out and meet other men when you had a young child. Another said she would like to create a family for her son's sake but she couldn't envisage it happening. Two were adamant that they wanted to remain single. This disinterest may, of course, be related to the high level of involvement with their children characteristic of the early years of parenting.

Several expressed a concern that becoming involved with another man may undermine their newfound sense of agency and independence. A common theme was that of protecting themselves and their children by trying to have some control over the relationships they may form in the future. They indicated that if they did consider having a relationship they would be more selective about who they got involved with in the future. This wariness was sometimes due to having negative experiences in the past and sometimes due to a newly identified need for stability prompted by motherhood. Yasmin and Alyssa were concerned both that their children may be confused about their parentage should they embark on a new relationship and about the possibility of negative repercussions for themselves and their children if those new relationships broke up.

> *Right now I'm not interested in another boyfriend.... I've got my daughter; I can't bring another man home.... Say I do find another boyfriend next week and he's good to me for five years, and then after them five years, you know, he does something dramatic then it's not only gonna break my heart, it's gonna be my daughter's too.* (Alyssa)

Conclusion

Listening to the stories of young mothers' lives is a salient reminder that this is not a homogeneous group, and research which fails to recognize, and distinguish between, the widely differing backgrounds and circumstances of young mothers will fail to provide the data necessary to devise appropriate responses to those young mothers who struggle in difficult circumstances to achieve their goal of a good life for their children. Young women's relationships with the fathers of their children are both positive and negative, often simultaneously. They can assist young women to exit—or catapult them back into—homelessness. These findings confirm that we cannot continue to carry out research around young motherhood without acknowledging that motherhood is a social process whereby relationships rather than the characteristics or circumstances of individual players—the mothers, the fathers—are key to outcomes. Finding out how young women experience and perceive these relationships and how this may influence concrete consequences such as homelessness and affect sense of self, including self-esteem, sense of agency and independence, is critical to devising appropriate policy and practice responses to support young mothers in our communities.

This research was funded by a Telstra Community Development Grant.

*Pseudonyms have been used throughout

References

Bunting, L. and C. McAuley. 2004. "Research Review: Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood: The Contribution of Support." *Child and Family Social Work* 9: 207-215.

Coley, R. L. and P. L. Chase-Lansdale. 1998. "Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood: Recent Evidence and Future Directions." *American Psychologist* 53 (2): 152-166.

Davies, L., McKinnon, M. and P. Rains. 1999. "'On My Own': A New Discourse of Dependence and Independence from Teen Mothers." *A Critical Feminist Perspective on Teen Pregnancy and Parenthood*. Eds. Wong, J. and D. Checkland.Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 38-59.

Gavin, L. E., M. M. Black, S. Minor, Y. Abel, M. A.Papas, and M. E. Bentley. 2002. "Young Disadvantaged Fathers' Involvement with Their Infants: An Ecological Perspective." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 31: 266-276.

Kelly, D. M. 1999. "A Critical Feminist Perspective on Teen Pregnancy and Parenthood." *A Critical Feminist Perspective on Teen Pregnancy and Parenthood*. Eds. Wong, J. and D. Checkland. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 52-70.

Kiernan, K.E. 1997. "Becoming a Young Parent: A Longitudinal Study of Associated Factors." *The British Journal of Sociology* 48 (3): 406-428.

Luker, K. 1996. *Dubious Conceptions: The Politics of Teenage Pregnancy*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Mallett, S., Rosenthal, D., Keys, D. and P. Myers. 2006. *Moving Out, Moving On: Young People's Pathways in and Through Homelessness.* Youth Homelessness Action Plan: Second Stage Report. Victorian Homelessness Strategy, Office of Housing, Department of Human Services, Victoria, Australia.

McMahon, M. 1995. *Engendering Motherhood: Identity and Self-Transformation in Women's Lives*. New York: The Guildord Press.

Morehead, A. and G. Soriano. 2005. "Teenage Mothers: Constructing Family." *Family Matters* 72: 64-71.

Pirog-Good, M. A. 1995. "The Family Background and Attitudes of Fathers." *Youth and Society* 26 (3): 351-376.

Quinlivan, J. A. and J. Condon. 2005. "Anxiety and Depression in Fathers in Teenage Pregnancy." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 39: 915-920.

Rhein, L. M., K. R. Ginsburg, D. F. Schwarz, J. Pinto-Martin, H. Zhao, A. P. Morgan and G. B. Slap. 1997. "Teen Father Participation in Child Rearing: Family Perspectives." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 21: 244-252.

Roye, C. F. and S. J. Balk. 1996. "The Relationship of Partner Support to Outcomes for Teenage Mothers and Their Children: A Review." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 19: 86-93.

Schofield, G. 1994. *The Youngest Mothers: The Experience of Pregnancy and Motherhood Among Young Women of School Age*, Aldershot, UK: Avebury.

Speak, S., Cameron, S. and R. Gilroy. 1997. *Young Single Fathers: Participation in Fatherhood—Barriers and Bridges*. Family Policy Centre.

Tan, L. H. and J. A. Quinlivan. 2004. "Domestic Violence, Single Parenthood, and Fathers in the Setting of Teenage Pregnancy." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 38: 201-207.

Deborah L. Byrd

If You Build It, They May Not be Able to Get There

The Challenges of Mentoring Teenaged and Low-Income Single Mothers Through an Undergraduate Service-Learning Course

This essay grows out of the experience of teaching a Women's Studies service-learning seminar entitled "Single Motherhood in the Contemporary U.S.: Myths and Realities." It identifies the challenges that arose as the professor and her students sought to support the mission of the Family Development Research Program, a grant-funded program designed to provide a variety of mentoring services to teenaged mothers. The article identifies obstacles activist teachers and students are likely to encounter as they partner with social service workers to create ambitious, sustainable programs for young and low-income women. Among the topics discussed are the challenges of bridging class divides, addressing space and funding needs, and dealing with transportation and liability issues. The students designed and implemented a broad range of programs that were useful not only to the teen mothers, but also to several other groups of low-income single mothers, such as those residing at a local homeless shelter and those participating in a PA Department of Welfare-sponsored program. The essay concludes by noting how valuable partnerships between a college and multiple social service agencies can be when one is attempting to build and sustain programs that depend on grant funding. The closing words are given to two teenaged single moms, who speak of the important role these collaboratively designed support programs have played in their personal and academic development.

How can undergraduate students support the valuable work being done by dedicated social service workers and in so doing, get experience negotiating the obstacles one inevitably encounters when engaging in collaborative efforts to address issues of institutionalized injustice? How can twenty-year-old women who have never been mothers best support pregnant and parenting teenaged girls? How can women who attend a college where the yearly tuition is $40,000 form meaningful bonds with the residents of a shelter for homeless women?

How can one best support mothers who have many responsibilities and little free time, mothers who are too poor to own a car and/or too young to drive one? How does one build—and sustain—a partnership between a small, private, "elite" college and several community service organizations that have no history of working together?

Establishing a college-community partnership

These are issues that arose as I planned and implemented Lafayette College's first Women's Studies service-learning course, an upper-level undergraduate seminar entitled "Single Motherhood in the Contemporary U.S.: Myths and Realities." Because I wanted to stress the interconnectedness of class, race, and gender, and because I had arranged for my students to work with parenting and pregnant teenaged girls enrolled at a local high school, many readings focused on the cultural ideologies and institutions that most powerfully affect young and low-income single mothers. Early in the semester my students also read case histories of adolescent single mothers, the majority of whom are poor or near poor when they become pregnant.[1] These texts prepared the college students to interact thoughtfully and respectfully with the high school mothers, for the readings dispel the notion that the U.S. is a meritocracy, reveal the inaccuracy of the prevalent and demeaning stereotype of the lazy and self-indulgent "Welfare Queen," and expose the falsity of the common belief that girls who become mothers as teenagers are sexually promiscuous, irresponsible individuals who inevitably do irreparable harm to themselves and their children.

In the initial offering of the course, I informed my students that their main project would be to find effective ways to support the Family Development Research Program, a grant-funded program designed to reduce the high dropout rate of pregnant girls at a local high school.[2] The physician who wrote the initial (2000) grant had convinced a local childcare organization to establish a daycare facility at the high school; FDRP grant monies pay for a bus that transports the girls and their children to and from school and for half the salary of the nurse/social worker who, along with the high school guidance counselor, mentors the young mothers. In addition to trying to ensure that a high percentage of the girls graduate from high school on time, then pursue schooling or training that will allow them to earn a living wage for themselves and their children, FDRP has the following goals: to ensure healthy pregnancies and deliveries, decrease the frequency of premature birth and low infant birth weight, teach parenting skills and provide other kinds of support that will reduce the incidence of child abuse, provide ongoing healthcare screening, and minimize the number of girls having a second, closely spaced pregnancy.[3] Home visitation and mentoring services are provided to the young mothers until their child turns five, another goal being to ensure that the teenagers' children are kindergarten-ready at the appropriate age.[4]

In 2000, six girls participated in FDRP; five years later the two staff members were mentoring 22 high school students and 17 recent graduates.

The nurse who works most closely with these young mothers was delighted that my students wanted to help the FDRP staff fulfill its goals, though initially we weren't sure exactly what form—other than tutoring—that assistance might take. At our first meeting with the high school students, my Women's Studies students distributed a survey, listing some of our ideas for programs and urging the teens to let us know which of these—and more importantly, what other activities—they would find enjoyable and/or useful. A few of the high school students were openly skeptical of the value of spending time with the college students. "Are any of ***you*** moms?" one teen (who ended up actively participating in our programs) pointedly asked, her tone clearly conveying her suspicion that she was unlikely to benefit from interaction with girls she (falsely) assumed were "spoiled rich kids."[5] But most of the teens expressed interest in the proposed interaction, perhaps in part because I shared with them the information that I and three of my four sisters are single mothers.

Finding time and space

By the end of the semester, the six students in the first offering of WS 353 had formed close relationships with the ten high school students who regularly attended the sessions we sponsored. They also had accomplished remarkable things, which I will detail later. But our success in supporting the teen mothers required a great deal of resourcefulness and tenacity. The first challenge we faced was finding a time and place at which the college and high school students could meet. Because the girls who elect to participate in FDRP are balancing their responsibilities as mothers, students, and in most cases, part-time workers in the paid labor force, much of the mentoring they receive from the FDRP staff occurs one-on-one in the girls' homes. The staff does require that most of those enrolled in the program attend a 50-minute "Lunch and Learn" session once a month, but for a number of reasons, this venue wasn't suitable for our programs.[6]

It turned out that a few of the teen mothers could stay after school on Wednesdays, so this became our first regularly scheduled meeting time. But since we wanted to make our programs accessible to the other teens, we began searching for additional times and places at which the two groups could meet. We considered having gatherings on the college campus, but lack of safe and affordable transportation made this idea unfeasible.[7] We resolved this problem—at least for some of the teen mothers—by forming a partnership with the much more accessible Third Street Alliance for Women and Children, a non-profit that (among many other things) provides housing and support services to low-income women and their children.[8] Through a lucky coincidence, TSA had just opened up a new wing that was to house pregnant and parenting teenaged girls from the foster care system; the Director of Residential Services thought the programs we were designing for the high school moms would appeal to and benefit not only this incoming group, but also TSA's older single mothers.[9] So we began holding a second set of sessions on Monday evenings.

Questioning the mothers and questioning our assumptions

As those who have taught service-learning courses know, one of the guiding principles of service-learning pedagogy is the importance of listening to one's community partner, of allowing the individuals one is seeking to support to articulate their concerns, goals, and needs. Thus just as they had done with the teen mothers, my Women's Studies students through conversation and a survey asked TSA residents to guide them in designing programs. Although the lives of the two groups of single mothers were quite different in some respects, one striking commonality surfaced in the survey responses: all the mothers had very busy, demanding lives and were particularly interested in activities that would be fun, creative, and relaxing.

The most popular suggestion, made by a college student who was an avid "scrapbooker," was to hold sessions at which the mothers and mothers-to-be could make baby or memory books. This activity turned out to be beneficial in three major ways. First, through the collaborative experience of scrapbooking, the single mothers and the 20-year old, non-parenting college students became comfortable interacting with one another. Secondly, because making baby and memory books often led participants to share with one another their family histories and future goals, the college students obtained information that helped them design subsequent programs that the mothers found interesting and useful. Last but not least, regular interaction with women whose lives are in many ways different from their own gave the college students a greater incentive—and an enhanced ability—to understand the ideologies and public policies that affect, profoundly and often negatively, young and low-income single women's experiences of motherhood.

The experience of interacting simultaneously with two groups of single mothers also foregrounded for me and the college students how important it was for us to constantly scrutinize our assumptions. For example, as we contemplated what might happen when the teenagers got together with single mothers in their mid-20s or 30s, we thought exclusively of ways the younger moms would benefit. Because many TSA residents are high school dropouts or have GEDs rather than diplomas, these women often have difficulty finding jobs that allow them to be financially self-sufficient. Thus my students and I assumed that interacting with the TSA residents would further one of the primary goals of the FDRP—would increase the high school students' awareness of the importance of finishing high school, then pursuing additional schooling or professional training. We also thought the high school students would benefit in two other ways: (1) should they ever find themselves in need of shelter or other kinds of support services nonprofits like TSA provide (such as dealing with substance abuse and domestic violence issues), they would know that such institutions exist, and (2) they could receive advice on childrearing from women who had greater parenting experience than they had.

The high school students did benefit from the interaction in these ways. But they also reminded us of something we had forgotten: the fact that young people can instruct and motivate their elders. Because the teen mothers have convenient access to an excellent, inexpensive daycare and receive extensive support from the FDRP staff, many take it as a given that they—like almost all earlier participants in the program—will graduate on time, then enroll in college or high-quality job training programs. The teenagers' ability to juggle school work, part-time jobs, and mothering—and the confidence most had that they could continue to do so after high school—was inspirational to the older single moms.

In fact, the TSA residents' excitement about furthering their formal education resulted in one of the most important programs facilitated by my students, an eight-week "college prep" course conducted at TSA by the director of Northampton Community College's New Options/New Choices program. New Options/New Choices is a grant-funded program that since 1980 has been supporting low-income individuals, especially single mothers, who wish to pursue post-secondary education.[10] One of the students in my course arranged for the director of New Options to come to TSA to provide an overview of the program's services; these range from assisting individuals in choosing a career path to helping them become computer literate, obtain scholarships, or find affordable childcare. The NONC director was so impressed by the enthusiasm displayed by the TSA residents that she agreed to conduct the eight-week session at the shelter so that these low-income single mothers would not have to worry about childcare (which was provided by my students) or about finding the time and money to get to and from the community college (nine miles away). Most of the TSA residents attended these workshops, as did several other low-income single mothers who are mentored by the nurses who oversee the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare's Nurse-Family Partnership, women who had learned about our service-learning activities through the nurse who is the linchpin of FDRP.[11]

Liability, transportation, and funding issues

Another project we began working on was a series of free "Mommy and Me/Water Babies" classes for women with children ages six months to two years. One of my students was on the college's swim team, which was willing to provide a properly certified instructor, and TSA was willing to give us access to the center's pool, which is often used for swimming classes for older children and adults. Several of the young mothers said they were interested in such a venture, so everything seemed to be in order. But then we had to deal with liability issues. To make a long story short, it took us the entire semester to figure out a way to provide adequate insurance coverage for the program we had in mind. Then, when we tried to mount the sessions on Sunday afternoons in February, none of the high school mothers attended. The weather was bitterly cold and understandably, the teens didn't want to wait for public buses or walk to TSA with infants and toddlers. Finding a safe, accessible, and affordable way for young and low-income single mothers and their children to get to sites where college-sponsored (and other) educational programs are being held continues to be a major challenge. Recently, I and the NFP and FDRP nurse-social workers have joined others in creating a local Maternal Health Coalition; one of the coalition's top priorities is addressing the above-mentioned transportation issues.

Another challenge I and my service-learning students continue to face is finding a way to pay for the support programs we design. In addition to purchasing supplies for activities like scrapbooking and light refreshments for our weekly sessions, my students and I must locate funding for the more ambitious programs we run once a month. At these events, which generally draw from 40 to 50 women, we provide door prizes as well as dinner for the mothers and their children. For example, my fall 2006 seminar students held a "Spa Night" that featured free yoga instruction and a spoken word poetry performance; during this three-hour event, one group of college students gave the mothers manicures and pedicures while another group watched the women's children. Scattered throughout the room were informational tables on such topics as resume writing, stress management, and free and inexpensive family activities in the local area. To register for door prizes, mothers had to visit each station, where they had the opportunity to pick up handouts and brochures; play games that were both fun and informative; and converse informally about the subjects on which a third group of students had done research.

These programs have been incredibly well received, but of course they are costly. Thankfully, I teach at a college that generously funds both its academic programs and student organizations; over half the expenses my students and I have incurred have been covered by the WS program or by campus organizations to which my students belong. And it seems likely that in the near future our new President and Provost, both of whom have expressed a strong interest in service-learning pedagogy, may establish a budget line for those engaged in community-based teaching and research. Until that time, however, my students and I will be forced to devote quite a bit of time to soliciting donations from local businesses. Although I look forward to having access to a budget, engaging in fundraising definitely has been a worthwhile educational experience for my students. Not only have they learned how essential money can be to the success of activist projects, but they also have had a chance to educate other college students and many of our city's residents about the needs and concerns of one constituency of our community—its young and low-income single mothers.

In addition to the programs I've mentioned, the college students have provided one-on-one tutoring, especially for teens who are on maternity leave. They have twice conducted a "baby items" drive at the college, as well as located and transported free used furniture to the homes of low-income mothers. And they've created a *Parenting Resource Manual* on topics in which the mothers have expressed interest; these include breastfeeding, child nutrition, child discipline, child development stages, choosing educational and age-appropriate toys, baby-proofing one's home, and tips for saving money on a wide variety of parenting-related expenses. Some of these topics have been the basis of brief, interactive presentations at one of the weekly meetings; others can be the basis for presentations by future WS 353 students. The idea, of course, was to create a manual that could be revised and expanded in subsequent years.[12]

Creating a sustainable partnership

As the phrase "subsequent years" suggests, it was important to me from the outset that I create a relationship with the FDRP (and as the collaboration expanded, with Third Street Alliance and the Nurse-Family Partnership) that would be sustainable; I did not want to enter into a partnership with community organizations that have ongoing needs if I could offer only one-time, short-term support. Thus I arranged in advance to offer the service learning seminar in the fall, then teach a spring semester literature-based Women's Studies course in which students could participate in the "single moms program" for their major course project. I redesigned "Literary Women" so that many of the texts focused on low-income women, and I began the semester with a video on teen mothers that a graduate of the FDRP program had produced for a college course, actively trying to cultivate student interest in this ongoing service-learning venture.[13]

The dozen "Literary Women" students who chose to pursue the service-learning project option continued the tutoring activities initiated by the seminar students and in an effort to promote family literacy, initiated a new "arts and crafts" activity—making children's books—for the weekly sessions.[14] Two of the students designed a very successful presentation on dating and domestic violence, as well as created a chapter on this topic for the *Parenting Resource Manual*. Another group of students created a cookbook entitled *Nutritious Recipes for Young Mothers on the Go*, which in addition to recipes, contains advice on how to plan, budget, and shop for meals. The authors created a sample two-week schedule of dinner meals, demonstrating how one can save both time and money by doing such things as freezing portions of a casserole for future use or by using a cooked chicken for several different meals. The students priced the items needed for their two weeks' worth of meals, and even showed how the cost of that same set of meals would decrease once basics like flour and condiments were purchased. The authors presented their cookbook at a session at which they brought the main dish, while asking the mothers to prepare one of the appetizers. The interactive nature of the presentation was very appealing to the mothers, as was a similar session at which college students demonstrated how to make homemade zucchini-carrot baby food.

This academic year I'm again teaching WS 353 and Literary Women back-to-back. Because enrollment in the seminar tripled, fundraising was much easier, as was planning and implementing large-scale events that many single mothers attend. For example, this September my students sponsored a workshop run by single mothers' rights activist Katherine Arnoldi, author of the award-winning graphic novel *The Amazing "True" Story of a Teenaged Single Mom*.[15] Arnoldi shared some of her own experiences as a former low-income single mother, gave advice about identifying family-friendly colleges and universities and accessing scholarship opportunities, and moderated a lively, community-building discussion about single motherhood. Because I had 17 committed volunteers, we were able to invite not only the high school moms and the residents of TSA, but also the residents of a nearby subsidized housing complex and the low-income, first-time single mothers in the Nurse-Family Partnership program. Towards the end of the event, we invited these "new" single mothers to join us at our weekly meetings and urged them (and the nurses and caseworkers who mentor them) to contact us if we could assist them in other ways. As a result, some of my students began tutoring low-income single mothers who are taking classes at the local community college; others are helping a nurse find parenting materials for her cognitively impaired clients; and a third group is teaching the NFP staff how to manage their computer data base more efficiently.

But having 17 students in the seminar comes with its own set of problems. For instance, I now realize that one reason last year's college students and single mothers bonded fairly quickly is because attendance at many sessions was low. Generally four to six mothers and four to six college students attended a given weekday session; not only could this small group converse as a whole, but it was easy for individuals from the two groups to pair off.

But when WS 353 enrolls seventeen, the college students have to take turns attending the weekday sessions; rotating in and out, their interactions with the single mothers are less frequent and therefore less likely to result in close, mutually beneficial relationships between members of the two groups. This problem is especially exacerbated this year because for reasons too complex to detail, none of the parenting and pregnant teens has been able to commit to the Wednesday sessions at the high school that we ran so successfully last year. On the other hand, because of programs like the "spa night" and the Arnoldi workshop that reach large audiences, the college students are now offering their support to two additional groups of low-income single mothers. But as the scope of the project expands, the need to address both issues of sustainability and the obstacles posed by inadequate monetary and transportation resources becomes increasingly pressing—and the solutions more complex.

The value of complex partnerships

The biggest challenge we have faced is finding a way to "save" the Family Development Research program, whose grant funding expires in June. Even though the FDRP has met, indeed exceeded, its objectives, the daycare facility at the high school is being closed at the end of the academic year. Moreover, no one was assuming responsibility for writing grant proposals that would fund what the teen mothers themselves regard as the most important feature of the program—the mentoring services provided by the nurse, who for all practical purposes also functions as the girls' social worker. Here is where the complex web of partnerships that my undergraduate Women's Studies students helped to create proved most useful: the FDRP staff, the director of the local Nurse-Family Partnership, and a number of individuals and non-profits who had become aware of and valued the programs my students had developed began working with me to make sure that young single mothers in our city continue to have the mentoring services that they need and so richly deserve. Currently this informal group of activists are putting the finishing touches on a grant proposal, and we have found a local nonprofit that wants to make maintaining and strengthening a combined FDRP-NFP initiative its top priority for the coming year. Without the connections among organizations and community activists that my students helped to forge, it's unlikely that I and others in the community would have collaborated in such a timely and effective manner.

Out of the mouths of babes' moms

I could talk at length about the value of service-learning, about ways in which the college students' ability—and desire—to retain, grasp, and assess the facts and theories they encountered in course readings was enhanced by their firsthand interactions with single mothers. I could detail how much my students learned from the community college financial aid officers, social workers, nurses, and young single mothers who visited our classroom, individuals who have far more knowledge than I have about some aspects of low-income single mothers' lives. I could describe how these WS courses have helped many college students hone their skills as activists, about ways in which my students are continuing to support local teenaged and low-income single mothers through volunteer work, internships, independent studies, honors thesis projects, or leadership positions in the college's "Community Outreach Center." But since such topics are complex and beyond the scope of this essay, I'll close with a few words about and from two recent high school graduates, who regard the mentoring they received from the FDRP nurse and my students as playing a key role in their personal and academic development. This information comes from Rachel Gallagher, a student in my first WS 353 seminar who has conducted interviews with FDRP "graduates" as part of an honors thesis project, one designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of both grant-funded and college-sponsored mentoring programs for parenting and pregnant teenaged girls.[16]

Kim is a white, working class student who has just completed her first semester in the honors program at a local community college; she became pregnant as a high school sophomore. Although she currently lives with and receives much emotional support from her parents, she did not tell them she was pregnant until five months after her son was conceived. She has remained good friends with her son's father, a college senior who not only pays child support but also assumes primary childcare responsibilities on the weekends. Compared to that of most other teen mothers, Kim's life seems almost blissful, and her future does indeed look bright. She graduated in the top ten percent of her high school class, and if she can maintain a GPA of 3.5 or higher, she will continue to receives scholarships that cover her college tuition.

But Kim's home life was far from idyllic when she became pregnant; her father was a heavy drinker who only became a recovering alcoholic after Kim's son was born. According to Kim, it was the FDRP nurse more than anyone who helped her maintain high grades and achieve emotional stability during her first two years of motherhood. "Sally is always there for you no matter what your issue, no matter what your problem," Kim remarks; "I had somebody to talk to and help me who I knew wasn't going to be judgmental." Kim speaks of how convenient it was to have free transportation to and from a great daycare, and how comforting it was to know "that my son was fine and so close by." Of the monthly "Lunch and Learn" sessions, Kim notes how much she benefited from programs on topics like birth control, STDS, and filing for child support, and how much she treasured the opportunity to trade experiences with other young moms. "We'd all sit around and talk about life," notes Kim, "just kind of help each other, and Sally would always be there to give suggestions."

Kim claims that many teachers at her high school assume that teen mothers "don't care about school, wanna drop out, and don't even have ideas of going to college"; as a result, they don't inform these students about admissions procedures or scholarship opportunities. She claims that the college students were particularly important to her because they supported and helped her achieve her goal of attending college full-time right after graduation. "My biggest concern was getting grades high enough to get a full scholarship and I was struggling in pre-calculus," Kim observes, noting that she was "so thankful for the tutoring" a college student provided and how reassuring it is to know that "the Lafayette girls are still there if I ever need help with college coursework." "I know I would have graduated without these supports," Kim concludes, "but the fact that the tutors and Sally were always available was so helpful, because as a teenaged parent sometimes you get so stressed. When you have people to turn to it keeps you from giving up or becoming so aggravated you explode."

Tina, a nineteen-year-old African American single mother who gave birth to her daughter when she was a high school junior, also speaks of how much she benefited from the FDRP and college-sponsored programs. Currently Tina lives with and receives a lot of support from her mother and an older sister, but she gets little financial or emotional help from her child's father, who has been in and out of jail for much of the past three years. Tina admits that initially she thought the programs for teen mothers were "gonna be dumb." But she soon changed her mind, claiming that, "knowing you're not alone in being a teen with a baby helps you keep your head up and stay strong and not listen to people who say you can't do what you wanna do because you can. I'm doing it!" She appreciates the fact that the college students were available for tutoring or "if you just needed a babysitter to get your homework done," and glows with pride as she talks about how the professor was so impressed by the poem she wrote to teach her daughter about body parts that she read the poem at a national conference.

Tina also credits Sally and the college students for helping her sustain her dream of becoming (as Sally once was) an emergency room nurse. After Tina became pregnant, the high school teacher who was charged with helping Tina keep up with her coursework only made one visit to her home; not surprisingly, when Tina returned to school she had to "cram everything in" and ended up earning grades lower than those she was used to receiving. Her teachers then convinced Tina to enter a vo-tech program in cosmetology, even though she indicated she had little interest in this field. But as Tina notes, the college students kept alive her belief that she had the ability to become a nurse, and after Tina graduated, Sally helped her find a job at a local nursing center that will pay for her to take courses leading to an LPN or RN degree. And like Kim, Tina knows that she can continue to turn to Sally and the college students for both moral and practical support. "I look forward to Sally's visits," Tina claims. "She helps you encourage yourself and really helps you with parenting skills, telling you that even though you're a teen, you can still give the baby what the baby needs." "And I know," she concludes, "that the college students would try to help you out with anything; all you have to do is ask."

[1] According to Melissa Ludtke, 87 percent of teen mothers—the vast majority of whom are not married—are poor or near poor (26). About 40 percent of unmarried mothers (of all ages) in the U.S. do not have high school degrees; roughly two-thirds of these mothers and their children live in poverty (1997: 30).

[2] The FDRP program has been quite successful. Whereas one-third of the pregnant and parenting girls not enrolled in the program have dropped out of school, FDRP participants have graduated at or above the rate (c. 86 percent) of non-parenting students at Easton Area High School (see www.eastonsd.org/di.htm). Only one FDRP participant has had a second, closely spaced pregnancy, and only 6.5 percent of the infants born to FDRP teens have been below average weight at birth, compared to a county average of 9.6 percent. All five members of the first FDRP "class" have completed post-secondary degrees and are pursuing careers that they find rewarding and that allow them to be economically self-sufficient: two are medical assistants, one is an accountant, one is a chef, and the other works in the field of early childhood education. This year, one of the FDRP seniors graduated in the top ten percent of her class (she was ranked 12th); this young woman received five scholarships, including one that will cover all her tuition expenses for the first two years of community college.

[3] As is revealed by such studies as those undertaken in 1992 by the Alliance for Young Families (a Massachusetts nonprofit dedicated to preventing adolescent pregnancy and to expanding quality services for teenaged girls who do become

mothers), young mothers who have access to the kind of support services provided by FDRP "are more likely than other teen mothers to postpone the birth of a second child" and thus are "more likely to finish high school and less likely to remain dependent on welfare; [moreover], their children, on average, do better in school" than those of other teen mothers. Similarly, two Yale psychologists who tracked adolescent mothers in New Haven found that those who remained in comprehensive, school-based programs similar to FDRP for seven or more weeks after giving birth were considerably less likely to have another child in the next two years than pregnant girls who had never participated in or who had dropped out of the support program. For more information on these and similar studies, see Ludtke 170-75.

[4] Thus far, the children of all graduates of the FDRP program have been kindergarten-ready by the age of five. The educational future of these children is bright; studies of female-headed households reveal that the level of "maternal education is the primary factor in how well the children are likely to do in school" (Ludtke 299).

[5] Although some of the parenting and pregnant teens at the high school seemed to assume that all Lafayette College students are from well-to-do families, they learned through interaction with my students that this is, indeed, not the case. For instance, three of the six WS 353 students in my first seminar qualify for and receive full or almost full financial aid.

[6] The time of each session was limited (especially since students were getting and eating lunch the first few minutes), any presentation or activity would have to be repeated three times, and none of the college students had a class schedule that permitted her to be at the high school from 10:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Most importantly, the FDRP staff often needed this time to run other programs or to facilitate community-building among the young mothers.

[7] Many of the high school girls are too young to drive, and those old enough to do so often don't have access to cars. For liability reasons, the college does not permit its faculty and students to transport members of the community who are being supported through service-learning classes and volunteerism, so it was not possible for my students to take the teen girls and their young children to and from campus. Public transportation also was not an option, because bus service to and from "the hill" on which the college is located is infrequent, and most of the high school students live more than a mile from campus.

[8] Through its resident housing program, Third Street Alliance provides "a safe and nurturing environment to women of diverse backgrounds and personal challenges, allowing them to initiate steps to stabilize their lives and the lives of their children" (www.thirdstreetalliance.org). The center has a daycare for older adults dealing with memory loss and/or physical losses associated with aging, as well as an affordable, high-quality daycare center that is licensed through the PA Department of Welfare. TSA also offers a broad range of programs to the general public, including classes in aquatics, karate, yoga, table tennis, and cooking. It is within walking distance of the college as well as the homes

of several of the teen mothers.

[9] In September 2005, TSA opened a new wing for its Supportive Adolescent Independent Living (SAIL) program, which was designed to provide housing and support services to single, pregnant, and parenting adolescent girls involved in the foster care system. Because of various bureaucratic snafus, to date no adolescent girls from the foster care system have been placed in the SAIL wing; it remains unutilized, despite the need for such a facility.

[10] For more information on the New Options/New Choices program, see www.northampton.edu/office/ncno.

[11] The Nurse-Family Partnership is a program funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In the Easton area, four full-time nurses and one supervisor mentor 80 low-income single mothers who are not enrolled in high school; some of these young women (who range in age from 17 to about 30) are high school dropouts and others are high school graduates. The goals of NFP are similar to those of FDRP, but unlike FDRP participants, the mothers do not meet as a group but instead receive one-on-one support through regular home visitations. The NFP nurses are eager to help the mothers they mentor establish a sense of community with one another and with other single mothers in the area; they were delighted that some of NFP participants attended the NCNO workshops held at Third Street Alliance. My current students and I are expanding and strengthening our partnership with NFP and plan to continue to do so.

[12] My fall 2006 seminar students added three sections to the resource manual: one chapter focuses on how to apply and get scholarships to local colleges, the second focuses on stress management, and the third provides information about public library programs and other free and inexpensive activities that might be of interest to local low-income mothers and their children.

[13] This impressive video, which documents the day-to-day struggles and achievements of two young mothers in the year leading up to their high school graduation, is now being used in "life skills" classes at several local middle schools. Both the professionalism of the production and the articulate, resourceful, and ambitious mothers featured in the film disprove the notion that teenaged single mothers are doomed to lead a life of hopelessness and poverty.

[14] The idea of making inexpensive books to teach young children such concepts as numbers, colors, animals, and the weather was one that was suggested to us by an NFP nurse, who taught us that we could make the books childproof by enclosing the pages in small ziplock baggies, and that the book could also serve as a teething ring if we holepunched the baggies and strung them on plastic shower rings.

[15] For more information on Arnoldi's fiction and work as a single mothers' rights activist, see www.katherinearnoldi.com.

[16] The two teen mothers have given me permission to quote from their interviews with Rachel, but their names (as well as that of the FDRP nurse) have been changed to protect their privacy.

References

Arnoldi, Katherine. 1998. *The Amazing "True" Story of a Teenage Single Mom*. New York: Hyperion.

Ludtke, Melissa. 1997. *On Our Own: Unmarried Motherhood in America.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Aline Gubrium

Making Statistics Lie

Interrogating Teenage Motherhood in a Rural African-American Community

The focus of this paper is to analyze the ways that three African-American women from one rural community in the southern U.S. interrogate social languages constructed around teenage pregnancy, which are influential in the construction of public health policies targeting young women said to be "at risk" for this social problem. While the research literature acknowledges that young Black women may be aware of these social languages, my research question asks if and how they construct their identities accordingly. This paper first looks at the ways that teenage motherhood is constructed as a social problem in the research literature—according to particular "social languages." I then look at the way that three women position themselves within their community according to various social languages on teen motherhood. In particular, through narrative analysis I look at how the participants refer to these social languages to position themselves as certain kinds of women in their community.

> I got my vision, I got my dreams, and there are days when I feel down like I really can't make it, I can't go no further, I'm nothing.... But it's like I have goals—I want to be something different from what I have right now … I can become what statistics have designed me to be, a nothing, or I can make statistics a lie.... (Polakow, 1992: 73)

Introduction

In Valerie Polakow's (1992) study of young African-American women's perceptions of themselves as teenage mothers, one participant reflects on the tendency of medicine and the media to represent her as being yet another number in a long line of young women who have become teenage mothers. Under this rubric, she is variously represented as a burden to the U.S. political economy, or as another wasted life in the Black community (Merrick, 2001; Polakow, 1992). Being a statistic, in this context, means fulfilling negative outcomes constructed by dominant society—constructed through a prism of race, class, and gender. The image of teenage motherhood is also linked to government surveillance of the bodies of women deemed "less valuable" in our society (Collins, 1999) and to a public health preoccupation with stemming the tide of teenage pregnancy through pharmaceuticals (such as Depo Provera, Implanon, and previously Norplant) used to combat this social problem (Roberts, 1997).

However, what might it mean to "make statistics lie," as one young woman speaks of herself with reference to teenage pregnancy? Might making statistics lie mean not falling prey to one's circumstances at hand, or if one does become pregnant at a young age, not having the same outcome as might be deemed normative for the situation of teenage pregnancy? The focus of this paper is to analyze the ways that three African-American women from one rural community in the southern U.S. interrogate a dominant discourse on teenage pregnancy prevalent in the media and influential in the construction of public health policies targeting young women said to be "at risk" for myriad social problems. While the research literature acknowledges that young Black women may be aware of this discourse constructed around teenage pregnancy (Elise, 1995; Williams, 1991), my research question asks if and how the women constructed their identities along the lines of this hegemonic model.

In this paper I will first briefly review the literature written on teenage motherhood as a social problem. In particular, I look at the way that teenage motherhood is constructed by social scientists as a social problem. "Social languages," or "prevailing ways of thinking about the world and our lives," (Rose, 2003) are used by social scientists to explain why or how a young woman may come to be a teenaged mother. However, they are not only bandied about in the academy or in the public health and policymaking setting. As narrative resources, social languages are also reflected in the stories that ordinary people tell about their lives and the world around them. Whether economic or culturally determinist, social languages were used as resources by three women in telling their own (and others') stories of teenage pregnancy and its purported outcomes.

In the second part of this paper I examine how the three women take up the reviewed social languages to position themselves and others as certain kinds of women in the community. Key to my analysis, however, is the prioritization of the women as narrative actors in telling their own stories. They do not just willy-nilly take up a social language and apply it to themselves and others. Rather, the three women work these languages as a "part of accomplishing matters of ongoing local interest" (Holstein and Gubrium, 2000, p. 95)—strategically positioning themselves as "outliers," or in contrast with, "those statistics" said to be found within their community.

Social languages of teenage motherhood

Economic determinist language

Represented as a social problem, teenage motherhood is often depicted as a passive response to oppressive socio-economic/environmental constraints (Anderson, 1990; Dash, 2003; Musick, 1993; Wilson, 1987). Within an economically determinist social language, teenage pregnancy in the urban Black community is said to be the result of a past history of slavery and sharecropping (Dash, 2003), and a present rendered almost hopeless by the demise of the industrial sector and a resulting lack of jobs (particularly for African-American men) (Anderson, 1990; Wilson, 1987).

This social language links the development of Black teenage motherhood to economic changes in the U.S. For instance, in his investigative journalism report on teenage motherhood, Leon Dash (2003) links the phenomenon of teenage motherhood in urban African-American communities with the growth of the sharecropping system in the rural south. Teenage motherhood is explained as an accommodation to a changing economic landscape, in which young Black women had as many children as they could to meet the labor demands needed to successfully participate in a system requiring a sheer volume of workers. A shift to a post-industrial mode of production has resulted in a decreasing value for laboring bodies, as children are no longer valued for increasing output. However, the remnants of this economic imperative remain alive in the minds of the Black community, with the rural custom of early childbearing almost unconsciously reenacted as a cultural pattern of survival (Dash, 2003).

Cultural strategies language

Alternatively, teenage motherhood is depicted as an active, rationally motivated reaction to environmental constraints—in which a young woman seeks to survive, or adapt, to her circumstances by aptly playing the lousy hand she's been dealt (Battle, 1995, 2005; Geronimus, 1996, 2003; Stack, 1974; Williams, 1991). Elaine Bell Kaplan (1997) refers to this social language as a "cultural strategies perspective." A cultural-strategies social language is notably referenced by Carol Stack (1974) in her ethnographic study of family life in The Flats, a predominantly African-American community in the Midwestern U.S. In *All Our Kin* (Stack, 1974), teen mothers are represented as actors, creatively responding to their social circumstances to achieve status in their communities through one of the only paths left open to them—motherhood.

Arline Geronimus's (1996, 2003) work also references this social language, representing teen mothers as rational decision makers—who decide to have children while young as a way to adapt to future negative health outcomes. Citing a statistic that the infant mortality rate for teenaged girls in Harlem is half that of older mothers, Geronimus (2003) writes that "common sense" theories that put forth that teenage motherhood causes social problems and poverty have it backward. On the contrary, teenage motherhood is one way for young women mired in poverty to gain a sense of agency and to achieve something tangible for themselves. As rational actors in a world of poverty, poor teenage mothers are represented as amateur economists conducting a cost/benefit analysis of their circumstances, realizing that they may derive substantial benefits within their community by having a child.

Intersectional language

Finally, an intersectional social language views teenage pregnancy through multiple lenses of race, class, and gender inequality (Kaplan, 1997; Kunzel, 1994; Merrick, 2001). This social language represents teenage motherhood as a response to structurally oppressive conditions—emotionally, in terms of one's relationships with others (family members, friends, and intimate relationships); economically, in terms of access to job opportunities; and racially, in terms of access to social capital. These mutually implicating forms of oppression intersect in the lives of young women and are integral to the experiences of young mothers.

Elaine Bell Kaplan (1997) proposes a theory of poverty-of-relationships, whereupon teenage motherhood is seen as a strategy used by young women to make up for emotionally impoverished relationships. From this perspective, young women have children in order to form a connection with someone else. Having a baby is a way of forming a loving relationship—something that might be missing in a young woman's relationships with others. Teen mothers, thus, are depicted as resisting an oppressive reality by attempting to take control of their circumstances.

Social languages of teenage pregnancy may reflect, in part, socio-historic circumstance. But they are also imbued with the researcher's own agenda, whether the researcher is out to "prove" that teenage mothers are just like everyone else or deviant from the norm, survivors adapting to impoverished circumstances (both economically and emotionally speaking) or cunning women out to exploit "the system." As dominant narratives on teenage motherhood, these social languages, in their own right, situate young women with particular identities in relation to teenage pregnancy.

Method

> Our whole lives are dominated, though it is not always so clearly translatable, with the question "How do I look?" …[I]t is not that we are all so self-obsessed, it is that all things eventually relate back to ourselves, and it is our own sense of how we appear to the world by which we chart our lives, how we navigate our personalities that would otherwise be adrift in the ocean of other peoples' obsessions. (Grealy, 1994: 72)

What might be the concerns of teen mothers, or other community members, in their own representations of teenage pregnancy? Lucy Grealy (1994) writes of the individual concern with self-representation, as well as how they are perceived and represented by others. A narrative perspective views acts of representation as key to the way that we make meaning of our lives. While several researchers have noted that teenage mothers are well aware of the social languages used to describe them (Lustig, 2004; Merrick, 2001; Williams, 1991), an analytical gap remains in the literature on the ways that young women and other women from within communities "at risk" situate themselves with particular identities in relation to social languages on teenage pregnancy.

Narrative approach

As part of a larger study on the gender socialization of rural African-American women in a North Florida community (Gubrium, 2005), I conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 women, ranging in age between 18 and 61 years old. The purpose of the larger study was to document the narrative contours of the growing-up stories of rural African American women. I was especially interested in how the women constructed their experiences in relation to commonplace troubles such as narcotics addiction, intimate partner violence, teenage motherhood, and related health problems. While all of the participants in this study spoke during points of their interview about motherhood, with many speaking of teenage motherhood, the three participant narratives presented in this paper serve as exemplars in representing the different kinds of orientations toward teen motherhood to be found within the interviews. Their accounts bear witness to the narrative possibilities that can grow from contending with dominant images of teenage motherhood and the self-identifying imperatives of which they and women like them deal with on a daily basis. Their narrative orientations and representational work are the focus of my analysis here.

Participant perspectives

While the three participants were aware of negative constructions surrounding teenage motherhood, not all of their narratives were rooted in a "frustration at the lack of opportunities" in their lives (Elise, 1995). Indeed, one woman positioned herself as succeeding as a result of her experience as a teenage mother. Three outcomes of teenaged motherhood are presented in this paper to structure the three women's narratives on teenage pregnancy. One participant speaks of what it means to fall into a cycle of teenage pregnancy. Here, the participant is concerned with representing herself as a statistical outlier in her community. Another participant speaks of "breaking the cycle" of teenage pregnancy, to represent herself as a different kind of woman than that of her mother and two older sisters. In this context, she situates herself as a successful woman within the context of the American Dream and contrasts her own experiences with prototypical model of teenage pregnancy said to be all too commonly realized within her family and community. Finally, a third participant goes beyond either model—while she may have fallen into a cycle of teenage pregnancy, technically speaking, her story is not constrained by this cycle. Rather, she reworks social languages that might vilify her experiences as a teenage mother, centering her own achievements on a locally realized, Afrocentric Dream.

Falling into the cycle of teen pregnancy: Being a statistic

Participants were not so want to label themselves as statistics, as "being a statistic" connotes falling into a cycle of teenage pregnancy and is laden with negative images in dominant society. For example, within the rhetoric of population control, statistics (as those ever teeming masses) are those who are not able to control their own sexuality, much less their own lives. As potential statistics, women at risk for teenage pregnancy may not be able to control themselves and, therefore, should not be given the right to control their own (reproductive) bodies. It is in this way that temporary and permanent forms of sterilization are cast as a panacea in the fight against over population. Correspondingly, African-American women said to be "at risk" for teenaged pregnancy are reduced to negative stereotypes linked to Black female sexuality. They are consistently represented in the media and within social problems literature as "welfare queens" and "jezebels," eager to exploit "the system" while contributing to its doomed failure (Collins, 2000; Hartmann, 2002; Lubiano, 1992).

One way to analyze what it might mean to be a statistic is through an analysis of what participants claim that they are not. In a context of distancing themselves from the said norm, several participants in my larger study described themselves in contrastive terms—constructing their own identities in contrast to this prototypical character cast as typical for their community. Dorothy Smith (2003) applies the term "contrast structure" to describe the way an individual might contrast her own behavior with that of another individual, to show that her own behavior is anomalous.

Participants strategically took up contrast structures in narrating their life course to present themselves as living "outside the box"—taking a different course in life than the status quo and, in the context of this paper, distancing themselves from a cultural model of teenage pregnancy said to be traditionally found in the Black, rural South (Dougherty, 1978). Wanda's narrative, in which she positions herself as a "different kind" of woman, is an exemplary representation of this contrast structure.

At the time of our interview Wanda was 39 years old and had one teenage daughter. Taking a look at her story we may see how she positions herself as an outlier, falling outside the statistical majority of women in her community. Wanda represents herself as a woman steeped in morality and responsibility, contrasting herself with her depiction of other women in her community. During our interview she spoke of her sexual relationships as being few and far between—primarily taking place subsequent to adolescence with one longtime boyfriend, who is also the father of her daughter. In contrast to her own behavior, she characterizes the common young woman in her community as sexually active.

> *The myth that I, the myth that you mostly hear…you understand what I'm trying to say … at a certain age, most Black teenagers are [having sex]. The pregnancy rate was very high. But my momma, she always tell me, "you carry yourself in the way, as a lady would carry herself. Your body is your temple. You respect yourself and the way you respect yourself is you make someone else respect you … especially men."*

While Wanda refers to teenage sexuality and childbirth as a myth, she also relates that the rate of teenage pregnancy in her community was very high when she was growing up. Going against this norm, she speaks of herself as taking her mother's lessons to heart, guarding her sexuality and respecting her body by not sleeping around. She is thus able to claim herself as an outlier in her community, by following dominant norms of monogamy and controlled reproduction. She signals a contrast between herself and other young women in her community, speaking of their lack in self-respect and morality in getting pregnant while teenagers.

Wanda's story references Kaplan's (1997) poverty-of-relationships theory, in which young women in her community are sleeping around because they are not taught to respect themselves, are not loved by their mothers (or do not receive the valuable lessons that she did from her own mother), and, thus, are starving for a loving relationship. In contrast, Wanda speaks of having an extremely close and loving relationship with her mother, as well as with her three brothers. She describes her pregnancy experience with much relish, as a time in life when she was especially spoiled by her over-protective brothers. Indeed, those young women facing a void of loving relationships in their lives might have resorted to pregnancy as a way to fill an emotional gap in their lives or to boost their self-esteem.

Wanda concludes her narrative by foregrounding her own perspective on mothering. Continuing her contrast structure on teenage motherhood, she separates herself from the other young women in her community in response to my question on what she considered to be important successes in her life. Wanda replied that while other young women in her community found themselves in the situation of being mothers as teenagers, often having several children while young (she noted: "Their children was about grown before I even had my first one!"), she spoke of being especially proud to have "escaped" this outcome. Women as statistics are those who fail to escape the cycle of teenage pregnancy.

Breaking the cycle and living the American dream

Several participants positioned themselves as "breaking the cycle," speaking of themselves as accomplished because they did not fall into a cycle of teenage pregnancy. These participants also used contrast structures to distance themselves from other women in their community, whom they cast as unsuccessful women due to the burden they faced as young mothers. However, in addition to being "outliers" in their community—they also positioned themselves as successful women due to their ability to fulfill a part of the American Dream.

The American Dream is based on a positive development course, rooted in capitalist notions of individualism, accomplishment, and what are usually thought of as white, middle-class values (Gullette, 2003). While the basic storyline of the American Dream may be similar across the U.S., the plot of the story is also linked to local realities—influenced by intersectional contingencies faced by the participants. Serena, a 21-year-old single woman with no children, spoke of "breaking the cycle" of teenage pregnancy when she referred to her three older sisters and mother as "falling into the cycle" of teenage pregnancy—all at the age of 17. In contrast, she emphasizes her own still intact virginity. Her story is exemplary as she represents herself as a successful young woman poised to achieve the American Dream primarily because she was able to break this cycle.

Responsibility lards Serena's story of breaking the cycle—she speaks of herself as responsible sexually, reproductively, and morally. She begins her story, describing her only romantic relationship thus far in her life—with a young man from her town who she began to see when she was 16 years old. Even though she never had sex with her boyfriend, she relates that town gossip got to be too much for her, with community members constantly speculating about her sex life. Serena said that she decided to end her relationship with her boyfriend after three years because her own self-respect was more important to her. Through her story of chastity, she foregrounds her precipitous move to change what was almost surely bound to be her fate—nipping the cycle in its bud, so to speak. In other words, through her own rendering, she works against a theory of poverty-of-relationships, as she speaks of "not needing a man" to boost her self esteem. On the contrary, she presents herself as a young woman who possesses confidence about her own capabilities in spades.

Serena describes her relationship with her three sisters, contrasting her own chaste behavior with that of her sisters' sexually active behavior.

> *When I say I'm different from my sisters, I mean [my community] was saying I was pregnant and … gonna be pregnant and different stuff. I was like "noooo. I guarantee you I'm not gonna be pregnant at a young age." Cause all my sisters did get pregnant at age seventeen. My mom got pregnant at the age of seventeen. So, with me growing up, I seen to it that, I was gonna break that cycle.*

To a certain extent, Serena's narrative pathologizes the cycle of teenage pregnancy in her family. Describing herself (or any other woman in her community, for that matter) as potentially "at risk" of becoming pregnant, she takes up a cultural strategies social language, in which her community expects that after three years of being in a relationship that she would surely choose to have sex with her boyfriend. "What other options did she have?" she has members of her community asking her. In contrast to other young women in her community, whom she describes as having "limited options," she speaks of herself as a "different" kind of woman, out to achieve the American Dream.

> *I'm gonna do stuff with my life. I'm gonna be somebody. Round her, most [women] are staying in apartments ["the projects"], which, I'm young, and I'm in an apartment. With me saying I'm different.... I guess it would be with [my sisters and other young women] getting pregnant at a young age ... and [me] graduating with honors and different stuff.*

Serena's determined claims follow a path to the American Dream, but one tailored to a reality circumscribed by intersecting oppressions. She assembles a success story for herself in which she graduates with honors, does not get pregnant while a teenager and, thus, is able to do something valuable in life—writ large in a dominant political economy that measures a poor, Black woman's achievements in life based on her ability to support herself without state intervention. Notably, while Serena admits that she lives in a government-subsidized apartment like many other women in her community, she also emphasizes the fact that she is still young and still has much to do in life. She further noted that unlike the other apartments around her, hers is the only apartment not "sharing walls" with those around her. Metaphorically speaking, Serena's morals and behavior are like her apartment's walls—separate from the other women in her community.

In the end countering both a cultural strategies social language, which would hold that she might actively use pregnancy to adapt to difficult life circumstances (as a local form of empowerment), and an economic determinist model, which would hold that her socio-economic environment would lead her to rely on men and reproduction to secure a positive identity for herself in her community, Serena instead relies on the American Dream, rooted in individual aspiration and self-reliance (a pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps type of model), to firmly establish herself as different from the other women in her community in breaking away from an oppressive cycle of teenage pregnancy.

Working the cycle through an Afrocentric dream

I was first struck by a participant's use of the metaphor of "being a statistic" in my research on gender socialization when I interviewed Quanda, a 26-year-old woman with two daughters. When asked to talk about the birth of her two daughters, Quanda spoke of running away from home when she was in high school and eventually becoming pregnant for the first time, saying that she was actually happy to get pregnant because she knew that her mother would not allow her to live at home if she was pregnant. Analyzed from a poverty-of-relationships perspective, Quanda could be seen as using her pregnancy to attract attention from her mother and to form a loving connection with another person (her baby daughter). When asked about the birth of her second daughter, four years later, Quanda spoke of herself as a statistic for getting pregnant again. As a statistic, she represented herself as one of many women in her community who are not able to adequately control their reproduction.

However, when asked how she would describe herself as an adolescent, Quanda constructed an identity contrary to that of the passive teenage mother, who suffers a low self-esteem as the result of becoming a mother at such a young age: "I was nice…. Easy to get along with … I ain't have no low self esteem about me having a baby. Cause I put my baby pictures and stuff all over my locker. Everything." Especially in relation to dominant images of young Black mothers, who are usually constructed as "unfit" in the media (Collins, 1999), teen mothers are found to use professionally taken studio portraits to present a counter-hegemonic depiction of themselves—as good mothers despite the odds (Lustig, 2004). I noted this same phenomenon during my interview with Quanda, which took place at her house, where she displayed photos of her two daughters all over her living room walls and tables. Thus, she did not present herself as a mother ashamed of her children or what she had become. Instead, her story was rooted in an Afrocentric logic holding that a woman's value in her community is integrally linked to her capacity to mother and to place the well being of others above one's own well being (Burgess, 1994; Collins, 1998; Daly et al., 1995; Dougherty, 1978; Hill, 2005). In contrast with Serena's American Dream of getting ahead in life through self-reliance, perseverance, and individual pursuit, Quanda constructs a story of achieving the Afrocentric Dream through a story that links her success as a woman with her accomplishment as a dedicated mother to her children. She works the cycle of teenage pregnancy, with young motherhood serving as a clincher for her positive life outcomes.

Quanda spoke of herself as becoming more independent and assertive after the birth of her first daughter: "Even though I was young with a baby, I ain't regret it. 'Cause I was happy. I think that kept me out of a whole bunch of trouble too, having a baby. I don't care what nobody say!" Quanda provides a contrast between the usual construction of a teenage mother as "in trouble" or "at risk." The birth of her first child actually turned her life around—she describes herself as achieving more through the valuable lessons of responsibility she learned as a young mother. Highlighting her burgeoning responsibility, Quanda went on to talk about the leadership award that she received in her senior year of high school (after her daughter's birth).

> *The state troopers gave me an award for outstanding achievement, turning my life around. Like, this for a teen who done had a baby, ran away from home, had a baby, got her own place, still came to school everyday, this and that and then. So it's outstanding … from the juvenile justice*

> *system. Turned my life around where … I had got to my senior year. I was determined to do, oh yes! My whole eleventh and twelfth grade year, I had my own apartment. I went to school everyday. I walked my baby to daycare, right there, and then walked on to school.*

Quanda speaks of a changed identity for herself, from being a "follower" and "runaway" before she was a mother, to being a "leader" with achievements after she became a mother. Perhaps ironically, "the man" himself, the juvenile justice system, recognizes the way she has turned her life around—she has blossomed into a self-reliant, determined young mother who is on a recharged path towards a better life. Quanda counters a dominant narrative of statistical teenage motherhood, positioning herself as another kind of teen mother—a young woman achieving an Afrocentric Dream in which her achievements are very much rooted in her young motherhood.

Conclusion

The three women presented in this paper narratively represent themselves with identities culturally compatible with dominant and/or local meanings of success. They position themselves within an American Dream or Afrocentric logic, the key difference being that an Afrocentric logic foregrounds one's connections with another (in this case, with one's children) as crucial to one's success, whereas the American Dream relies upon individual achievement (a woman is an island, to undermine John Donne's famous quote) as a route to success.

Meanings of teen motherhood are not just a matter of internalizing social languages, which would indicate that participants simply reproduce a particular background of sexual behaviors, expectations, and experiences. Rather, it is part and parcel of participants' use of, and narration of, certain identities—to position themselves as particular types of women in their community. In this paper, we see that two participants position themselves with particular identities through the use of contrast structures—in "being different" from other women who may fall into a cycle of teenage pregnancy. Alternatively, another participant subverts the very social languages constructed around teenage pregnancy, which put forth that this social problem results in failed outcomes or is manifested through a compromised environment. The narrative analysis presented here demonstrates the variability of positions that may be constructed in relation to teenage motherhood.

References

Anderson, E. 1990. *Streetwise: Race, Class, and Change in an Urban Community.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Battle, L. S. 1995. "Teenage Mother's Narratives of Self: An Examination of

Risking the Future." *Advances in Nursing Science* 17 (4): 22-36.

Battle, L. S. 2005. "Examining Assumptions About Teen Mothers." *American Journal of Nursing* 105 (4): 13.

Burgess, N. J. 1994. "Gender Roles Revisited: The Development of the 'Woman's Place' Among African American Women in the United States." *Journal of Black Studies* 24 (4): 391-401.

Collins, P. H. 1998. "When Fighting Words Are Not Enough: The Gendered Context of Afrocentrism." *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice.* P. H. Collins. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 155-183.

Collins, P. H. 1999. "Will the Real Mother Please Stand Up? The Logic of Eugenics and American National Family Planning." *Revisioning Women, Health and Healing: Feminist, Cultural and Technoscience Perspectives.* New York: Routledge: 266-282.

Collins, P. H. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.* New York: Routledge.

Daly, A., J. Jennings, *et al.* 1995. "Effective Coping Strategies of African Americans." *Social Work* 40 (2): 240-248.

Dash, L. 2003. *When Children Want Children: The Urban Crisis of Teenage Childbearing.* Urbana: The University of Illinois Press.

Dougherty, M. C. 1978. *Becoming a Women in Rural Black Culture.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Elise, S. 1995. "Teenaged Mothers: A Sense of Self." *African American Single Mothers: Understanding their Lives and Families*. B. J. Dickerson. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 10: 53-79.

Geronimus, A. T. 1996. "What Teen Mothers Know." *Human Nature* 7 (4): 323-352.

Geronimus, A. T. 2003. "Damned if You Do: Culture, Identity, Privilege, and Teenage Childbearing in the United States." *Social Science and Medicine* 57: 881-893.

Grealy, L. 1994. "Mirrors." *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul.* Ed. P. Foster. New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday: 53-73.

Gubrium, A. 2005. "Growing-up Stories: Narratives of Rural African American Women." *Anthropology.* Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida.

Gullette, M. M. 2003. "From Life Storytelling to Age Autobiography." *Journal of Aging Studies* 17 (2003): 101-111.

Hartmann, B. 2002. "The Changing Faces of Population Control." *Policing the National Body: Race, Gender and Criminalization.* Eds. J. Silliman and A. Bhattacharjee. Cambridge: South End Press. 259-289.

Hill, S. A. 2005. *Black Intimacies: A Gender Perspective on Families and Relationships.* Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Holstein, J. A. and J. F. Gubrium. 2000. *The Self We Live By: Narrative Identity in a Postmodern World.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Kaplan, E. B. 1997. *Not Our Kind of Girl: Unraveling the Myths of Black Teenage*

Motherhood. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Kunzel, R. G. 1994. "White Neurosis, Black Pathology: Constructing Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy in the Wartime and Postwar United States." *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*. Ed. J. Meyerowitz. Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 304-331.

Lubiano, W. 1992. "Black Ladies, Welfare Queens, and State Minstrels: Ideological War by Narrative Means." *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality.* Ed. T. Morrison. New York: Pantheon Books: 323-363.

Lustig, D. F. 2004. "Baby Pictures: Family, Consumerism and Exchange Among Teen Mothers in the USA." *Childhood* 11 (2): 175-193.

Merrick, E. 2001. *Reconceiving Black Adolescent Childbearing.* Boulder, CO, Westview Press.

Musick, J. S. 1993. *Young, Poor, and Pregnant: The Psychology of Teenage Motherhood.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Polakow, V. 1992. "Young Mothers' Stories: Being Teenage, Black, and Single." *Lives on the Edge: Single Mothers and Their Children in Other America.* Ed. V. Polakow. Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 63-80.

Roberts, D. 1997. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty.* New York: Vintage Books.

Rose, T. 2003. *Longing to Tell: Black Women Talk About Sexuality and Intimacy.* New York: Picador.

Smith, D. E. 2003. "K is Mentally Ill: The Anatomy of a Factual Account." *Inner Lives and Social Worlds: Readings in Social Psychology.* Eds. J. A. Holstein and J. F. Gubrium. New York: Oxford University Press: 536-558.

Stack, C. 1974. *All Our Kin.* New York: Basic Books.

Williams, C. W. 1991. *Black Teenage Mothers: Pregnancy and Child Rearing from Their Perspective*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Wilson, W. J. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pamela J. Downe

Memorializing and Moralizing Young Motherhood in Barbados

Women in a fast-growing and underserved urban community in Barbados resist the increasing denigration of young motherhood by sharing stories of the young slave mothers of centuries ago. These stories emphasize the strength and resilience of youthful motherhood, and as such they counter the globalizing discourse of young motherhood that casts it in negative light. The collective remembrances of slave motherhood by the women who participated in a five-year ethnographic study of community well-being can be understood as a rarely studied kind of memorialization, that which is narrative-based, informal, and intergenerational.

Introduction

> *"I'm a mother from the islands, I've been mothering since I was young, and I'll damn well do what I want. That is my mother-right."*

In the Departures area of the Los Angeles airport, a young man stood at the check-in counter arguing loudly with an airline representative about whether he did, or did not, owe money on his ticket. He would not be issued a boarding pass, he was told, until he paid the outstanding balance of $100. Growing more frustrated by the man's refusal to pay, the attendant finally admonished the young man. In a stern tone and with a thick Caribbean accent that had been reasonably undetectable in the earlier portion of the conversation, she told him that, at 21 years of age, he should be "getting his life together, getting a job and paying the money that he owes." She completed her admonishment by saying, "And don't be telling me that you don't like the way I be speaking to you. I'm a mother from the islands, I've been mothering since I was young, and I'll damn well do what I want. That is my mother-right." The young man acquiesced, paid the money and headed for the departure gate.

I witnessed this exchange in early October, 2005, and it caught my attention not only because of the volume at which both participants were speaking but also because it rang very familiar. Between 1999 and 2004, I worked with 22 women in Bridgetown, Barbados who live and work in a rapidly growing and underserved community characterized by transience and poverty. Through the over 30 interviews I conducted with these women across four research trips, it became increasingly clear that they had very serious concerns about the changes that were occurring in their community. What the women saw as an increase in the violence, poverty, unemployment, drug use, and sex work occurring in their communities was the source of tremendous stress and ongoing fear. As they talked about these stresses and fears in great detail, it also became clear mothers, and particularly young mothers, were cast as central figures in the women's stories about community change. Unlike the globalizing discourse of teen mothering—emanating primarily from the United States, Canada, and Britain—that demonizes young mothers and attributes negative community change largely to them, the women participating in this research saw young motherhood as a historically generated site of strength and community well-being. The "mother-right" that the frustrated "island mother" claimed for herself at Los Angeles airport, then, not only reflects the central position of mothers in Caribbean cultures, but it also speaks to the centrality and rights of young motherhood. In this paper, I explore the way in which young motherhood is constructed as a site of empowerment and strength by women living in a poor, urban neighbourhood in Barbados, and I do so to counter the largely negative and North American criticisms of young motherhood.

The 22 women who participated in this research did so as part of a larger study I was conducting on the narratives of community well-being. They ranged in age from 19 to 91 years of age, with the average age being 44. All of the women are mothers; nineteen lived with their children at the time of this research; and fourteen also actively cared for other children, including grandchildren, stepchildren, cousins, nieces and nephews. The six-block area that constitutes this community was, and continues to be characterized by high residential turnover; no one I interviewed had lived there longer than five years, and most choose to leave after several months of residency (although after moving away several women returned). The houses in this neighbourhood were in poor repair, constructed with scrap wood and corrugated steel, and only a few had adequate water supply or plumbing. In sum, the women described a community that is vastly different from the primarily rural areas from which they migrated, and they described maternal care in the context of cultural dislocation and in light of what they perceived to be the government's apathy towards the poor. In this difficult environment, however, lively stories about young mothers of centuries ago were shared quite frequently, sometimes spontaneously, and other times in response to my specific questions. Perhaps because the women participating in this research found themselves in dire circumstances, awaiting what one woman called the "hurricane of health-breakers" to descend fully, they sought and found inspiration from these stories. What were these stories? Why did they resonate so strongly?

Young slave mothers: Stories of strength[1]

> *"It be like a slave-mother is right here with me saying 'stay strong, stay strong'."*

Motherhood has long been a central feature in defining Caribbean womanhood. Unlike in the British and Spanish traditions that shaped Barbados' history, motherhood for women in the Black majority is generally seen neither as an inevitable destiny nor as a source of oppression. Instead, it is seen as a way to engage across generational lines with the giving and receiving of social gifts (nurturance, financial support, humour, spiritual care, friendship, mentoring). Not at all defined only in terms of a mother-child dyad, as it is so often in Euro-American societies, motherhood in the eastern Caribbean is seen as a collective exercise that is highly gendered. In Barbados, community mothering, other-mothering, and biological mothering are recognized as being individually distinct but they coalesce and together constitute matrifocality.

Andrea O'Reilly (2004), Karen Flynn and Cindy-Lou Henwood (2000), Wanda Thomas Bernard (2000), and Miriam Johnson (1990) are among the many feminist scholars who offer profound insights into how matrifocal social arrangements characterize many Caribbean societies and African-American communities. As these scholars demonstrate, matrifocality defines women's social positions not in relation to men (as is often the case in non-matrifocal and patriarchal contexts) but in relation to intergenerational gift-giving and receiving. In matrifocal communities, mothers tend to assume the financial obligations as well as hands-on care of children and elders. While this certainly causes hardship, it is not understood culturally as a burden, just as an expected part of motherhood. The relational line of economic as well as emotional interconnection then is extended from women to elders and children. Adult men figure secondarily in this line.

A young mother with whom I worked in Bridgetown explained,

> *It takes determination to make sure I got what I need to feed my children and I pay for everything they need. But I got lots of determination. I'm a mother not just at home but in the whole community as well. Some of the men here are good men, but it's all on me. That's just how it has always been.*

In a matrifocal context, that the care of the children and community would be "all on her," is naturalized, taken for granted not as a burdensome task but as a responsibility that offers her authority and strength. This mother's age and youth is not incidental to this process. Indeed, with a mother's average

age at first birth being seven years younger than that in the United States and five years younger than on the neighbouring island of Trinidad and Tobago (Mohammed and Perkins, 1999), young motherhood in Barbados plays an important role in naturalizing the prevailing matrifocality.

For the women participating in this study, young motherhood creates a connection with the strength and perseverance of the slave mothers of the past. As a nation founded first on the labour of enslaved men and then on enslaved women and men, there is an enduring public memory—as Michael Lambek (1996) and Linda Garro (2001) would call it—of a past marked not only by violent subjugation but also by survival and ultimate political victory. In most accepted historical accounts (Beckles, 1989; Shepherd, 1999), the young slave mothers, who endured sexual assault and exploitation, were fundamental in achieving community cohesion, administering care, and creating inter-plantation alliances among slaves. In times of extreme stress, the stories of these young mothers' strength and leadership offer inspiration and consolation to women, like those participating in my research, who feel disempowered by the desperation of their community. As Lainie, a 55-year-old woman who I came to know very well explained it,

> *A hurricane be coming. A hurricane of health breakers be on its way. The community is infested with drugs and layabouts [unemployed men]. The mothers we be doing our best to keep everyone safe and healthy but the hurricane be coming. We be needing the strong will of the young slave mothers 'bout now.*

When describing what she saw as an intense escalation of crime and violence against women, Delia, a 33-year-old mother of four, told a story of one slave mother in particular who personified this "strong will." As a girl, Delia learned about a young woman who, in the early 1800s, was a slave on the Orange Hill Plantation in the St. James parish on the west coast of the island. According to her story, Henrietta Hutson was 14 years old when she was sexually assaulted by a White plantation manager and became pregnant. She gave birth to a son and by the time she was 18 years old had three more children, reportedly all conceived through rape. In a conversation with Delia in 2001, she recounted the story.

> *Henrietta was a survivor. She loved her children and wept when her oldest son died when he not even be a full year. But the tears did not weigh her down. She got up, like all strong Black mothers, she got up. Got up strong. At 14, she became a mother and she started caring about the world around her. When her son was born, she was born too, as a strong slave mother who knew how to love even while she was in the worst situation. She worked in the cane fields and she'd sing softly under her breath, and in her songs, she comforted the others around her. She'd look at them, and nod, like a*

> *knowing nod that said, "it be alright, alright." And with those songs and the looks, the others around her knew to keep going, that they'd be remembered as strong and healthy and unbreakable. The field manager, he knew it was young Henrietta's song that was going to cause trouble 'cause the spirit of our people just weren't breaking. Night after night, he'd bring Henrietta to the canes, force himself on her and torture her in ways not fitting to recall. But that just made Henrietta love her babies and her fellow workers all the more. She knew how to pray. She taught herself to read. I don't know that she would have had that kind of back [meaning a strong back bone] if she hadn't been young and fierce, fierceful young. That's what kept her healthy. I mean, the caring she did for her babies and for all the Orange Hill babies that needed her, needed Henrietta. We got lots of Henriettas here. Strong girls finding themselves when they find their mother-right. Young strength is good strength and it makes for a strong future.*

Interestingly, I cannot find Henrietta Hutson's name on the nineteenth-century rosters of St. James slaves or on any of the historical records that I consulted from the Orange Hill plantation. Nor does the name appear in any of the books used in the St. James schools or in the written histories consulted. (Of course, this does not mean that Henrietta never existed, only that no written evidence of her life is readily accessible.) This is particularly interesting because it suggests that this iconic characterization of young motherhood (and perhaps others as well) emerges not from official documentation but from a tradition of oral history that provides a great deal of openness and fluidity. More often than not, stories that are not cemented in script or mired in formalized historical detail can be invoked across time and in different contexts to function as a validation of otherwise marginalized experiences. For Delia and the other women participating in this research, the story of Henrietta Hutson may indeed fulfill this function. Sandra, a grandmother of six children, all of whom live in her care, did not make specific reference to Henrietta Hutson but she did recall that her own teen mothering was a source of individual and community health.

> *Back then [the early1960s] there be cholera and polio and so on. But when I was just a young girl having my babies, it was as if a slave-mother be right there with me saying 'stay strong, stay strong'. And so I did right. Nothing protects you from hurricanes of health breakers but if you do right and you be a strong mother caring for the children and for the others, you fend off them diseases. One morning I waken and I hear Michael [her youngest] coughing, coughing something strong. I scoop him up, he be hot, real hot. I waken the others, and I say, we got to go to the clinic and off we set. I not have the money for the bus for all of we, so I give Michael to Andrea [her oldest daughter] and I put them on the bus. Luke [another son] and I start running behind the bus. I was young, before the arthritis come to me, so I*

> *could do it. And then a van pull up and there be Lainie's mother. "Get in here child" she holler and Luke and I jump in. Lainie's mother and me, we look over at each other, I be dead frightened but I know just looking at her, it would be ok. We be two mothers, one young, one old. And we be doing proud by the slave mother … We be keeping our people safe and healthy. Michael, he be alright. And I know some people be all fussing about them young girls having babies now, I look at them and I see something strong in them. Their Michaels [are] going be alright, too.*

In this passage, the nostalgic connection to an unnamed slave mother of the past creates a tie between the motherly strength Sandra sees in herself and in Lainie's mother. Just as Henrietta Hutson is credited in Delia's retelling with fueling the maternal strength of young women today, Sandra sees her own success as a teen mother and community mother as being tied both back in time and to the future mothering skills of young girls in her community today.

Throughout my interview with Sandra, her 15-year-old grandson was listening attentively and at key points in her description was shaking his head in obvious disagreement. Sandra kept holding her hand up to prevent him from interrupting but at the end of her story, and after she finished her cold drink, she said, "Henry, you be wanting to say something here?" Henry immediately began to question Sandra's account, "You really hear a slave mother on your shoulder? You really hear that? You got crazy voices in your head, nan!" Sandra's response was immediate and loud, "Crazy voices? You think that when I be honouring them strong slave mothers, I be crazy? You be a fool for thinking that." Undeterred by Henry's eye-rolling, Sandra proceeded to explain that the slave mothers kept "young fools" like him alive with their "youthful strength" and Henry would "do right" to learn from their lessons. Sandra shooed him away at the end of her admonishment and looked at me with disbelief, "I worry hard for what life going be like for him. He has no good sense of what be important."

That the lives of the young mothers depicted in these narratives are storied with such passion and that these stories circulate, evoking fierce defense, is highly significant. These stories serve as a lived history (Downe, 2006) that casts young mothers as central and venerated members of a distressed community. In these nostalgic narratives, youth is a source of strength and collective survival. As such, young slave mothers are memorialized every time these stories are told and defended.

Memorialization of youthful maternal strength

> *"We be needing them young ones with youthful strength to be doing all they can."*

There has been a recent flurry of academic interest in processes of memorialization, which involve commemorating the people and events of the past through shared remembrances. Most of the existing and emerging studies of memorialization focus on public memorials and built form (Nevins, 2005; Richards, 2002; Santino, 2004) as well as the various responses to state-driven commemorative practices (DeJorio, 2006; Forest, Johnson and Till, 2004), many of which memorialize military conflicts and national loss (Buffton, 2005; Clarke, 2006; Edkins, 2003; Shay 2005). With few exceptions (Sherebrin, 2002), research has rarely explored how historical events and figures are memorialized through informal daily practices and shared narratives. Although some work has examined the gendered dimension of memorialization (Garton and Springthorpe, 2002; Whites, 2005), few have analyzed its intergenerational dimensions of commemoration (Sayigh, 2005) and even fewer have connected memorializing projects with motherhood (Bosco, 2006). Despite the dearth of research, my work with women in Barbados suggests that the informal and narrative-based memorialization of intergenerational maternal care is very significant in how the women connect the past with the present, and how they value their roles as mothers and community leaders. As Lainie points out, "I just don't know how to be talking 'bout what we should be doing here [to address the unwanted community changes] except to talk about where we come from, and what the young mothers before us be doing to get out of the messes they had then."

For Lainie and the others, shared remembrances of the slave mothers create continuity between past and present maternal strength. As such, these remembrances offer inspiration and a way to talk about the lead that mothers take in a distressed community. It is highly significant that the age of the memorialized mothers is continuously stressed. In virtually every interview, Lainie would refer to "them young slave mothers"; Sandra spoke often of the "youthful strength"; and Delia repeatedly characterized Henrietta Hutson as "fierceful young." Although there are not many historical records that detail the age at which the enslaved women in Barbados had children, it is widely believed that birth rates were reasonably high and mothers very young (Higman, 1995). Bridget Bereton's (2003) analysis of the unpublished letters and diaries of slave women and of female plantation owners indicates that in the later years of slavery, motherhood marked a transition from indentured girlhood to enslaved womanhood, and this transition signaled important changes in the informal community expectations put on young women. The women were, Bereton explains, now informal leaders in their communities and young women therefore developed a political, subaltern voice through motherhood.

Tzvetan Todorov (1996) draws a very useful distinction between literal memories that tie past experiences to specific events and people, and exemplary memories that connect past experiences deriving from one (set of) event(s) across time to other events. Exemplary memories therefore open remembrances to analogy and extended application. The shared stories told by the women in the Bridgetown neighbourhood to commemorate young slave mothers stand as exemplary memories. These stories extend the remembered strength and perseverance of young mothers of centuries ago across time and context as they are applied to the young mothers in Bridgetown today. Through the sharing of these stories, the women participating in this study hope to encourage not only themselves but also, and perhaps particularly, the young mothers to find their political voice and maternal strength to speak and act against what they see as destructive community change; "we be needing them young ones with youthful strength to be doing all they can," Sandra explained.

Remembrances of young mothers as localized resistance

"I'm not sure why I'm mad, but I be spitting mad."

With its emphasis on young mothers, the memorialization of slave-era motherhood is a veneration of young women that stands in stark contrast to the globalizing discourses that denigrate youth (Schissel, 1997). The remembrances of young motherhood shared by the women in the Bridgetown community can be interpreted not only as an attempt to tie the past to the present and to inspire action in the face of adversity, it can also be interpreted as a localized resistance to the transnational recasting of young motherhood.

In his bestselling critique of the globalizing "culture of fear," Barry Glassner (1999) explains that few characters have been held as responsible for the degradation of society as young mothers. Focusing primarily on American political discourse, Glassner (1999: 90-91) explains that by the mid-1990s, news reports and social commentaries were profiling the "epidemic" of teen pregnancies and motherhood. In his 1995 State of the Union address, then President Bill Clinton referred to teen mothers as "America's most serious social problem." The 1996 Federal Welfare Law in the United States included a transfer of $250 million for the promotion of premarital abstinence, but only among those under eighteen years of age, and that same year, Health Canada created an envelope of $2 million for social programming designed to "combat teen pregnancies, and the community degeneration and burdens thereof" (Health Canada, 1996). These kind of initiatives on the part of American and Canadian governments are very significant because they contribute to the writing of a "master narrative" of young motherhood that adopts universalizing language (depicting young motherhood to be the same everywhere) and casts young motherhood, and young mothers, in consistently negative ways.

There is, of course, a large international audience for the primarily American- and British-based journalistic accounts that document the low educational achievements of young mothers (Koch, 2006; "Teen Pregnancy 'Hotspots,'" 2005), the high rates of criminal activity among the children of young mothers (Elshtain, 1996; Goldsborough, 1994), the exorbitant costs young mothers pose to national economies (Caldas, 1994; "Cost of Unwed Teen Birth," 2006), and the greater likelihood that children to young mothers will be born showing the effects of substance abuse (Dale, 1991; Marquez, 2006). Without controlling for issues of poverty, which render relevant differences in educational achievement and crime rates insignificant, and without addressing the fact that many cases of malnutrition among racially marginalized children of young mothers are misdiagnosed as the aftermath of crack use (Paltrow, 1999), consumers of these sensational reports can easily conclude that the social ills plaguing all kinds of communities around the world can be explained by teen pregnancy. In fact, Wade Hern, Assistant Secretary for children and families at the Health and Human Services Department of the United States, has recently stated publicly that teen birth rates singly drive a lot of negative social indicators including drug use, child abuse and neglect, crime rates, and the need for foster- and state-care (cited in Koch, 2006: O2A).

In his biting critique of the shoddy research that informs these misrepresentations of young mothers, Barry Glassner (1999: 90) argues that "in what may qualify as the most sweeping, bipartisan, multimedia, multidisciplinary scapegoating operation of the late twentieth century," young mothers were repeatedly accused of destroying communities and fostering a sense of hopelessness. This is a far cry from the stories of young slave motherhood that were shared with me through the course of my research, and it is therefore fair to ask how this public British and North American discourse on teen motherhood is relevant to the women with whom I worked in Barbados.

The rhetoric and fear around young mothers in North America and Britain are not bound by national borders; nor is this rhetoric born only within those contexts. There are globalizing discourses which are challenging the nostalgic connections to teen mothers' strength. An editorial appearing in one of Barbados' national newspapers in May 2002 expressed distress over the death of a 14-year old girl who died of AIDS-related causes. Tying the HIV/AIDS epidemic to fears about broader community change, the editorial asks,

> Should we not be learning from our loved ones who have made homes for themselves in Canada, England and parts of America? We are learning from them that crime, unemployment, underemployment, vagrancy, drug use, irresponsible sexual behaviours and reckless teen mothering are ruining communities, communities that are much like ours: newly urban, Black and marked by migration. ("Tragic Times," 2002: A4)

Young mothers are recast in this account, from community leaders and symbols of strength to sources of community ruin. In this view, young mothers no longer lead the way; they—along with those who are addicted, unemployed, criminally inclined, promiscuous—are standing in the way of collective progress with their recklessness.

This editorial is not a solitary account. Five other newspaper articles appeared May, 2002, informing readers that the profile of young mothers in

Barbados should elicit concern. Lainie told me that her minister shared a similar concern with his congregation: "He just stood right up there in front of all us mothers and he say, 'Are we doing Bajan [Barbadian] motherhood any good by letting the young ones breed?' I'm not sure why I'm mad, but I be spitting mad at that." Lainie's response was most likely due to the fact that by questioning the fitness of young mothers, the minister (and all those expressing similar sentiments) is questioning the memorialized accounts that validate the women's claim to a political voice and central place as community leaders. Questioning the iconic characterization of young slave mothers is to question an important source of power—in Sandra's words, "youthful strength"—that Black women in post-slavery Barbados have as competent mothers.

Despite accounts to the contrary, the women participating in this research continued to insist that stories of young slave motherhood are fundamental to their fight for community well-being and their struggles against the "hurricane of health breakers." These stories not only provide individual inspiration and a way to live history; these stories also allow the women to resist the globalizing trends and to assert a localized identity that still very much upholds the principles of matrifocality. "Don't be telling me that we don't matter," Lainie explained, still responding in anger to her minister's comments. "Maybe we not be like them others, maybe we got the young slave mothers better than the rest of them do. But I be serious when I say, we be doing right by saying to the young ones: be strong, be mothers, be good."

Conclusion

In her account of becoming a young mother, Crystal'Aisha Perryman-Mark (2000) describes the challenges posed by the globalizing discourse that renders young motherhood as negative. And although there is no doubt, and it is certainly not my intent here to negate the fact that there are significant and age-specific challenges, difficulties and struggles associated with young motherhood, PerrymanMark (136) claims that to politicize motherhood is to give voice to a feeling of power that for many young women remains unattainable outside of more complex intergenerational ties. "A mother interviewed by Fiona Green states that 'to Mother is to have an entire generation in one's hand' (1999: 101). This is a power mothers and othermothers—aunts, friends, grandparents and caregivers—have had, and continue to have, and that is passed down to us" (PerrymanMark, 2000: 136). Memorializing the strength of young mothers may not alleviate the real life difficulties that teen mothers face, but it does help to maintain the cultural site where women claim a voice and a political place of power in matrifocal communities.

The research on which this paper is based was funded by the Social Sciencdes and Humanities Federation of Canada.

[1] The topic of women and slavery in the Caribbean is an expansive one. Despite the many and exemplary works that present primary as well as secondary sources (Shepherd, 1999), that offer historical syntheses of the gendered aspects to slavery (Beckles, 1989; Bush, 1990; Morrissey, 1989) and that discuss the attention to the fertility and child mortality rates on slave plantations (Beckles, 1998: Kiple, 1981; Midgley, 1992), there is surprisingly little written on the experience of mothering under slavery.

References

Beckles, Hilary. 1998. "Centering Woman: The Political Economy of Gender in West African and Caribbean Slavery." *Caribbean Portraits: Essays on Gender Ideologies and Identities*. Ed. Christine Barrow. Kingston: Ian Randle Publisher. 93-114.

Beckles, Hilary. 1989. *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bereton, Bridget. 2003. "Gendered Testimony: Autobiographies, Diaries, Letters by Women as Sources for Caribbean History." *Slavery, Freedom and Gender: The Dynamics of Caribbean Society*. Eds. Brian Moore, B.W. Higman, Carl Campbell and Patrick Bryan. Kingston: University of West Indies Press. 232-253.

Bernard, Wanda T. 2000. "Bringing Our Boyz to Men: Black Men's Reflections on Their Mothers' Childrearing Influences." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 2 (1): 54-65.

Bosco, Fernando J. 2006. "The Madres de Plaza de Mayo and Three Decades of Human Rights Activism: Embeddedness, Emotions and Social Movements." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96 (2): 342-365.

Buffton, Deborah. 2005. "Memorialization and the Selling of War." *Peace Review* 17 (1): 25-31.

Bush, Barbara. 1990. *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Caldas, Stephen. 1994. "Teen Pregnancy." *Phi Beta Kappan* 75 (January): 402.

Clarke, F. 2006. "'Let All Nations See': Civil War Nationalism and the Memorialization of Wartime Voluntarism." *Civil War History* 52 (1): 66-93.

"Cost of Unwed Teen Birth in N.C. Measured." 2006. *Christian Action League* 4 Nov.: 1.

Dale, Suzanne. 1991. "Born on Crack and Coping with Kindergarten." *New York Times* 7 February: A1.

DeJorio, Rosa. 2006. "Politics of Remembering and Forgetting: The Struggle over Colonial Monuments in Mali." *Africa Today* 52 (4): 79-106.

Downe, Pamela J. 2006. "Aboriginal Girls in Canada: Living Histories of Dislocation, Exploitation and Strength." *Girlhood: Redefining the Limits*.

Eds. Yasmin Jiwani, Candis Steenbergen, and Claudia Mitchell. Montreal: Black Rose Books. 1-15.

Edkins, Jenny. 2003. "The Rush to Memory and the Rhetoric of War." *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 31 (2): 231-250.

Elshtain, Jean B. 1996. "The Lost Children." *New Republic* 21 October: 30-36.

Forest, Benjamin, Juliet Johnson and Karen Till. 2004. "Post-totalitarian National Identity: Public Memory in Germany and Russia." *Social and Cultural Geography* 5 (3): 357-380.

Flynn, Karen and Henwood, Cindy-Lou. 2000. "Nothing to Write Home About: Caribbean Canadian Daughters, Mothers and Migration." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 2 (2): 118-129.

Garro, Linda M. 2001. "The Remembered Past in a Culturally Meaningful Life: Remembering as Cultural, Social, and Cognitive Process." *The Psychology of Cultural Experience*. Eds. Carmella C. Moore and Holly F. Mathews. New York: Cambridge University Press. 104-147.

Garton, Stephen and John Springthorpe. 2002. "The Scales of Suffering: Love, Death and Victorian Masculinity." *Social History* 27 (1): 40-58.

Glassner, Barry. 1999. *The Culture of Fear*. New York: Basic Books.

Goldsborough, James. 1994. "The Unwed Birthrate." *San Diego Union Tribune*, 28 July: B11.

Health Canada. 1996. "Social Pathologies and Canada's Response." *Health Bulletin*, October 14: 3-4.

Higman, B.W. 1995. *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*. Kingston: University of West Indies Press.

Johnson, M. 1990. *Strong Mothers, Weak Wives: The Search for Gender Equality*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kiple, Kenneth F. 1981. *The Caribbean Slave: A Biological History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Koch, Wendy. 2006. "Fewer Teens are Giving Birth but Cost to Taxpayers Still …" *USA Today* 30 October: O2A.

Lambek, Michael. 1996. "The Past Imperfect: Remembering as Moral Practice." *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. Eds. Paul Antze and Michael Lambek. New York: Routledge. 235-254.

Marquez, Laura. "Meth Wreaks Havoc on Lives of Young Mothers and Their Kids." *ABC News*, 6 March 2006. 4 January 2007 <http://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/story?id=1801827>.

Midgley, Clare. 1992. *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870*. London: Routledge.

Mohammed, Patricia and Althea Perkins. 1999. *Caribbean Women at the Crossroads: The Paradox of Motherhood among Women of Barbados, St. Lucia and Dominica*. Barbados: University of West Indies Press.

Morrissey, Marietta. 1989. *Slave Women in the New World: Gender Stratification in the Caribbean*. Lawrence: Kansas University Press.

Nevins, Joseph. 2005. "The Abuse of Memorialized Space and the Redefinition of Ground Zero." *Journal of Human Rights* 4 (2): 267-282.

O'Reilly, Andrea. 2004. *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart*. Albany: State University of New York.

Paltrow, Lynn M. (1999). "Punishment and Prejudice: Judging Drug-Using Pregnant Women." *Mother Troubles: Rethinking Contemporary Maternal Dilemmas*. Eds. Julia E. Hanigsberg and Sara Ruddick. Boston: Beacon Press. 59-80.

PerrymanMark, Crystal'Aisha. 2000. "Resistance and Surrender: Mothering Young, Black, and Feminist." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 2 (2): 130-138.

Richards, Sandra L. 2002. "Cultural Travel to Ghana's Slave Castles." *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education* 11 (4): 372-375.

Santino, J. 2004. "Performative Commemoratives, the Personal and the Public: Spontaneous Shrines, Emergent Ritual, and the Field of Folklore." *Journal of American Folklore* 117 (466): 366-372.

Sayigh, Rosemary. 2005. "A House is Not a Home: Permanent Impermanence of Habitat for Palestinian Expellees in Lebanon." *Holy Land Studies* 4 (1): 17-39.

Schissel, Bernard. 1997. *Blaming Children: Youth Crime, Moral Panic and the Politics of Hate*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Shay, Talia. 2005. "Can Our Loved Ones Rest in Peace? The Memorialization of the Victims of Hostile Activities." *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (3): 709-723.

Shepherd, Verene. 1999. *Women in Caribbean History: The British Colonised Territories*. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers.

Sherebrin, Hannah. 2002. "Partners in Complicated Grief: National Grief Reactions to Disasters and Grassroots Memorialization." In *Complicated Grieving and Bereavement: Understanding and Treating People Experiencing Loss*. Eds. Gerry R. Cox, Robert A. Bendikson and Robert G. Stevenson. Amityville: Baywood Publisher. 241-254.

"Teen Pregnancy 'Hotspots' Tackled." BBC Radio Broadcast, 24 February.

Todorov, Tzvetan. 1996. "The Abuses of Memory." *Common Knowledge* 5: 6-26.

"Tragic Times." 2002. *The Barbados Advocate* 11 May: A4.

Whites, LeeAnn. 2005. *Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Making of the New South*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tara Mae Hillyer

Mother, Woman, Healer

Every Mother has a story. The story of who she is and how she grew into that woman. This is mine. I was 19 years old and living in the USA when I got pregnant with my first child. Certainly a large surprise for all of us. Doctors had spent years telling me that I may not ever be able to get pregnant, and even if I did I probably would not be able to carry to term. Since I was 13, I have suffered with endometriosis (a painful disease where the endometrial lining grows outside of the uterus and causes cyst-like formations on organs within the abdominal cavity. With each menstrual cycle these growths cause debilitating pain). Just a few months before I got pregnant I had surgery for the endometriosis. It was very successful, but the gynecologist neglected to tell me that for a few months after the surgery I would be very fertile. Nine years later I am still glad that this important information never reached my ears.

Unfortunately, I was not in a very healthy relationship when I got pregnant. As a teenager, who had already engaged in more than my share of abusive relationships, I did not yet have the experience with relationships and life to recognize that it was time to end the relationship. Instead I thought I should suck it up and try to make it work. A few months later I came to the realization it just was not going to work. When I tried to break up with my boyfriend he became very upset; he blocked the door and prevented me from leaving. I had never seen that side of him, and it scared me. After some discussion I could see he was not calming down and I felt my only salvation lay in retracting what I had said and assuring him that we were still a couple. In the morning I left. When I reached my parents' home I called and told him it was over. He harassed, stalked, and threatened me for months. I became so stressed and sick that the pregnancy was at risk. I was losing weight, bleeding, and unable to eat. After a threatening call where he told me he would take the baby as soon as it was born and that I would never see the baby again, I had no choice but to leave the security of my parents' home and fly back to Canada.

I left a place where my finances where taken care of, where my parents were paying for my post-secondary education, where I had the support and care of both my parents and my younger brother. I left to give my baby the opportunity to be born. Once in Toronto, I had to go on welfare, I received less than $700 per month—my rent was $660. Do the math. There is not a lot left over to pay for the phone, transportation, and, most importantly, for food. I had been away from Ontario long enough for many of my close friendships to have dissolved, and I was essentially on my own, pregnant and poverty-stricken. This is not the direction I thought my life would take when I imagined what I would be when I grew up.

With the support of a couple of close family friends and my aunt, I gave birth a month early to a five-and-a-half pound baby boy. Let me tell you, for such a small thing he sure did hurt a lot. But he was beautiful, and many days and nights I just lay beside him staring at his absolute perfection. Though he did not have any physical complications, as he grew up there were a lot of developmental problems— socialization, behaviour, aggression, anxiety. I had to work hard to get him diagnosed, but eventually he landed several popular titles: ADHD, ODD, PDD, PTSD (Attention Deficit Disorder, Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).

The first year of his life I couldn't afford to eat much so I had only one meal a day, usually Kraft dinner or a bowl of cereal. He was breastfed so I figured he was probably fine. For the most part he was. As he began to eat more solid foods, I would save the money I had to buy him fresh fruits and vegetables and then make the baby food myself. I learned to cut a lot of corners, but I was young and had a lot of pride, I couldn't tell my parents the dire straits I was in, and I wouldn't go to a food bank either. But just before his first birthday I went back to university for a degree in psychology, got a student loan, and moved out of the city. The student loan was a life saver. It was a lot more per month than the money I was getting from welfare and by that point my parents had figured out that I had been starving and had begun to send up a little money each month to help with food.

I never realized how depressed I was. I saw a psychiatrist for the post-traumatic-stress (PTSD) I suffered from my experiences in the U.S. I just looked at it as PTSD, I never saw it as depression, or anxiety, or even Post Partum Mood Disorder (PPMD). I just knew I wasn't the same girl I used to be. I was a frail and frightened version of the woman I almost was. In my last year at York University, I had a great professor who taught me more than just how to interpret a text book. I took several classes with him on Art and Psychotherapy, Ritual and Healing, Expressive Art Therapies…. It changed me. It healed me. It empowered me. It was the first step to my recovery, which would take another seven more years. It was because of him I made the first

Tara Mae Hillyer, "Pregnancy"

decision in my almost adult life to do what I wanted to do, not what I thought I should do. It was scary and I had no rational justification for it, other than I really felt from the depths of my soul this is what I was supposed to do. I went on to post-graduate work in Outdoor Recreation, a huge diversion from the course previously plotted for my life.

During this last year of school my landlord found it engaging to use me as a distraction from his family and his life. No matter how many times I tried to divert his attentions, he kept coming back, more and more forcefully, until one evening when his wife was out of town. That night he came down to the basement apartment and told me how he fantasized about me and then satisfied himself to those thoughts. He tried to touch me and kiss me. I dodged his attempts, but he became more and more insistent. I managed to dissuade him and corral him back to the stairs leading to his portion of the house. The next night he tried again. I avoided his efforts once more and decided it was time to move. I wrote my letter of departure and made arrangements to leave within the month.

During this time an old friend of mine stopped in for a visit. He came over completely strung out on methamphetamines. He was more aggressive than my landlord, and had no idea how forceful he was being. He threw me around like a sack of potatoes. Silently I prayed that my son, who was sleeping in the other room, would not wake up and end up in his path. As he came down from his high, he needed to go home and get his stash. He didn't come back. I don't think he remembered he even came over in the first place. The last time I heard about him he was in jail.

We moved into a house. I started the post-graduate program. My son started a new daycare. It was a one year course in kayaking, canoeing, backpacking—challenge courses and ecology. In addition, each student chose an area of focus. Mine was wilderness therapy. It would seem I still could not divert from myself from the call of people-care after all. I integrated art, wilderness, recreation, and therapy into a beautiful way for people to connect with nature, humanity, and themselves. A few more pieces of my fractured soul slowly healed. But it was a difficult year for my son. He had been kicked out of numerous child care centres, and babysitting was getting more and more difficult to come by. However, we both managed the year and I graduated with several certificates.

I got a job as a supervisor for children's recreation centre, working with children with special needs. But, it was in the city and we weren't. The toll of driving extended hours, and the requirement for before and after-care for my son proved to be too much. I was there for a year. I enjoyed the stimulation, the programming, the kids, but in the end, my own child was more important, and I had to change jobs.

After a few short contracts I settled at a centre for pregnant teens. The centre provided high school education, parenting education, social workers, and a variety of support programs. It also only operated during the hours of a regular school day. This meant that I didn't require before or after-care for my son and could drop him off and pick him up after school. It was what I needed to be the Mother my son needed. However, it also meant I was only working part-time. My new job didn't really utilize any of the education I had earned, but it was a job that was full of wonderful and supportive women. It was a place where I visited my past in every young woman that walked through the door.

It was hard for me at first to connect to any of the young women at the centre. Not because they were oppositional, or difficult, or because they carried an attitude that could barely fit through the door, but because I could see myself in each of these young women. These were young women who had been abused in ways that would make even the strongest stomach churn. These young women were forced to grow up before they were finished being children. These young women were so dedicated to the life inside them that they sacrificed the person they thought they were going to be to allow the woman inside them to come forth. As I connected one by one to the young women in the centre, I connected to the young woman in me—to that girl who never finished being a girl. To that girl who carried fear and terror inside her which ate at her confidence, esteem, and security everyday.

As the days passed I grew inspired by the feats of courage these young women demonstrated. They grew and matured and they were the most incredible mothers I had ever seen. Despite their age and lack of education, they were more caring and devoted to their children than many of the 30-something mothers I have known. Eventually, I allowed myself to acknowledge the courage I had inside myself. I acknowledged the sacrifices I had made and continue to make. I acknowledged that I was indeed the perfect mother for my son. The young women at the centre taught me that. And for that I am eternally grateful.

I kept my ties to the outdoor world and joined the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario, where I sat on the Board of Directors for a term. It was there that I met a man who was a single father of two boys, one of whom had some special needs. There was a connection between us because we were both the single parent of a child with special needs. I thought he understood. I thought he "got it." I thought he recognized how hard I worked every day as a mother, as a woman, as an individual. I thought he respected me as a peer and as woman. I entered a relationship with him. I got pregnant. I was wrong. He was none of the things I thought he was, least of all understanding of who I was and what I had to offer.

He wanted me to have an abortion, or to give the baby up for adoption. I couldn't do it. I changed all my plans, again. Prior to finding out I was pregnant I had sold my house, gave notice at my job, and had been accepted into a Master's Program in the States. Because my first son did not have the presence of a father in his life I was determined to do everything in my power to provide the opportunity for my next child to have a father. I didn't realize at the time it was beyond my power to do so. I think sometimes we want something so desperately for our children that reality means very little.

By the third month of my pregnancy, my son and I were homeless and living on friends' sofas. The relationship with my unborn child's father was dissolving, horribly, and there was still pressure from him to terminate the pregnancy. We stopped seeing each other but I told him I would contact him when the baby was born. We did communicate a few times before then, but not much was said. I wanted this pregnancy and birth to be different, but a lot was the same. This time I ended up on bed rest, and thankfully I had enough work hours under my belt to qualify for employment insurance. My second son was born on his grandfather's 50th birthday, in my bed at home. It did not go according to plan, but by the time he graced us with his presence my best friends were present, my Aunt was being traumatized by the pain I was experiencing, two midwives were delivering the baby, and my eldest son (at the time six years old) had slept through the whole thing.

He was an Angel. He was perfect. He did not cry when he was born; he just stared at me. My heart heard his inner voice announce me his Mother. Not long afterward my eldest son woke up and welcomed his brother into the family. He was the first person other than myself to hold the baby. He has been the proudest big brother ever since. It took longer to recover physically from this delivery. Though I didn't have any stitches, my body was sore for a couple of months. Life was bliss for four months, until the Post Partum Mood Disorder (PPMD) struck with an intensity that paralyzed me.

For months fear and terror gripped me, and in the moments I was not afraid, I was very depressed. It was only because I channel-hopped past Oprah one day, pausing long enough to see Brooke Shields tell some of her story about having Post Partum Depression, that I recognized I needed support. I was extremely reluctant to take medication, but as the days passed and panic consumed me, I edged closer and closer to making that decision. I joined a group for women with PPMD and started taking specific vitamins and herbs to help combat the symptoms and encourage my brain to increase the hormones I needed to balance out my emotional and psychological state (which took almost four months at high doses to have any kind of effect at all). I also visited a Sangoma (a South African Shaman/Medicine Woman/Healer), which proved to be a pivotal point in my recovery process. I do not believe it was any single strategy that made the treatment effective, but all the little pieces fitting together. It took almost a full year of deep spiritual work, herbal supplements, counseling, and support groups before I started feeling real relief from the PPMD.

The baby's father was in and out of the picture. He would come by when it was convenient for him and stay usually ten to twenty minutes. He would hover over me when I was nursing, well into my personal space. The year that followed was difficult between the baby's father and myself. If I was hospitable and friendly he would interpret that as a sexual advance and treat the baby and myself much better. But as soon as he figured out that nothing had changed and we were not going to be involved again he'd miss a couple of visits, be curt with me, and take less interest in the baby. By the time the baby was 18 months old he called me and told me he never wanted the baby and still didn't. It was the most deplorable phone conversation I have ever had. I sat in shock as he spewed off the most horrible things a person could say about their own child and the mother of their child. Over the previous two years he had said reprehensible things, he had sent me emails calling me a bad mother, he criticized everything I did, but this phone call beat all of those conversations and emails put together. I was devastated for my son. A week later he changed his

Tara Mae Hillyer, "Flower Baby"

Tara Mae Hillyer, "Serious"

mind, again. It seems it all revolved around the child support payments that the Social Service Office was forcing upon him. The baby was too expensive and inconvenient.

In the meantime my eldest son continued to have difficulties in school. Each year, since JK, he had been transferred to a different school by the school board. As he came up on the waitlists for support programs he would be too old, or the parameters of the program had changed, and he was no longer eligible for service. The only constant we had was an annual visit to Youthdale in Toronto. We had been through Markham Stouffville Pediatric Assessment Clinic, Blue Hills Child and Family Centre, Early Intervention, York Centre for Children Youth and Families, Kinark, Sick Kids Hospital (Toronto), and Southlake Crisis for Youth. Not one of these agencies was able to provide on-going care.

In January 2006 the situation at school became so desperate I felt there was no other option than to remove him from school and home school him. Although I was terrified this would only add more stress to our already fragile relationship, we took the plunge and never looked back. It was the best decision I had ever made regarding his care and treatment. I saw a dramatic change in his personality. He calmed down immediately. We had an active and engaging schedule of experiential learning and book learning. He was doing fantastic. In the first few months we home schooled, he jumped a grade level. He was motivated and curious and dedicated. I was so proud of him, and us for the commitment we made to each other and to ourselves. The baby benefited just as much as my eldest son did. The baby joined us on all our outings, was present as I taught small groups of home schoolers, and had the opportunity to interact with children of varying ages. We all enjoyed the experience.

Months past where the father of the baby and I pretended everything was fine. The month before Christmas he told me he wanted joint custody so he could use the baby as a tax write off. This was a smack in the face. When I returned from holidays visiting my parents, he sent me an email again asking for joint custody so he could get a tax deductible/refund. He listed a few other demands, which at this point seemed to reflect a marking of territory. I tried to explain to him joint custody had nothing to do with claiming a dependant. He would have none of it. Things were escalating. Though I had sole custody de facto, I filed for legal sole-custody. When I served him the papers he was not very impressed. He felt compelled to stand in the driveway at eight o'clock at night on the coldest night of the year to "discuss" it. He said I was an obstacle to his relationship with his son. I stomped my foot like a child having a tantrum and asked him if he was serious. I bent over backwards to accommodate him. I always let him choose when he wanted to come for visits. Only after a year of random visits did I even request a schedule. Even then I still ridiculously accommodated him when he changed the time, called to cancel, changed the day, or didn't show up. He rarely showed up on the agreed dates and times.

Tara Mae Hillyer, "Reclaiming Freedom"

When he couldn't argue that point anymore he switched to talking about what would happen if I died or became incapacitated. Part way through his argument his words changed from "if" to "when you're dead." That was enough to make me a little nervous. My response was simple. I told him I wanted my children to remain together and that I didn't expect him to care for my eldest child. Then he went on to say he didn't want to fight for the baby after I died. I told him what the lawyers had told me, which is that even if I named him the guardian in my will anyone could contest it. There is a six-month period

Tara Mae Hillyer, "Emerging Light"

to file for permanent custody. He began arguing about having to go to court and I should make sure that everything was in place in case I should die so disputes wouldn't happen. I said, "look if I am dead there is nothing I can do." At that point, my friend came out of his house to rescue me.

What he did not know was that during my vacation I was diligently working to reclaim my freedom and overcome my fear of men. I was actively working to heal from years of abusive relationships. I spent many months meditating on how to overcome my paralyzing fears. In the end, the message I received was to photograph men and the desert and find a way to see them both as sacred and beautiful; the philosophy behind it being that if I was connected to men and the desert in a sacred and beautiful way, then there would no longer be a cause to fear them. I journaled through the process. I photographed flora, and landscape and men. Up to that point I was very skilled at photographing women and children beautifully, but I had yet to find away to capture men beautifully in photographs. Suddenly, there in the photos before me were beautiful images of men and the desert in a way I had never conceived of before. And in the Sonoran Desert, a place that I feared and dreaded for so long, I found the serenity that I had been longing for.

I couldn't keep these images and the story of my recovery to myself. I put the images and the journal entries together and created an art exhibit for other women to come and see; for other women to know that no matter how much time has passed living in abusive relationships, or how many men had abused them, or how deeply their fear was rooted, there was a way out. Maybe it wasn't the same path I chose, but there is a path for each of us.

This whole endeavour generated a momentum in me to take back my power. I filed claims for custody in the courts. I stood up for myself, not always without resistance, but I always found help when I needed it. I took an entrepreneurial class for women in business. I created a business plan. I registered my business in my name and began taking clients as a Medicine Woman—a healing form I have practiced since I was a teenager. I launched the photo exhibit (on my birthday) the week I graduated from the business program. I developed my website (www.taramaehillyer.com) and several workshops to encourage others on their own path. I continue creating the opportunity for me to be the best mother and woman I can be. I feel it, my children feel it, and those who know me see it.

Money is still tight, my eldest son still struggles with school, my baby's father still limits his visitation, my car is on it's last wheels, and my apartment is certainly too small for the three of us. Despite these things, and all the trials of being a woman and being a single mother, I would not have written my life any different. It is all these experiences that have peeled away at the masks of people I had to be, to finally uncover the woman I truly am. I invite the many women who had children before they had grown into a woman themselves, to look within and see the shinning courage and compassion that carries them through each day—to honour themselves as women, as mothers, and as children of the Earth. Our children are our greatest gifts, our greatest challenges, and our sure path to what we are capable of. Blessings.

Young Moms Speak Out

Sarah Pilon and daughter, Skyra

Sarah Pilon

Sarah Pilon

Aren't I Too Young?

Here I am a typical 16-year-old girl. I know everything. My parents really don't know what the're talking about because it's a new time, new world, new rules. *My* rules.

Getting high, at the very least, seven times a day, once before class in the morning, then at lunch break, afternoon break, after school, and at least twice in the evening. My whole world was getting high. If I found a quarter. the first thought in my mind was, "all I need is another $4.75 to get a joint." I would search, steal, and lie to get it. I would stay up or go out as late until I found some—day after day, until I got bored. I had to get high to be normal. It wasn't giggly fun anymore, so I upgraded. First it was oil, hash, perks, then mushrooms and ecstasy. I was falling fast into a hole I couldn't pull myself out of alone.

The norm was party hard on the weekend—whatever was the cheapest way to waste away the rest of the crappy week. One week was particularily bad. My parents and I, as usual, were on very different levels of what was acceptable, and there was plenty of arguing. My friend, Nadine, convinced me to go to this party. I agreed. Half-sloshed, I met a guy. His name was Travis. He was older (20), different, and certainly not like all the other guys I knew. We totally hit it off that night, met the next day, and before we knew it, we were dating. Of course, with absolutely no approval from my parents (16-year-old baby of the family dating a 20-year-old guy)! We continued to date. We were both in a difficult place … lost … and it was as if we found each other and kept each other from drowning in the mud, like Forrest Gump and Bubba leaning against each other to sleep—we stayed afloat.

He did his military thing and I was in high school. I had no idea what he was doing; I just knew he put on a uniform every Thursday, and we couldn't hang out. Life went on.

Everything was perfect. I now had someone to talk to, someone to share myself with, someone to party with. All we did together was party or stay at his house and drink and get high and watch movies. Then I'd go home and wait to do it all over again the next day. We didn't really know each other. I think we were both too hurt or too scared to let each other in. Our relationship was satisfactory to our needs and wants. We were sexually active and I knew I wouldn't get pregnant because that only happened to other girls—I was going to finish high school, go to university, and be something great, but that was later—I was just having fun for now.

August 2002. I started getting cramps. I thought for sure it was my appendix or bladder, something hereditary. My doctor ordered an ultrasound. When the nurse stared intently at the screen, I knew something was wrong. I thought something was wrong with my bladder, but she turned the screen around and pointed to a little dot on the screen, "That little squiggly line in the middle of the circle … that's a baby, you're pregnant." My heart dropped. I never knew tears could fall from my face so quickly. The first words that came out of my mouth were, "is it too late to have an abortion?" She said, "no." I was only six weeks along. At this point, Travis, my boyfriend and the baby's father, was living in Borden, taking a course for the military to become a mechanic, coming home only on the weekends, staying with me and my parents. I wasn't sure what to say to him. He came home that day—my 17th birthday was that weekend. I blurted out the news with many tears. The amount of sorrow, confusion, and fear was so thick in the air that it felt like a really foggy night with your brights on, unable to see, guessing how to steer. He wasn't shocked. He agreed to support whatever decision I made.

I made the appointment. I was getting an abortion. This was something I had been strongly against, ever since I was a kid, and something I argued against in debates at school and with friends. But, suddenly, everything changed radically.

On the Sunday night I was laying with my mom, hoping to feel comforted. She asked me if I was pregnant, I'm sure hoping I would laugh and tell her she was crazy. I replied "yes." She cried. I cried. We cried. We had a *real* talk for the first time since I was 13. I decided that night I would keep the baby. Travis agreed and we decided to get married in December 2002, finally getting serious about our lives.

The military wouldn't move me until paper work for our marriage went through, so I lived with my parents for another three months. My mother's worst nightmare was coming true—seeing her little girl walk around with a big belly.

Being able to spend time with Travis only on weekends didn't help us get any closer. And I was still getting high all the time, it being the only thing that kept my mind off my belly getting bigger and bigger. I was about to become a *mom*! The most responsibility I had ever had was getting to McDonalds on time to start work, something with which I struggled! I was so scared—so ill-prepared. I knew nothing. I even failed my high school parenting course! All I was sure about was that I wasn't going to kill an innocent baby—that my baby would grow up to be a person, a friend, a human being.

Shortly before I moved to Borden someone mentioned to me (true or not) that if they found traces of drugs in my baby at birth, the Children's Aid Society would become involved, and they would probably take the baby away. I was so frightened it was as if someone had kicked me in the face. I didn't want to lose my baby. I was starting to feel kicks and be comfortable with the idea of being a mom, excited to meet him or her—this was *my* baby. I had to clean myself up—not for me, but for my child. It was no longer an option! I quit smoking cigarettes, quit smoking weed, and I even stopped swearing!

I finally moved to Borden, Ontario—a military base—near the end of March 2003. I was in a new world that wasn't mine anymore. I didn't know anyone but Travis. Everyone around me was military, something extremely new to me. We lived in a PMQ (married quarters) on base. The only time I got out to do anything was when we started going to our church in North Bay, the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The majority of the people in the church were fairly young families. I started to ask a lot of questions, getting feedback from moms that had experience, and reading a lot of magazines and books on parenting. I started learning and continued researching how to be a good mom, but no book could prepare me for an actual baby. At the same time, I found myself getting to know Travis for the first time. We had never done anything recreational, or productive together. It was as if I had started dating my husband! I fell in love with him, and he was a totally different person, a person I admired.

Ryan Joseph Emile Pilon was born May 24th, 2003. After a scare (the cord was around his neck) he was born perfectly healthy and very cute! I was immediately in love with him. I was still very scared, but Travis being the amazing man that he is, helped us develop as a wonderful family.

Travis was transferred to Petawawa, Ontario, so we moved four months after Ryan was born. Another new area, but this time I had Ryan. It no longer felt like I got pregnant and we were just "dealing with it." This time, it felt like we were starting a family, a little unexpected and very early though, nonetheless, true. I was no longer interested in the life I once led and enjoyed. It was as if someone had pried my eyes open until I was willing to see, and then thanked them for helping me to see, forever indebted and grateful. That person was God.

We decided after Ryan was about nine months old to have another child and so we started trying. I soon learned through a friend at church that there was a young parent support program in the area that offered free childcare and available courses to complete high school. I jumped at the opportunity and started the program. I met people my age and learned about the area and the support and help available to me as a mom.

I saw a lot of girls still living "the life" *with* children, ultimately pushing their child aside to please themselves—getting nothing but brief moments of fake happiness with others, while their child was learning how to say "mommy," learning how to to walk, read, smile, and giggle with someone else. I knew from that moment on I would try my best to be fully dedicated to my son Ryan, and to my future children, giving them the most memorable childhood I was able to give … remembering that *mom* was there.

Soon after we had a baby girl—Jordan Morgan Jean Pilon, born on April 27th, 2005. There was now chaos in our little house, with a few new friends from church and school that visited and helped.

We had been clean from everything since I was four months pregnant with Ryan, and counting. We had a family and we were embracing it. We enjoyed our moments together, creating more, moving past the hard days or weeks, learning.

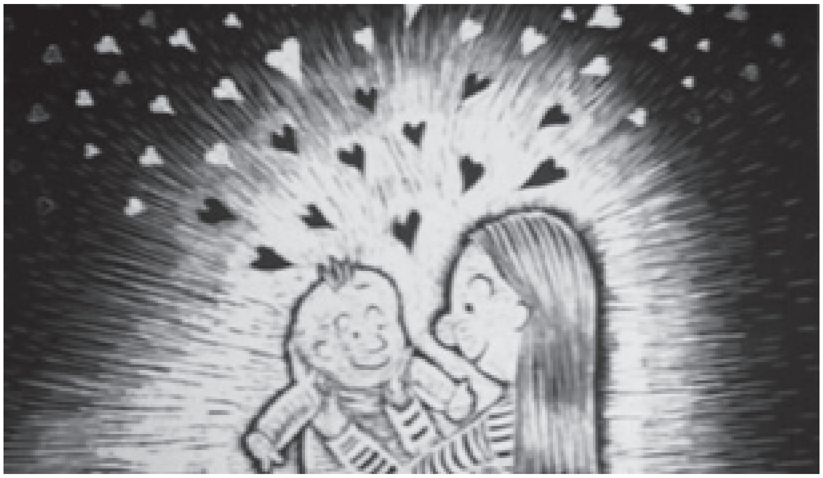
We were invited to the Dominican Republic for Travis's brother's wedding in January 2006. We gratefully attended that wedding and returned home with yet another blessing, although this particular pregnancy was not all ribbons and lace. The summer following was extremely trying on our marriage and we went through a very rough patch. But the worst is over and we are recovering beautifully with the help of family and friends, and first and foremost, God.

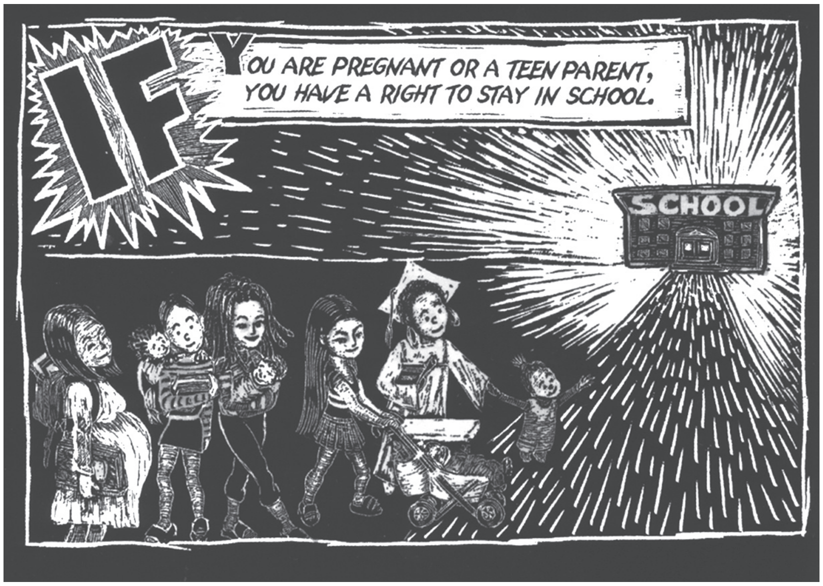
We just gave birth to another baby girl, Skyra Jessie Michaela Pilon, on November 9th, 2006. Absolutely gorgeous and a true blessing to our family and marriage.

I look at my son, now almost four years old, and I will never be able to thank my mom enough for talking with me that night and, in a way, smacking me upside the head. The way his perfect, little, innocent face looks at me and says "mommy … I love you" makes me so unbelievably grateful that decided to "keep the baby." My life would not be the same without them—all my children. My life.

Katherine Arnoldi

The Amazing True Story of a Teenage Single Mom




IF
YOU ARE PREGNANT OR A TEEN PARENT, YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO STAY IN SCHOOL.
SCHOOL


THANKS MOM
GRADUATION DAY
FOR LETTING ME COME
TO YOUR GRADUATION FROM COLLEGE
SO I COULD IMAGINE IT
FOR MYSELF.

The Amazing True Story of a Teenage Single Mom *was named a "Top Ten Book of 1998" by* Entertainment Weekly *and was nominated for the Will Eisner Award in the Graphic Novel. It won the New York Foundation of the Arts Award in Drawing; the American Library Association's Notable Books; and The American Library Association's Top Ten Quick Picks for Reluctant Teen Readers. This book advocates for equal access to education for teen moms. It is like a support group that teen moms can hold in their hands and encourages them to fight for their rights. To purchase the book, go to: http://www.katherinearnoldi.com.*

Oolagen Community Services

Essence, Lynn and Arika Speak

These are the personal accounts of three young mothers dealing with life as a single parent, with little in the way of financial resources or support. Essence, Lynn, and Arika all live in Toronto and participate in the Wraparound Process at Oolagen Community Services. Wraparound is primarily a planning process. It is an opportunity for isolated individuals and families to build community supports and to use those supports to work towards achieving *their* goals and aspirations. The Wraparound Process is strength-based and client-driven. Many young mothers who have suffered significant marginalization and socio-economic disadvantage are empowered by the process; and, perhaps, for the first time are in a position where their voice *is* the loudest at the table. Essence, Lynn, and Arika are also members of the Young Moms' Committee, a place where young moms who are either participating in Wraparound or have already completed the process, can meet to support one another, share knowledge, develop skills, and do advocacy work. It was within the context of the Young Moms' Committee that this writing was generated. Lastly, it is important to note that the narratives do not encapsulate the whole of these young mothers' realities but rather only speak to one aspect of their day-to-day obstacles and joys. Indeed, the women expressed that they would need to write a book if they were to talk about all the different issues and needs of young, single parents in Toronto.

The fulfilling struggle

Being a single mother, my main struggle is providing for my boys on a day-to-day basis. We are on social assistance and there is never enough money. I just get by every month. Every day I think about groceries, two sizes of diapers, clothes, rent, bills, and getting rid of my debt so I can go to college. My life has a very basic schedule—up at 6:00am, daycare, school, then home to clean, cook, go to the gym, nap if possible, pick up my boys at 5:00pm, dinner, play together (quality time), watch TV, and then I do my homework. This is my life everyday. I don't think there is any way to make my days easier. I say it's a struggle but I love my boys and my life. Being a mother is the most fulfilling thing that ever happened to me. I wish my boys could have a father figure but I've dealt with this situation within myself—I 'm their mother and father.

—Essence

Everyday lives of single parenting

My name is Lynn. I'm 25 years old and a single mom. I have three children and I go through everyday life as a struggle. I'm stressed, upset, lonely, and angry everyday. I love my children so very deeply and I made a mistake once—I pay for it every single day. It's like people don't believe that someone can change. Nobody is perfect, we all make mistakes, and some of us pay for them a little harder than others. It's like this—I got into a little trouble with the law, it wasn't too serious, but I was incarcerated and did a little time and my children were taken away from me. Now I'm struggling and fighting to get them back.

One child, my eldest, was placed with a family member and now I have a custody battle. My middle child was placed in temporary care and now I'm having problems. I don't have the money to go back into the country. They don't want to come to my country. They keep coming up with excuses on why they can't come to me. It's very stressful, tiring, upsetting, disappointing, and I'm just fed up. but I will never give up the fight. I will fight up until my last breath has been taken.

—Lynn

The ups and downs of no male role model

I am writing about the positive and the negative sides of being a single mother without having a father figure for my daughter. The first negative factor of not having a father around is discipline—everyone knows mothers are nurturers and fathers are providers. Not in this day in age! More and more young mothers are having this problem throughout the world. When you have a strong-willed child, it is very hard to discipline them without breaking their spirit—whether you have a father around or not for them.

I found that talking to my child and listening to her helps me to understand her and be there when she needs me.

When it does come down to disciplining her, I get very frustrated and annoyed, which is very bad because she senses my vibes and knows she is getting to me. I just have to take a deep breath and tell myself to calm down and go to another room until she and I both calm down.

If her father was in the picture I think it would be a little easier to deal with her temper tantrums and mood swings—because of my tiredness or whatever else. On the other hand, the positive thing about not having a male role model is the bond that we share. I do believe it would not be as strong if there was male influence in her life.

Also, the thought of ever losing my child in a custody battle would be devastating.

Another negative that I worry about for my daughter living without a father is her self-esteem and sense of worth when she is older. Her lack of communication with her father would make her wonder if he loves her or even cares about her.

—Arika

Saje Delany

Young Moms

> *My mom didn't believe me. She didn't want to face that it was actually true.*
> —Amy Schnieder

It's hard to be a young mom. People look down on you, and society, as a whole, disapproves. It can be difficult to finish school with a decent education. There are many programs that help mom though. When I had Chase I had no idea what I was doing. Attending programs and talking to other moms helped me to cope.

There are many programs out there for young parents. We have "Baby and Me Yoga" and gymnastics. These are good because many people, especially young moms, are worried about post-pregnancy weight. For those who need extra help coping, there are prenatal classes and home health nurses. Also, Best-Start and the Ontario Early Years Centre have excellent resources that you can take home. Pembroke's library has story-telling for parents and their children. The children listen to stories and then make crafts. Pembroke also has father-baby programs. Another great program is the Young Parent Support Program (YPSP). This one helps get young parents their education and develop their parenting skills as young adults.

A major concern of people is education. Some believe that, if you have a child at a young age, you'll never finish school. Young Parent Support Program helps to dispel this myth. YPSP has a school where parents bring their children. As the children play upstairs, under childcare supervision, the parents do schooling downstairs. The great thing is that, unlike regular school, everyone works on different subjects and there aren't too many distractions. Because of the great support of YPSP, young moms are getting their education, as opposed to dropping out.

Saje Delany and son, Chase

When young moms have babies many consider it "babies having babies." Angela Shelton (Schneider, 2006) says, "I wish babies were not having babies. It makes me so sad and frustrated." Other people believe that we are too young, too promiscuous, and too untrained. It's true a lot of us don't know what to do, but for a first child no one knows what to do exactly. Older people look down on young moms because they believe most of us are substance abusers. Younger people do have a higher abortion and adoption rate. What others don't look at is the fact that as our children get older so do we. We all mature as we grow.

Although many people look down on young moms, no one really sees us. They believe that since we're young, we're wrong. Many of us have made bad choices, but some programs help us to make good ones. The Young Parent Support Program is one of these, helping us to get our education. Just like everyone else, young and old, a baby changes everything. So, although we had a child at a young age, we can do the same as everyone else, only better.

References

Schneider, Amy. April 18, 2006. Online: www.angelashelton.com.

Ama Indeewari Liyanage, "Fountain of Love"

Katelyn Nahoney

My World

She's my world
My little girl.
I can see myself in her eyes.
And even when she cries

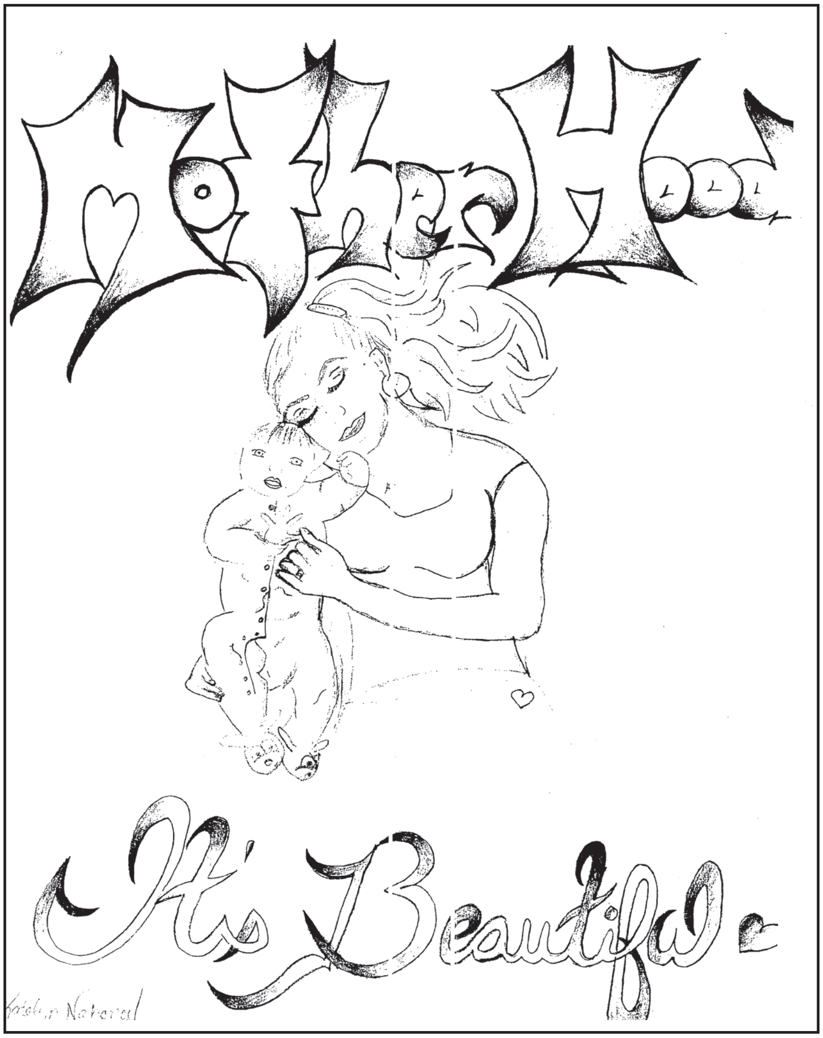
She has a beautiful soul.
And that's how I know
Her heart is as pure as gold.
I love watching her learn
play and earn.
And she's good at doing what she's told.

She's my world
My little girl.
I can see myself in her eyes.
No matter how mad or frustrated I get
My love for her never dies.

I love teaching her things
and watching her grow
counting her fingers
and touching her toes.

She's my world
My little girl.

And my little girl
Is my whole world.



Katelyn Nahoney, "Moatherhood is Beautiful"

Katelyn Nahoney

A Stranger's Eyes

All the ignorance, all the stares
Coming from strangers' eyes
Looking at you like a bad parent
Because your child cries

You hear the whispers
"Look at her, she's way too young"
"She already has a child"
You walk by with your head down
As the pain and frustration is piled

Every child gets tired or fussy
And every child cries
But when you're a young mother, in public
Your confidence dies

I've taken the classes and the advice
I'm the best mother I can be
I play with her I expand her mind
But that's no good … apparently

All we can do is prove them wrong
And do the best to teach our kids
When they grow up to stop the stares
As those strangers once did.

So next time these strangers' eyes happen to stare
Just ignore the whispers
And smile and nod
And show them you don't care

Huda Eldariry

Mind, Body and Soul—Heart

I've been ripped in two; Mind body as one team, soul on her own!
I've been ripped in two! I've been ripped in two!
Hello my name is heart. I'm the emotion from mind, body, and soul.
I've been ripped in two; I bleed from the panic and confusion they brought.
I've been ripped in two! I've been ripped in two!
Mind and body are beautiful women, they show elegance and grace.
I've been ripped in two with soul hurting alone in the corner.
I've been ripped in two! I've been ripped in two!
Soul has reached the door; the key is there, but can't unlock the door.
I've been ripped in two; mind and body have invited me to elegance and grace.
I've been ripped in two! I've been ripped in two!
Soul has given me the opportunity to have a childhood.
I've been ripped in two; both offers are tempting.
I've been ripped in two! I've been ripped in two!
I've been ripped in two; Mind body as one team, soul on her own!
I've been ripped in two! I've been ripped in two!
I've been ripped in two; I can't desire both of them!
I've been ripped in two; how do I be fair to both?
I've been ripped in two! I've been ripped in two!

Huda Eldariry, "Positive, Negative"

Amanda 4 Keira

struck by love

A feeling so new
A feeling I love
You are my daughter given from above
You are constantly on my mind
I love every moment spent, watching time go by
Overwhelmed with joy every time I see your face
I thank God for putting me in this place
You give me strength, the inspiration that I need

A proud mother, love struck indeed.

Stacey Kathen and Cole

Stacey Kathen and Cole

Photo: David Nemeroff

I WAS HERE is a media workshop that puts digital cameras and photoblogging websites into the hands of young parents. A group of women, all pregnant or parenting, have been documenting their lives in Toronto through their own eyes. All have had experience with homelessness. Each participant has her own private photoblog, where she can load up her pix and write stories, comments and insights. An exhibition of their work recently toured several Toronto venues including the Rotunda at City Hall and Toronto Free Gallery. It was also featured in the Contact Photography Festival this May. Participants efforts to raise awareness about issues affecting young parents has captured the attention of Mayor David Miller, staff with Ontario Works, health care professionals, social service providers, journalists and the general public.

The women meet weekly at a community centre where childcare, a hot lunch, and TTC tokens are available. The digital cameras are on loan from the National Film Board of Canada, as part of the Filmmaker-in-Residence project at St. Michael's Hospital. The project partners media with medicine.

For more information about I WAS HERE visit: www.nfb.ca/filmmakerin-residence/iwashere. Workshop participants selected the following images to share in this special issue of the *Journal of Research on Mothering*.

Photo by Adrienne, "I'm late, but I'll get there."

Photo by Jess, "One of my first, yet one of my best."

Photo by Keneisha

Outcast: A person who is rejected from society or home.
Outcast: Friendless, excluded from a society.
Outcast: One who has been excluded from a society or system.
Outcast: Alone in the world with no one to care.

With stress on my shoulders and burdens to bear, I am a one-woman army. Battles I fight, struggles I overcome, sitting at times wondering, why me, why have I chosen this life?

Artist's Statement

We've come together as a group to have our voices heard.

"I guess I kind of liken it to voting," says Adrienne. "People say it's just one vote, one small voice, it doesn't count, but you do it anyway because it all adds up in the end."

We want to show that we have many struggles in our lives, but that ultimately we are strong, we work really hard. Through photoblogging, "We are creating windows into our lives," says Jess. "And hopefully, it will take the judgemental edge off and change people's perceptions of us."

We have been documenting our journeys, transitions, our homes, our families, our daily lives, exploring how and what we see. "Since I started using the camera, I look for beautiful things," says Meghan. "I analyze what I see. I think, where would be a nice place to go? I always keep my eyes open; alert to what inspires me."

We hope, in the words of Keneisha, that "People will take time to look at our photographs and read our stories, not just look and go, 'Oh, that's nice' and walk off. But really look at the work we've done and think about what it feels like to walk in our shoes."

—*I WAS HERE Photobloggers*
January 10, 2007

Meghan and Xzavior

St. Martin's Manor
Young Parent Resource Centre, Hamilton

Sharon and Emma

Shannon and Tyler

Sarah and Liam

Nicole and Raine

Meghan May

Wherever *You Are,* There *I Am*

It was merely fifteen months ago
When you brought a true smile across my face,
My little baby girl was born
You had finally found your way.
I embraced you like no other
And from then we have moved together like one,
Wherever I am there you are
My twinkling star and shining sun.
When you awake in the morning
And stand there in your glory,
As I realize how much you've grown
My heart replays the story.
The months that you spent inside of me
The day that you entered my life,
Relieving all of my tension, frustration
The anger, the, hurt, the strife.
The day that you were born
Gave me a true and brand new start,
Opening my eyes to opportunities
Touching and healing the wounds upon my heart.
At the age of fourteen I had dropped out of school
I had made countless mistakes,
Wearing a mask to hide the truth
My entire reality was fake.
It was when you were born
That the layers began to fade away,

Meghan and Arianna, St. Martin's Manor, Hamilton

And I could wake up in the morning
With a smile upon my face.
You have given me the strength and the courage
To say that I will achieve,
Knowing that I had to do it for you
Even if I didn't want to do it for me.
From then on I have pushed myself
Although at times it is tough,
I have always been guided by your giggles, your smiles,
Your unconditional love.
Sometimes at night
I creep in to see you fast asleep,
All of the things that you are dreaming
Those secrets are forever yours to keep.
When I wander out quietly I calmly ask myself,
Why is it that God has blessed me
With this precious angel from above?

Kathleen Camara

Second Chance

I had a first chance at being a mom.
It was hard and painful to get him into this world;
Now he's here and I can't ask for anything more.
He makes me proud to be a mom for the first time.

His big beautiful eyes make me smile
He is everything I ever wanted, and he is mine.
I have been blessed to have him,
But I have been even more blessed.

I have been given a second chance to be a mother
to a beautiful, healthy baby girl
She smells just like a freshly bloomed flower
and looks as beautiful as a rose.
She is everything I ever wanted, and she is mine.

—Dedicated to Julian and Caroline

Danielle Legault

Always and Forever

Always and Forever
since the day
I first laid eyes on you
I knew that
you were too good to be true
the love I felt
in my heart
I didn't know where to start v
I knew that being a young single mom
would have its ups and downs
a lot of people are around
to help me get through hard times
such as long sleepless nights
money was also tight
when I think of it
I know it's worth everything I sacrificed
for a bond so strong
that can never be broken
I would give my life for you
I know that one day you would too
even when things
are not going my way
I know that you are here to stay
I don't know how else
to express myself
I guess that no words
can describe how I feel
about this little angle I have created
I love you so much
being your mom
has made me very strong
I love you little Mathieu
always and forever

Natalie Gilbert and Mickenzie

Natalie, Nathan and Mickenzie

Shantella Anderson

Loud and Proud

When I get on the bus people intend to be mean.
There are some nice ones out there but it's hard for them to be seen.
When I walk down the street they stare and glare like
All eyes on me.
As my child calls me mom they stop and look straight at me.
They can look, they can judge, but I know that I am loved.
I hear them say, "Young and, stupid. Not done school.
she ain't even fit to be a mom."
They think I'm not listening,
well guess what—yes I am fit to be a mom.
I will be the best that I can,
because I'm my daughter's number 1
because I'm only 18 I don't have much to say
They are nothing above me.
They are as low as the dirt on my shoes
cause they could only sit and chat me.
I am proud to be me, for being a mom,
for carrying her for 9 whole months.
I'm proud of the hours I was in labour,
for looking and touching her for the first time
for keeping her safe,
for making sure she'd always be healthy.
I'm saying it loud because I'm proud.

Humewood House

Being a Parent

The following is a collection of statements by some of Humewood House's students when asked, "*If you had to make a statement about being a parent what would it be*?"

"If I knew life was going to be like this I would have crossed my legs and waited to bring forth another mankind. I would have waited until my guy was more mature in his mind. I feel more grown up during this time and pissed off that he's acting like life is not worth the fight. I wish I knew all this before. I would of protected myself from all lies. I love my son with all my might but if I had a choice I would of waited for a better time."

"I used to hang around silly kids and drink to have fun. After having my baby, I became a more responsible person. I started to care for myself rather than everyone else. I realized that my actions could have my baby taken away from me in a second as I was from my parents growing up. I know now that what you do and what you say can have an affect on your child and although I'm still growing I've learnt that sometimes you have to do better than your best to be a good parent to your child."

"I use to think that parenting was easy until I had got pregnant and started to learn all the things that I needed to know in order to parent positively. There is so much you need to know breast feeding vs. bottle feeding or both; how to care for your baby if he/she is ill with a cold, fever or simple teething. I used to think it was easy until I went through the sleepless nights. I had to learn and use all the supports that I could to help because believe even if it's an open ear, it helps."

"Before I got pregnant everything in my life was fine. I had a family who loved and supported me and a boyfriend to die for. When I found out I was pregnant everything changed. My family disowned me, my friends became distant, and my boyfriend was no longer by my side. My daughter was born, my boyfriend returned and became a better figure in my life. Right now I'm trying to be the best support in all our lives."

"Life is hard being a teenager, but it gets much harder being a single teen parent in our society, where people are judged for being young and indifferent."

"I will be a good parent that I am sure. All my life I had to struggle with family and friends in my life. People are sometimes just damn right mean. People say I'm dumb and I caused all the problems in my life.

My answer to them is I will be a good parent, of that I am sure If nothing else that I am sure.

I once meet this lady who told me I had the power to do better things with my life, that people's expectations of me were always fair and concrete. Also that I deserved to be loved just like any other child.

My answer to that is I will be a good parent, of that I am sure. If nothing else of that I am sure.

It was hard to comprehend that sometimes people make comments before using their heads. I had a child and soon realized what people thought of me was now irrelevant in my life. It only mattered that I had to care for a special little life. "

All About Me

Everyday I wake up in the morning ready for another day, but sometimes troubles comes my way. I feel like the world is no longer apart of me, but I know in my life it's all about me. I'm no longer looking for myself. I'm now a mother-to-be. I got to make the right decisions for me and my family. It's no longer about me. Time is ticking as the days goes by; the nights are longer, the days are shorter, but my child's life has just begun. But it's not all about me.

—Thanesha Sterling

To my son Sincere:
Sincere my baby bear
I love you more than you'll know.
Since you I only smile
Even though you changed my style
You really are a dream come true,
Coming straight from your daddy boo.
Thank God for blessing me,
For Sincere with eyes to see.
Love, your mother, Alisha Bright.

Kathryn Kruger

It's Not Easy

Being a young mom is not easy. Everyone judges you by statistics—that we are never going to make it anywhere in life and it's true—it's extremely hard to be a young mom. I was only 16 years old when I had my son Noah and I still had to finish high school. The only thing I ever worried about before was what I was going to wear, but all of a sudden I had this baby who depended on me for everything. It wasn't just getting up and going anymore. I had no idea how I was going to raise a child on my own. My name is Kathryn Kruger and I am now 17 years old and I am finishing high school and raising my son with the help of my parents and I still plan on going to college, just like any other teen.

Phato collage of Katt and Noah

Kristina Bannatyne

About my loves and me

Love.
I'm in love.
I have many loves.
I love my family so much.
I love my partner so much
I love my daughter so much
I've learned to love myself the way god made me.
I love to dream about all the things I can be in the future.
I love to shop.
I love to read.
I love to be creative.
I love being adventurous.
I love to learn new things.
I love to be sweet and cute.
I love to be nice to new people I meet.
I love that I can have a good education.
I love to talk, laugh, and have a good time.
I love that I know what I want for my family and I.
I love spending time with the people I love so much.
But most of all I love the person that I've evolved into.

Patricia Barnes and daughter, Brianna Acosta

Sam McCarthy

Budgeting With Gift Cards

A Teen Mom's Story of Money Management

As a young, single mom, I have a lot to worry about every month: school work to be finished, laundry to be done, toys to be picked up, and a baby boy to take care of. With so much to do, I just don't have the time to stop and consider what it is I need or want to buy, and how much it is going to cost me.

Before my son was born, I was a sixteen-year-old with no expenses, and what I thought was a big weekly pay cheque. I bought anything I wanted, and didn't even think about saving. I always thought that if I could spend like that before I had Jonny, I would have no problem afterwards. I was very wrong. I didn't go back to work right away, and the amount of those first government cheques seemed huge! But, I still found myself out of money very quickly. A year later, I still had trouble making the money last all month. I needed help. Budgeting was my only solution.

I started out making lists of all the things I needed, including costs, and reading flyers for sales. I bought the cheaper things at the beginning of the month because my cheque had to last twenty days, and I bought the more expensive things on the 20th. Still, no luck. I tried putting money aside, giving money to my parents to hold on to, putting money into a bank account that was not on my debit card. Nothing worked. What was I going to do? I couldn't keep spending like this!

While attending a group in my community for young moms, I was given a ten dollar grocery store gift card on a weekly basis. I used this for buying milk. I could only spend that ten dollars at the grocery store. Suddenly an idea came to me: finally, a budgeting plan that could work!

I started by digging out receipts for diapers, milk, wipes, baby shampoo, and anything else I needed to buy every month. I then divided them into lists based on the store they were purchased at, added up the total costs at each store, gave myself extra money for taxes, and started buying myself gift cards. Fifty dollars at Wal-Mart for diapers, wipes, shampoo, and a little extra in case Jonny needed something else. Fifty dollars at the grocery store for milk and Jonny's snacks, and a hundred dollars on a pre-paid credit card for my phone bill. My plan wasn't perfect the first time, but when I got it right, it was so easy to control my spending! After buying my gift cards, I bought sale items I saw in flyers that I didn't necessarily *need*, but wanted to have for Jonny. Any money I had left in my bank account went towards extras. I couldn't believe budgeting could be so easy!

Having a budget that worked for me made my life so much easier. It took away all the stress of worrying about money, and made my trips to the mall with friends much more fun!

Lee Lance

Functions of Motherhood

If the sick 18 month old naps at 3:30, eats at 5,
collapses at 7:40, cries at 1, is sick at 3, sick again at 5,
awakens fussy at 8 – how much sleep does this mother get.
Solve for x.

Find the lowest common denominator
of three spiking fevers; the product
of exhausted efforts; the greater sum
of your parts.

Borrow when you need to
carry when you must (integers, medicine, life)
when you multiply,
divide your labours
solve for differences and
memorize the quotient of survival.

It becomes second nature, calculating constantly
(the estimated time 'til next dosage, nearest bathroom
the variable of tantrums) – and amid the jumble
of numbers and schedules, you'll find yourself
staring at the midnight ceiling, digits
spinning, mind swirling, thriving
on the universal content of their need.

Nella

Natural Beauties

I am natural, so are you.
So young girls you need to stay true.
Not to him or her but to yourself.
Because when they're gone,
you're left alone to climb that shelf.
So we need to have wealth in our soul.
So when they try to bring us down,
we could stand up straight and bold.
Don't let anyone tell you
what you don't want to do, especially
if you know it's going to hurt you
and make you sow deeper and deeper
in a grave. Because we're all natural,
and nobody's slaves.

Angela Struyk

A Conversation with Stephanie Brunet

Stephanie is a 20-year-old mother with two children—one is three years old and one is eight months old. She is currently part of a Young Parent Support Program which helps young parents receive their high school diploma and receive care for their children.

How many hours of sleep do you get at night?
About 7 or 8.
How many times at night do you wake up?
Three times.
Are you the only one who gets up?
No.
What is the biggest challenge with your little girl?
Her hair.
Describe the challenge.
It's hard to comb and take care of every day.
What's the best thing about Shantica?
She's funny. She comes up with things—she's really good at remembering things like the "hands in your pocket" commercial.
What's the biggest challenge with the baby?
When they're both crying and I can't get to both of them at the same time.
How do you respond?
Let one cry until I deal with the other one or have Shantica help me to get the other to stop crying.
How old were you when you got pregnant?
Sixteen.
How did you feel about that?

Scared and nervous. I wasn't sure I'd be able to handle it.
Why did you decide to keep the baby?
Because I don't really believe in abortion unless it's a life or death situation and I didn't think I'd be able to live with myself if I gave her up for adoption. At that time [the father] was supportive. He was there when I had Shantica—not when I had Isaiah.
Had you counted on doing this alone?
I figured I'd be doing it by myself.
Describe your home support.
[I get support from] the father, his mother and my brother.
What was your life like when you got pregnant with Shantica?
I had dropped out of school for a couple of months.
Where were you living?
By myself in an apartment.
How did you make ends meet?
[The father] had a good job.
Describe your relationship with the father of your children.
It's good—it has its days. It's had ups and downs in the past.
What are your future goals?
To finish high school and go to college to become a social worker.
Why a social worker?
Because I've been through so much in my life that I think I'd be able to help other people through what I know.
Why do you think you're a good mother?
Because I stay with my kids and don't go out to the bar every weekend like some other young parents.
Do you think being a young mother is harder than moms more established in life?
No. I think that you just gotta want to be a good mom, dad or parent.
Do you miss being able to do teenage things?
No. I was just getting into trouble anyway. And if I didn't have Shantica now I'd probably have been in jail then.
Do you think people respect you as a young mother?
I don't know. I don't think people treat me differently.
Do you think there are good services available for pregnant teens or young mothers?
I think this is a good program.
Do you see many young mothers who you don't think do a good job?
Yes.

Katherine Arnoldi

Seventeen

We are not seeing ourselves here.

We are seeing ourselves in magazines with our jean buttons open, our hair long and straight. We are seeing ourselves looking up at the camera, lying back on steps that lead up to a building we are supposed to know about.

We are walking on cobblestones.

We are wearing geometry.

We are lying on our elbows with rippled hair that begins a rippled desert. We are on our tippy-toes, our knees; we are licking our fingers, popsicles. We need moisture.

We are seventeen.

For now we are working at Perry Rubber, at Burger King, at Sam's Steak house. For now we are needing a muffler, a box of Tide, to pay the hospital.

We are out on the stoop, thinking about the future, our future.

We are trying not to show.

Who we are are all women. We are all women in a warehouse room. We are wearing hair nets. We are wearing face masks. Covered in talc, we are a hundred, maybe more. Who we are are the inspectors. We are a roomful of inspectors. We are a roomful of inspectors under the fluorescent lights.

We are a room full of inspectors thump-pooshing our air buttons, blowing up our rubber gloves, looking for pinholes, defects. We are all women. We do not know why there are no men.

We are beginning to show.

Our water is supposed to break. We do not know what that means. Your water breaks, then you go to the hospital.

We are carrying trays of food through double doors. On one side everything is carpet, cool, candlelight, white tablecloths, red napkins, the clink of glasses, the muffled sound of ice shaking. On the other, everything is dropping, clanging, steel surface, slippery tile, plates of steak bones, steam, comfort, warmth.

All things are full of labor, our mothers say. We are the girls that are beginning to show. Our mothers are at work. Our fathers we have not yet met. When the sun sets the boys will be snow under the streetlights, when the sun rises we will watch the fire hydrant water fall. We are the girls that you must see. We are on the outskirts of town, walking by the side of the road, standing in line. We are leaning on the porch with New York in our eyes, with Canton, Ohio, with Huntsville, Arkansas, San Pedro, Guatemala, Delhi there. We are the ones the men want to rock like a horse when we are a whir of dust, when we are too young. We are in the cane with no way out, in the warehouse room, back there under the bed, hiding.

We will take our diaper bags out. It is necessary for us to crawl across the railroad tracks, to hit the top of our heads, to make a bigger graph, a longer curve. A hundred of us thump-pooshing our air buttons, with clouds above the fluorescent lights, with varicose veins to hide. Not for one moment are we not smiling, are we not polite, do we not commiserate.

Counting is not something that is done to us. We count the days until this, the hours until that. It is 11:49, 11:50, 3:24, 3:29, six months from a G.E.D., almost closing time.

We are not seeing ourselves here. If we are walking by the side of the road, pushing a stroller, it is just because the bus was late. We cannot get one more pink slip. If you see us in line it is because we are thinking ahead, past the end of the line, way up front. We are seeing ourselves in the future, wearing something different than what we have on just now, in a place of our own.

We are not seeing ourselves here at the end of the line, explaining that our heat his been turned off, that we might need some help. We are not seeing ourselves being told that we make too much, but that if we do not get our heat back on by next week, she is sorry, but she will have to put our children in foster care.

We are still seeing ourselves in magazines. We want to be discussing date rape in a circle of girls from the dorm. We want to be discussing the health care system, giving input. We want to have our picture taken in front of our paintings, we want to take our shirts off in the park, to read our poetry up there at the mike.

Every page is something we want to see ourselves being. We are turning page after page, looking back and forth. There are boots and flannel, leather and dresses with flowers. What we are really looking for is ourselves. We are turning pages, looking at the background for a teething ring, a box of Pampers, a child running up behind with arms outstretched, hungry. We are not seeing teenagers who are mothers. There are no mothers at all. There are none of us that are part of the collective, setting up installations, chipping in for the lights, the set. It is not us there getting the tattoo, having something pierced, walking with the man with the baggy pants and the crew cut, living in the loft with the man who is also a sculptor , who is also in the band. We do not see any factory workers, no one with a hairnet on, a face mask. No one in a roomful of one hundred women thump-pooshing our air buttons, trying to make quota. No one with an apron, a tray of drinks, no one in a hat from Burger King. No one like we are. We are still looking front to back. We have to be honest, to face up. We are not seeing ourselves here.

Vanessa Young

We are mothers too...

As they walk by us they shake their heads and stare, occasionally they will stop and ask us personal questions as if it were their business. They seem to think that somehow they are better than us because their social status, or that we are less of a person because of the decisions that we have made, but let us be clear: *those were our decisions that we made and they don't make us less of a person.*

We are mothers just like you. We have the same common goals in life: to give our children the best possible life that we can give them, to raise responsible, independent, reliable children, to teach our children to love themself for who they are and to never be afraid to have their voices heard....we all want the best for our children, and we all need help with parenting. None of us were given a book carved in stone when our children were born, *we are parents, we are not perfect.* Please don't judge us when our children are acting up at the grocery store, all children have their moments even yours. Don't walk up to us and disrespect us, by asking us personal questions, we don't walk up to you and ask you your age, social status, or if your child's father is still in the picture. It's really not polite. We may be young and still have a lot to learn, but learning is an on-going process, it lasts a life time. Maybe next time you see us at the park playing in the sandbox with our child, say hi, we can learn a lot from each other.

Folio

Photo: Joe Paczuski

Editor's Notes

I am pleased to feature poems by Judith Arcana in this special issue on young mothers. In many of the poems published here, and in her book length collection, *What if your mother,* Arcana writes about her experiences, from 1970-1972, as a "Jane," a member of the Abortion Counseling Service of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union. The Abortion Counseling Service, now called "Jane," in the histories of the women's health movement in the U.S., worked with more than 11,000 women and girls (the youngest under 12, the oldest over 50), all of whom came to the underground group for abortions before the Supreme Court decision on *Roe v. Wade* in 1973. Some of the poems in the collection were inspired by this pre-Roe abortion work, others are drawn from the lives of girls and women Arcana knew and imagined, from newspapers, elections, legislation, from accounts of terrorism and assassination perpetrated by the anti-abortion movement in the U.S.; as well as from Arcana's work with clinics, colleges, and community organizations.

Arcana writes skillfully about complex subjects, managing to present powerful political poems that are at once grounded in women's lives and bodies. The poems are clear-voiced, compassionate and passionate. The poet manages to express struggle, suffering, and loss in work that is accessible, fierce, funny, and full of lyric intensity. The voices of young mothers are heard in compelling ways through poetic forms that employ everyday speech, conversations, and narratives of depositions and interviews.

Complex arguments are raised in poems such as "Jocasta interviewed in Hell" and the wry and darkly humorous "For all the Mary Catholics." The poem "In the Service we said," demonstrates Arcana's ability to use simple vernacular for the statement of "truth":

> Lying there, some would ask, so we said No, / we're not doctors; we're women just like you. / We needed to know how, so we learned it – /you know, just like you learn anything.

One of the most powerful poems is "Felony Booking, Women's Lockup, 11th and State: A Short Literary Epic" in which Arcana describes the experience of being arrested:

> Compounded by conspiracy: *collaborators /* like in black&white movies about Nazis / where they shave the heads of women who fuck / the enemy. But, citizens, here's the thing you need / to know: when it's illegal, abortion's homicide.

Towards the end of this poem Arcana's description of her own breastfeeding body evokes an ironic eroticism juxtaposed against the stark reality of prison and the justice system:

> Locked up, I freed my breasts from their container: / a nursing bra built like the Golden Gate Bridge. / I squeezed them soft like a lover, milked them hard/ like a farmer; sprayed my baby's own sweet nectar/ down that dirty little sink. Then lawyer boys took me / out to night court in the basement, away from the women, / saying *strategy*: I was a wooden horse, a night mare.

Arcana's arguments are never simplistic, as we see in her poem "She Said" in which we encounter the voices of many different girls and women, the many things "she" said, ending with the final voice:

> *She gulped some water in the kitchen and said….* My mother always said that everything comes down to give and take. So I think the baby, today, that was the taking – and me, me in my own life, I think that was the giving.

Judith Arcana's poems are fascinating historical contributions to the bodies of literature on abortion, reproductive freedom, the women's movement, and motherhood. Arcana speaks for many women, across boundaries of race, class and sexual orientation.

—Rishma Dunlop

Photo: Joe Paczuski

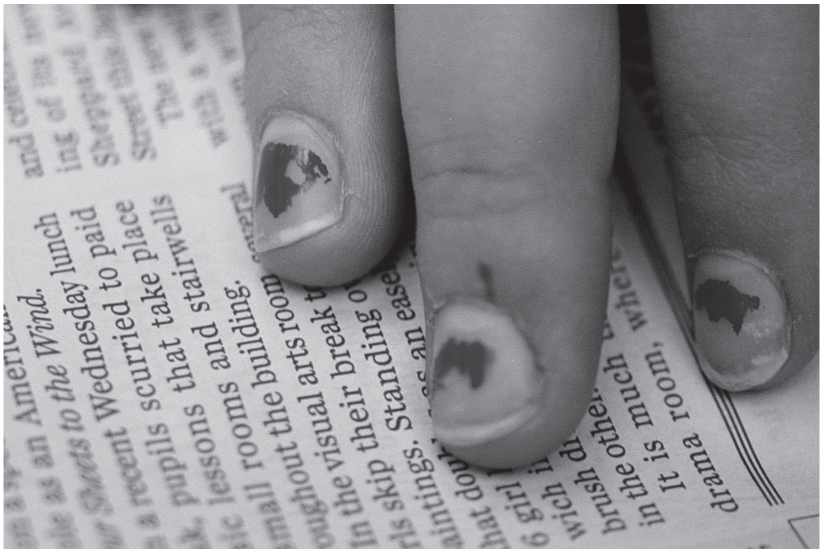


Photo: Joe Paczuski

Judith Arcana

She couldn't be sure what he'd say

1.
I never use condoms, you want me to feel it, don't you?
See, here's what I'll do, when I think I'm ready to blow,
I'll slide right out like a brass trombone, won't miss a thing,
not one little thing, honey girl, you'll see. We'll feel good,
no trouble in mind. I'm gonna protect you, honeybaby.
or
Don't you say one word, not one word; don't you make one sound,
not even the smallest sound, and don't you move neither, don't
you move a muscle. I don't have to tell you what'll happen
if you talk about this, do I? I didn't think so. I always knew you
were a smart girl. You always were a real smart girl.

2.
Now you know that's my baby too,
that's my baby as much as yours;
that's my son you got in there.
I know I put my boy up there;
man, I could just feel it.
or
You say it's mine but how do I know?
You're doing it with me, why not
somebody else? Other guys,
maybe lotsa guys, girl like you,
acting like you know what to do.

3.
You think I don't know what you're doing,
but let me tell you this, missy: you come in here
one day, you got yourself a big belly, you'll find
yourself out on the street, right out on the street;
now that's a promise.
or
Sweetheart, it would just kill your mother
if you got yourself in trouble, if you had
to quit school, if you couldn't graduate
with your class, if you couldn't go straight
on to college; you know that, don't you? Don't you?

Jocasta Interviewed in Hell

Well, naturally I blamed myself – blamed myself for giving up my baby – we all do, even when we say we don't. Being queen of Thebes was no compensation, though Laius insisted it would be. I don't say he made me do it, though being king he made me understand he could have. Laius was a bully anyway, and a bit dull, as many bullies are. If he thought he could confound the oracle, if he really believed he could defeat the old ones, why did I have to make that choice? Why did I have to send my child away?

Later I understood how great his fear had been. But when we argued, while we argued, I had no idea. I was so young then, still crying over my loose belly, still soaked in milk – I had set down my own power, and he was the king. He said, Send the child away; turn it out. And I did that. I did what he asked.

And so the queen of Corinth raised my son. Her servants and tutors grew him into a strong one who left home on a tide of fear, fearfilled love for his parents – love for his *parents*! But then, like an animal with instinct for its birth blood, he came back to be my suitor, my mysterious lover, the savior of my city.

You people always ask why I didn't recognize him, but have you ever seen a newborn? Or even a dear six month infant? Do you think I have the gift, the eye of the Graiae? Do you? Can you look at such children and imagine who they'll be at 18, standing in front of you? I think not. When you look down at them in their baskets, wrapped in soft cloth, rooting for the nipple under your gown, pursing their tiny budlipped mouths toward the smell of you, their eyes still fogged, still changing? How could I have *recognized* him?

Talking about Suzie, 1959

Don't you remember *any*thing? It was just a little while ago, I think it was '56, no, it must've been '57, Suzie went away right before school got out, right at the start of summer. So what was that, your second year at Bonaventure, starting then? Sure, yeah, 'cause it was the summer before my junior year. Don't you remember, it was right around the time of spring carnival, they said she was sick and she had to stay home and finish the year with a tutor from DePaul? And then they said she had to go away, so Aunt Viv and Uncle Al took her away, but remember Teddy and all the little kids stayed with us for a week and you two took them to the beach on the bus every day? Remember it was real hot, *every*body was at the lake – except me, that was the year I got my work permit, the first time I could make more than baby-sitting money, so I could only go to the lake on Sundays after church. Anyway, that was when they took her to one of those places, *homes*, in St. Louis; they keep you there until you have your baby and then they give the baby to people who can't have kids. It was like a convent there, or a jail even, I'm not kidding, places like that are so strict, the people who ran it were really mean, worse than Sister Marie-Claire – maybe even worse than Sister Thomas. I saw this movie about a girl who had to go to one, and her boyfriend tries to find her and he finally does, and he's real cute, but they won't let him in. So Mom and Dad and Aunt Viv and Uncle Al told everybody she was at a sani*tor*ium, for breathing when you get TB or something, but she wasn't, she was in St Louis. It *is* true. She *did*. Don't tell me you didn't know this. Suzie had a baby right before school started up again. She nearly got back too late to register; remember, because she came late she had to be locker partners with some girl in her homeroom who never talked? How can you not *remember* any of this?

Sheila's deposition, 1997

Ok, look, don't give me a hard time; I'm gonna tell everything; it doesn't matter now anyway. I need a cigarette….All right. Here goes. In my own words, like you like to say. First of all, I never thought I'd get, you know, pregnant, because I just didn't, you know, I mean it was too stupid, I mean, like who gets pregnant? I figured nobody gets pregnant, really. And it's not like we did it that many times either. And then when it happened, it took a while before I even knew, because I wasn't always bleeding at the same time every month, I wasn't some poster girl who started every twenty-eight days like they say, so I didn't even notice at first. And I didn't want to pay any attention anyway, it's so gross, I mean, the whole thing. Like blood always gets on your hands when you change and half the time it starts when you're at school and you don't even know 'til you pull down your pants in the locker room. But when I started to get fat I got freaked out; that's when I remembered I hadn't seen my period for a while. So I went on really strict diets, almost like the anorexic girls, and I worked out as many hours as I could, and that really helped, so like nobody noticed. My father never looks at me anyway, he wouldn't recognize me on the street, I swear, and my mother is not in the picture, you know? Later, when my stomach started to stick out anyway, I just wore really long sweaters and shirts, dark, mostly black. When I was naked you could really tell; I showed Jerry in the seventh month and he said, Jeez, how much bigger is it gonna get? But I had this cool idea, I went and got – really, you won't believe this, I got a *girdle*, you know, like women used to wear in old times. I got it in the old lady section of a store downtown where nobody goes, and it worked, you know, like even when I was eight months and all the way to the end, nobody noticed anything – well nobody ever said they did, anyway. It hurt though, I mean that girdle really hurt me. And when it finally started to come out, when I felt it hurting *under* the girdle, like from the inside, I was in school, so I got Jerry and we skipped out in his car. First we just drove around, but then he took me to a motel we used for sex, and I stayed in the bathroom until it came out. He played music real loud so nobody could hear me – I mean, I wasn't like some jungle woman or anything, but I made noise. When it came out, I turned it over and we pressed the head into a pile of towels for a while. We filled the tub with water to clean up and first we just put it all in there, the rest of the stuff that came out, you know, like the afterbirth, the cord. Jerry cut the cord with a Swiss army knife – he was very together. He used to be some kind of scout – you know, they learn stuff. We watched it float for a while, and then Jerry said, Hey, I know what we can do; let's take it to a dumpster – 'cause who looks in dumpsters, right? I mean, nobody we know does that, only maybe, like, homeless people, they might look around in there, but they're not gonna care. I mean, ok, they eat from dumpsters, but they're not gonna eat a baby, right? And it'd be dead anyway, and we can like stick it in a box, or under newspapers; nobody's ever gonna see it. So, ok, we were wrong about that part, but we did a pretty good job. You can't tell me it'd be better if we got all nice and married and kept the kid, playing Mommy and Daddy. I mean, think about it.

Celia finally responds, 1998

I filled out the goddamn form. You already know my blood type, every shot I ever had; you know my mother had diabetes and my father had a stroke – and his father deaf in one ear. That's it. What else do you want? Do you think if you follow me home I'll keep you? Do you think when you come to my door I'll let you in? What do you think I have for you? Thirty-eight years of birthday presents tied up with ribbons? Well, I don't. I don't have anything for you. I never had anything for you. I'd have stopped you being born if I could – but nobody would do it! They were all afraid of getting caught, being punished by judges like the damn fools sending you after me now. Oh, now! You want to know if I like music, if I have curly hair, thin earlobes? Why not ask to see the strawberry birthmark? I bet you wonder why I didn't leave you a token, a silver ring like in the movies. It's simple: I never wanted to give you anything but *away*. You think I'll tell you about your father, but I can't tell you what I don't know. That was a bad time, a bad time in my life – and it's none of your business. What makes you think what you need matters more than what I want? Do you really believe I'm your mother? Especially now, now that we know anybody, any*thing,* can hold those eggs, hold them and grow them just like a sitting hen? Now they've got plastic boxes that'll damn near do the job. In twenty years people like you will go looking for those boxes, won't they? They'll want to see their own box, just like *you* want to see *me*, with your phony nostalgia, your pathetic curiosity. Well, you can just pack it in; pack it in and give it up. Even if you do win in court, what'll you get? My name and address, my phone number? Then you'll be like the people who call me at suppertime to sell me something – credit cards, life insurance, vacation cruises – but I just hang up. So you're out of luck. Like the kids who show up at school with welts on their arms, looks like you got a bad one. Do you think you're missing something, you poor abandoned child? Play the hand you were dealt and stop asking for favors. Why do you think what you want matters so much more than what I need? You want me to say not a day went by I didn't think of you, wondering what you look like, how you turned out.

Judith Arcana

You want me to say I think of you every year on the day you were born. You want me to lie to you, but I won't. That's the kind of mother I am, the kind who won't lie to her kid. Go 'way from my door, kiddo, you're just a Jehovah's Witness to me.

Noreen's phone calls, 1999

They told me everything the day I left the hospital; they spread the papers out in front of me and I signed, but I never read them. I pretty much knew what they said. They explained the rules, about how I would never see her again, how I would never know who got her. Just like when it happened, I did what I was told. See, I was never a complainer; I was the kind that even if I fell down and hurt myself, I'd get right back up and keep walking. He lived on my block, we went out a few times; he seemed ok. We went to a movie and had ice cream after, but when we cut through the alley on the way home, he pushed me up against the back of a building. I saw him a lot on the street after that but I never talked to him. And I never told what happened, even when I knew I was pregnant. I dropped out of school and moved into the Home when it started to show. We sang hymns after supper every night, played cards every afternoon; we did a lot of laundry. They advised us to give them away; there wasn't much talk about taking care of babies. They always said the babies would be better off with their new parents; their new parents would give them good homes, send them to college. Once I was out of there, I hardly ever thought about it. That's the truth. I didn't cry when I saw babies, or wonder what she looked like; it was gone from me, like she was gone from me. It was erased, wiped out of my mind for years. Then one day I saw in the newspaper about some people who were adopted searching for their birth mothers. I'd never heard the expression before – *birth mother*. I started to cry. Picture this, I'm on the train, I don't have any Kleenex or anything, and I can't stop crying. I mean, *sobbing*. I got off before my stop, I was so embarrassed. Two days later, like I was hypnotized, I picked up the phone book, found the agency that handled the adoption, and called. While I was picking out the numbers on the phone pad, my head started buzzing – literally buzzing; I could hear this buzz behind my eyes. It stopped the second they answered. The second they picked up the phone, there was a clear silence, like a sheet of window glass, clear silence hanging in my head where the buzzing had been. Then the person on the other end said *Hello. Hello?* and I started to talk. I told them if she ever came looking, I wanted to be found. I gave them my home number and address, my number and address at the gallery, my email and cell phone – I would have given driving directions, the buses and trains that stop near me, or my social security number and my blood type – but they already had that. I didn't search on my own, hire a detective like some do. I only wanted to make myself available; in case she ever wanted to know, she could find me. And what they did was, they sent her a letter, saying if she wanted to meet her birth mother, they had the information. I didn't know it could work that way, but that's what happened. After a long time (she thought about it nearly a year) she called me. And when the phone rang – I swear to god this is true – when the phone rang, I knew before I picked it up that it was her.

For all the Mary Catholics

Mary Catherine came to public school because of money,
sat down next to me; Mary Elizabeth stood behind us
on the line in gym, whispering I ought to join
the Brownies; Mary Frances shared a geography book
(there never were enough in Miss King's room);
sweet Mary Jean showed me a shortcut home,
dangerous, down the alley (now she drives high
school girls across state lines, skipping
parental consent); Maria Teresa showed me
newborn puppies in a basket, then cut me cold
when I would not sing Jesus in December;
cute Mary Alice had a crush on my brother,
sighing they never could marry; famous Mary Jane
with her shiny black shoes traded me St. Francis
for a gas station pinup; Mary Rose shared
my locker, my Kotex, my Kleenex; Mary Ellen kissed
me on the mouth and laughed; shy Mary Jo
worshipped Audrey Hepburn in the dark; quiet
Mary Ann died at the Shut-Eye Motel,
blood from her uterus crusted on her thighs; tough
Mary Margaret moved to Detroit, seven children,
eight years, never answered letters; funny
Mary Louise called her Dungannon brogue
a French accent; Maria Francesca prays outside
the clinic where I work; Mary Patricia (now M. Pat)
called me after thirteen years to ask, Is the pill
safer now? then got divorced and married my brother;
Mary Helen marched with me all the way
down State Street, holding Mary Magdalene
over our heads; and angry Mary Carol goes to Mass
for the music, the poetry, the rush of spirit,
crying in pure nostalgia: *They can't keep me out!*

In the Service we said

In the Service we spoke clearly and distinctly:
We said, This is Jane from Women's Liberation;
please leave your name, your number and a message.
We'll call you back. When she did, we did; then
we said, What was the date of your last period?

When we met to talk, we said, Are you sure
you want to do this? When she said Yes,
we said syringe, speculum, dilator, curette;
we said vagina, we said cervix, we said uterus,
telling how to open it from the outside;
sometimes we had to say forceps, placenta, labor,
trimester, hours, contractions, fetus.

(To each other, learning, we said it feels like
the roof of your mouth, those ridges up in there;
the curette scrapes along those ridges, spoonlike.
We said you can feel the shape, like a textbook
illustration; it feels just like the picture looks,
it feels just like you think it will; that helps. Later,
sometimes we said, She was more afraid of the shot
than anything else. Or we said, Her cervix was so tight,
I thought I'd be there for an hour, my arm frozen,
my shoulder numb, holding that dilator still.)

Lying there, some would ask, so we said No,
we're not doctors; we're women just like you.
We needed to know how, so we learned it –
you know, just like you learn anything.

The Abortion Counseling Service of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union, now called "Jane" in histories of women's health movement in the USA, worked with more than eleven thousand women and girls (the youngest under twelve, the oldest over fifty), all of whom came to the underground group for abortions before the Supreme Court decision on Roe v. Wade in late January of 1973. Women in the group always called it "the Service," and referred to ourselves as "Janes."

Here is what happened

She was fifteen years old. She had
to pay for college. She had to pay
for this. She came to my apartment
on a Saturday afternoon. Her parents
didn't know. I didn't know her parents.
Her girlfriends brought her up
the stairs, holding on to her hands.
They wanted to help. I told them,
Go; get orange juice.

She was five months pregnant.
Two days before, we reached
up inside, pushed down outside.
She breathed out like fire,
she gushed out salty water.
She was lucky it came soon:
Saturday, no school, girlfriends
who lied for her. When she called,
contractions starting, I said, *Come over*.

She sat on the floor. She bent her knees.
She rocked and pushed and rocked
inside contractions: they were close.
We were close. I never saw her again.

Her name was Rachel. She said, *I don't
want to see it*. When I took it away,
she cried. I washed her body, fresh
water, holding her like the girlfriends.
She drank her juice. She took her medicine.
I drove her to a corner two blocks
from her house. She walked home
from there *Because*, she said, *you know*.
She touched my shoulder: *Thank you*.

She Said

—before 1973

On the phone she said, I have a friend who's got a problem, but she couldn't get to a phone so I'm calling for her. Do you know what I mean? Is this the right place?

When she lay down, she said, Are you a doctor?

Then she said, Aren't you afraid you'll get caught?

When we were putting in the speculum, she said, Oh, I had breakfast before I came. I know I wasn't supposed to but I was so hungry I just ate everything in sight, is that ok?

Later she said, I think I have to throw up.

Or, I have to go to the bathroom right now. Stop. I just have to go to the bathroom, and then I'll come right back.

Or, on a different day, I don't feel so good, should I do it anyway?

The next week she said, Infection? I don't have any infection. Oh, that. That's not really an infection. That infection's nothing, I've had it before, it's nothing, go on, go ahead and take that baby out.

Sometimes she said, Can I see it before you throw it away?

But another time she said, I don't want to look at it, ok? When it comes out, I'll just close my eyes, and you take it away, ok?

Once she said, What do you do with it all at the end of the day? Boy, you people are gonna get in trouble sometime, this's against the law.

And when we were done she said, What if it happens again? You know – this. Would you do me again?

She stood on the back steps outside the counselor's apartment and said, This is mi prima, my cousin, from Mexico. Can you talk Spanish to her? ¿Habla un poco? ¿Un poquito? ¡Si, gringa! We will do this.

No, I'll keep it on, I'm not hot, it's ok, I'm fine. *She was wearing her boyfriend's baseball jacket in the kitchen. She said*, Just tell me what I have to know.

This is my husband, Ed. He's going to sit here with me. *She leaned over, touched his arm, and said*, Ed, honey, this is Julie, she's my counselor, the one that got assigned to me when we called the number.

When we told her she should pay whatever she could afford, she was quiet a minute and then said, I think I can get nine dollars.

My father brought me here today. He's paying for this but he's really mad at me for it. *She took a hundred dollar bill out of her pocket and said*, He thinks if everybody got liberated, like with civil rights, that there'd be a lot of trouble, and he says I prove his point, because look what happens when you just do what you want. He says that's why we have to have so many laws on everybody, because if you let people be free and do what they want they'll just do evil things.

When the sister-in-law was asked why she called the police, she said, It's a sin, she can't do this. She has to have it, we all have to. Jesus doesn't want her to get rid of this baby, that's why I did it.

He doesn't like me to talk to my mother. Him and his mother, they don't let me go home to visit. *She put the tiny baby in her mother's arms and said*, We sneaked to come for this appointment. He doesn't know I'm pregnant again. My baby is so new, I can't have another one right away. He wouldn't even want it really, he thinks this one makes too much noise. He doesn't like me to do anything without his permission.

Holding her purse, wearing her gloves, the girl clinging to her coat sleeve, she said, You take good care of her, she don't know no better, she's just a baby her own self, she don't even know how this happened. She don't know what it's all about, this whole thing.

My mother told me I couldn't keep it, she told me she'd get the baby taken away from me right away if I had it. *She cried, loud crying with snot and choking. She wiped her nose and said*, She knows I want to have it. I could be a good mother, I've taken care of babies and I know what to do. But I'm only fifteen so she'll get them to take it away from me, I know she will. That's why I'm doing this! I'd rather not even see it!

After the cervical injection, she said, How did you learn all this? Did you read a book? Is there a book?

Every now and then, she said, How come you let us bring our boyfriends over to your house to wait? Aren't you afraid they'll tell? *And*, Jeez, who are all these little kids? What're you guys doing, running a kindergarten on the side? Are those doughnuts for us?

When we finished talking and gave her our phone numbers, she said, What if it comes out alive? What should I do then? I can't have it be alive. Should I, you know, should I...? Can I do it by myself? It could be alive, right?

Now and then she said, Oh I'm so sick, what a mess, oh I'm so sorry, I really feel fine but this just happened oh oh here it comes again. Oh god I'm so sorry, I can't help it, I'm such a mess, oh thank you.

She rang the bell, and when we buzzed her in she said, My girlfriends are downstairs. They brought me over when I called you about the cramps. Should they come back for me or can you give me a ride home? How long will it take for it to, you know, all come out?

Another time, waiting to miscarry, she said, I'm sorry it's taking so long. I'm sure you've got other things to do, I know a lot of women are waiting. But thank you so much, thank you for letting me come to your house. I couldn't have done this at my house, for sure. My parents think I'm at my girlfriend's house, I just hope they don't call to check on me, 'cause my girlfriend's mother could say something wrong and then I'd really be in trouble.

Ok, it'll take me about an hour and a half to drive home - I live over the line in Indiana - and here's what I'm going to do, *she said one winter weekend*. My father's a heavy sleeper, so if the cramps come in the night while he's sleeping he'll never hear me; I'll just go in the bathroom and lock the door. I'll do it all in there. He won't even hear the toilet flush, he never does, even when it's just ordinary, you know, flushing for regular reasons.

She looked at the clear plastic sheet on the mattress, the speculum and the syringe. Then she laughed and said, You ladies somethin, doin this up in here; you somethin, all right.

Why do you do this? *She looked around the small bedroom and said*, You're not rich. With what you charge, you can't be doing this for the money. What's it all about? Are you a bunch of women's libbers? Is that it?

I'm not nervous. I think you are good women. I'm never nervous, maybe cuz

I'm always tired. *She was so tired that when the woman beside the bed rocked her shoulder softly to wake her up, she said*, It's over? I'm sorry, I just closed my eyes after the shot you gave me down there. I'm sorry, but I was real tired, I had to work a double shift and din have no time between work and here.

Ohmygod, does this happen all the time? This bleeding? *She gasped and said*, The blood is so dark. Ooh! Ice?! Ay! Make it stop! This ice tray is too cold! Ohmygod! You better not be scared, I'm the one scared, not you. Orange juice, are you kidding? Ay, what if I faint? I know people faint when they lose blood. Can you still do me? Did you finish?

She leaned over to the woman driving and quietly said, My daughter's in Children's Memorial, she's only two, she's having an operation on her stomach valve today – it doesn't work right, since she was born. My husband's over there, with her, for that, while I'm here, for this. Could I leave right after I'm done? Could you take me back right away, so I don't wait 'til everybody is done? Would that be ok? Would the other women mind, do you think?

She gulped some water in the kitchen and said, Oh thank you, you'll never know what this means to me. Thank you so much. I could never thank you enough, I'm sure. I know some people say it's wrong, abortion, that you shouldn't take a life. And maybe we did take a life. But it's all give and take, isn't it? My mother always said that everything comes down to give and take. So I think the baby, today, that was the taking – and me, me in my own life, I think that was the giving.

Judith Arcana. Photo: Jonathan Arlook.

Acknowledgments

"She couldn't be sure what he'd say" first appeared in *Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights Newsletter* #71.

"Jocasta Interviewed in Hell" first appeared in *Family Reunion*, Chicory Blue Press, 2003.

"Talking about Suzie, 1959" first appeared in *Hurricane Alice*, 13/2-3, 1998.

“Sheila’s Deposition, 1997” first appeared in *pms: poem/memoir/story* #4, 2004.

“Celia Finally Responds, 1998” first appeared in *The Oregon Review*, Spring/Summer 2001.

“Noreen’s Phone Calls, 1999” first appeared in *pms: poem/memoir/story* #4, 2004.

“For All the Mary Catholics” first appeared in *POOL* #4, 2005.

“In the Service We Said” first appeared in *pms: poem/memoir/story* #1, 2001.

“Here Is What Happened” first appeared in *Reproductive Health Matters*, Summer 2002.

“She Said” first appeared in *Calyx* 17/3, Winter 1998.

All work by Judith Arcana except “Celia Finally Responds, 1998” appears in her book *What if your mother*, published by Chicory Blue Press in 2005.

Book Reviews

Unfit Subjects:
Educational Policy and the Teen Mother

Wanda Pillow.
New York: Routledge, 2004.

Reviewed by Lucy E. Bailey

Wanda Pillow's *Unfit Subjects: Educational Policy and the Teen Mother* turns a critical lens on a vital but rarely studied issue shaping young mother's experiences—that of educational policy. Asking "whether teen mothers fit in public schools and which teen mothers are fit for an education," Pillow's potent, sophisticated text takes its place within a growing body of feminist scholarship that seeks to interrupt the demonization of pregnant and mothering teens and their symbolic use in debates about declining family values. Pillow, a Professor of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois-Champaign, draws from ethnographic research in schools, policy, history, popular culture, and congressional hearings to trace the development and racialization of dominant cultural narratives about school-aged mothers, their expression in public policy, and their effects on women's experiences. This text is a substantive contribution to feminist scholarship and to understanding more fully the intricate ways young mothers' lives are shaped by larger political, cultural, and educational forces.

Pillow extends knowledge of pregnant/mothering teens in a number of ways. Most importantly, she explains that policies such as Title IX (American Educational Amendment Act of 1972) explicitly include pregnant/mothering students as a category of persons protected from sex discrimination in public schools. Despite such protection, Pillow catalogues practices in schools that testify to widespread noncompliance with policy, as well as significant discomfort with the idea of teen motherhood, practices as segregation, discrimination, inferior curriculum, and administrative negligence. Indeed, schools seem to evade their mandated responsibilities, in part because working to accommodate the needs of young mothers may be misconstrued as affirming their sexual behaviour and reproductive labour.

Policy implementation, subject to the vagaries of local control rather than federal oversight, is inconsistent and contradictory. This pattern is intensified by the absence of case law on school-aged mothers as a basis for guiding or compelling services. Rather than working to provide equal opportunity, schools construct self-sufficiency and advancement as women's individual responsibility ("it's your mess, you deal with it") to avoid the presumed fate as a future "drain" on social and economic resources. Young mothers bear the burden of such beliefs with education unequal to that of their non-mothering peers.

Among the text's most powerful chapters is Pillow's analysis of contemporary abstinence-education initiatives (chapter 6) that not only dictate what constitutes legitimate sexual activity but provide the very backdrop for cultural narratives of teen mothers as deviant. In other chapters, Pillow exposes the intensely racialized/classed threads infusing narratives about pregnant/mothering teens as a "contaminating" force and "social problem," as well as schools' differential treatment of young women on the basis of race and class. Pillow ends the text with a vision of education *for* teen mothers, detailing ways schools can better serve students through providing "access to make up tests or work…the provision of appropriate seating" for pregnant women, "access to bathroom breaks," and more flexible scheduling (62). Pillow charges schools to acknowledge their role as a "front line service provider" (79) for these young women.

This informative, theoretically sophisticated text is a useful call to action for school workers committed to equitable schooling practices, for scholars interested in gender and education issues, and for advocates for the rights of young mothers to reach their full human potential.

It Could Happen to You: *Diary of a Pregnancy and Beyond*

Martha Brockenbrough.
Riverside, NJ: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2002.

Reviewed by Linda Liebenberg

It Could Happen to You is both entertaining and enlightening. Martha Brockenbrough, a young professional who worked for Microsoft, takes the reader through her personal journey as a mother, from its beginnings when she decided to have a baby through to her daughter Lucy's first birthday. Brockenbrough's diary does not offer a prescriptive, academic, or theoretical view of motherhood.

Instead, by describing her fears and emotional turmoil in a raw and honest manner, leavened with humour, she provides an insider's view of what it is to be a fallible mother.

Included in Brockenbrough's narrative are memories of childhood, family, dating, and marrying Adam, her partner. These memories are well placed and serve to contextualize Brockenbrough's emotions and the reasoning behind her sometimes hysterically funny behaviour. She shares changes in personal perspective and how these changes come about—argely the result of the unfamiliar turmoil she experiences in her role as a new mother. We read of Brockenbrough's decision to follow her childhood dream of pursuing a writing career and not return to her former job. She also weighs her relationship with Adam—before and after the arrival of their daughter—and, for perspective, includes commentary from Adam, himself.

A down-to-earth writer, Brockenbrough addresses many niggling fears and concerns that parents-to-be may have, continually reminding readers that, despite best intentions, parents are ultimately human and babies are not automated washing machines that function in accordance with parenting books, guides, and manuals:

> One of the baby books I read said that most parents understand their baby's cries after three weeks. That wasn't reassuring at all. Not only was I really tired and pretty much useless when she was three weeks old, I also had only a fuzzy idea of what she needed. Because the book said I should have known better, I was a confirmed failure. As a failure all I would do to soothe her was try a little of everything. I actually nursed her and changed her diaper simultaneously once. And once is the number of times I will ever do *that.* (130)

In this delightful book, Brockenbrough writes as a friend who shares her experiences and offers kind counsel: "it is not going to work out the way you think it is going to work out, all the books and manuals are not going to be all that helpful (but read them anyway), and in the end it is all going to okay!"

Great with Child: *Letters to a Young Mother*

Beth Ann Fennelly.
New York: W.W. Norton, 2006.

Reviewed by Jane Satterfield

In the 30 years since Adrienne Rich's groundbreaking *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Institution and Experience,* there has been an explosion of literature about motherhood. From acerbic "hip mama" narratives like Ariel Gore's *Breeder* or Kate Moses's anthology *Mothers Who Think* to stern cultural studies like Judith Warner's *Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety*, these accounts deal with motherhood as institution and experience in varying ways, blending first-person accounts with broader social analysis. An award-winning poet (Fennelly's first collection, *Open House*, won the 2001 *Kenyon Review* Prize; her second, *Tender Hooks,* collects some of the most striking poems about motherhood and childrearing in recent years), Fennelly's approach to a familiar subject is a welcome departure; her subtle lyricism and fierce intellect find perfect expression in the epistolary tradition.

"These are letters I would have welcomed when I was pregnant," Fennelly writes, explaining her decision to share private letters written to a former student. Newly pregnant, with both parents dead and living far from friends, Kathleen became understandably panicked, wondering "who would help her, who would coach her through?" Partly "to stop her from leaking mascara on my shoulder," Fennelly pledged to write daily, welcoming the opportunity to "shape my own reflections about pregnancy and child rearing," quickly discovering that the exchange wove the two women into "that grand circle of women giving and getting advice about children."

Fennelly's witty prose accommodates life's bewildering contradictions, as when she writes about the changes pregnancy brings to a woman's life and a couple's marriage:

> It would be difficult to overstate how crazy and stupid lack of sleep can make a person—now get two such folks together and throw in a baby, especially if it's a screamer, and you'll find why sleep deprivation is a successful technique in cult indoctrination. Oh yes, the couple is now indoctrinated in a cult, the Cult of Baby, and their sleep is "a dirty torn cloth," as the poet Alicia Ostriker writes.… For the mother, there are the physical changes, her depression about the extra pounds, the loose muscles that trickle out a drop of pee when she sneezes. Add to that her compromised wardrobe, the epaulettes of spit-up.… No wonder she has a lower sex drive, which frustrates the husband, who is already dealing with the fact that if his wife is breast-feeding, his former beauty queen is now a Dairy Queen.

Fennelly's musings on her correspondent's questions about life and art lead her beyond superficial observations, toward "stresses beyond these that aren't mentioned so often"—the "eddies of discontent that begin to swirl in the formerly calm waters of the marriage"; the "judgmental" nature of the culture of motherhood; the "misogyny sometimes directed at women who produce not only children but creative work as well"; and "the erotics of motherhood." *Great with Child: Letters to a Young Mother* is a compelling portrait of a modern woman's journey through new psychic landscapes and an essential contribution to the literature of motherhood.

What if your mother

Judith Arcana.
Goshen, CT: Chicory Blue Press, 2005.

Reviewed by Jill Scott

Judith Arcana's *What if your mother* is more than a book of mother poetry; it is a trip through the history of women's fertility rights. One might call Arcana a poetry journalist or a poetry activist. Her words speak the clear, bloody truth of women's fight for reproductive freedom in accessible language heavy with the solid rhythm of story. Arcana's voice is inviting and strong, taking readers with her on a journey through the dark underbelly of the unspoken and the unspeakable, of the real and the inevitable. The truth is often funny, like the tale of sperm cells—"But there they were, jerky, blind, hesitant little swimmers with tails of thread." Arcana can be blunt and frank, as in the titular poem "What if your mother," which lays out the old argument that we cannot sanction abortion because what if your own mother had aborted you—"I think you just have to tell these people, / Get real. That's not what it's about." Some poems are poignant and poetically brilliant, as in "Loverchild," which evokes breastfeeding in all its liquid abundance:

> she broadens, she goes liquid
> she runs with saliva, with sweat, dripping milk
> …
> bitten by the teeth of the loverchild
> mother, I'm so hungry, feed me
> I need to eat you mother
> I love to eat you mother
> I eat to love you mother

Arcana tells the real story about mothering, not the Hallmark version, one where "If that baby doesn't stop crying / I don't know what I'll do," and one that is so vexing in its complex, incomprehensible beauty that it defies syntax—"blaze red angel baby / bleed purple magic mother." Arcana uses biblical imagery—"King Soloman could not imagine this woman, / sobbing, crazy, lost in shock"—and mythical figures—she writes Oedipus from the perspective of Jocasta, the mother forced to forsake her baby. We also hear, in all its sordid nakedness, the story of a teenage couple who hide their pregnancy under a girdle, then collectively dispose of the unsightly bump's contents—"When it came out, I turned it over and we pressed the head into a pile of towels for a while." The politics of abortion unravels into etymological humour when "roe" becomes a "small species of deer inhabiting parts of Europe and Asia" and "wade" becomes "chiefly, to go through a tedious task, a long or uninteresting book."

Mostly, though, Arcana evokes the gut-wrenching paradox that women love their bodies and their babies with every fibre of their being; that this unwavering love for the growing fetus forces them to make hard decisions because when the circumstances are not right for mothering, mothers turn to murder. No woman wants to be a Medea.

True Confessions

Renee Norman
Toronto: Inanna Publications, 2005.

Reviewed by Dorsía Smith Silva

Renee Norman's poems in *True Confessions* cover a range of experience, from her complex relationship with her mother to the daily struggles of womanhood. Her poems are bound together by the various experiences of women as daughters, mothers, grandmothers, and poets. The end result is a fresh, appealing collection that balances love, nostalgia, humour, fear, and anger.

Norman opens the first section, "This is How It Begins," with "Chop." The poem describes a parenting role-reversal, in which the speaker affectionately helps her mother undress like she does her "youngest child / when her head is stuck." The tone quickly changes in "Repairing Damage" when the daughter starts to "break / and fight back" with her mother for lecturing her "children / who should have known better." Mother-daughter tension also resonates in "Mother's Madness," as the daughter once again disapproves of her mother's commands to her children: "is this what you want them to remember? / stop running up and down the stairs / stop teasing your sister." Norman returns to the intimate bond between mothers and daughters in "For Sara at Twelve." The mother here tenderly recognizes her connection to her daughter: "the same knots tangle / your hair and mine / we both squint through / glasses spotted with breath." These moving poems best illustrate the profound emotions shared by mothers and daughters.

In the second and third sections, "If I Call Myself" and "When Geese Fly," Norman reflects upon the strength of women and the domestic responsibilities of mothers. With "On the Tongue," she describes how women come together to share pain: "when Nicaraguan poet Daisy Zamora recites / a poem about her mother / when mature students read personal narratives aloud / one mother's lost child is each particular sadness." In the poem "In the Bathroom Thou Shalt Eat Stones," Zamora reappears as a symbol of brave women who fearlessly "eat stones" while others prefer the easy life of eating "bonbons." Also of note are the poems "Woman Flees," "The Queen of Between," and the choreo-styled "Sex Secretaries in Search of a Poet," which examine the constant struggle of mothers working outside and inside the home to find time for themselves.

In the final section, "Giving Thanks," Norman returns to her role as a daughter—to both mother and father—and granddaughter. Although these poems evoke the speaker's warmth for her family, they border on trite sentimentality. Lines such as "for weeks I have been talking to my father / through my mother / inserting care and concern in the phone lines / passing by the heart" ("My Father, Driving") lack the emotional poignancy found in some of the poems in the earlier sections. Nonetheless, Norman's collection is a pleasure to read and paints a wide landscape of the lives of women.

The Development of Judgment and Decision Making in Children and Adolescents

Janis E. Jacobs and Paul A. Klaczynski, eds.
Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005.

Reviewed by Tatjana Chorney

In a society where we often hear about large numbers of youth suffering from moral and ethical apathy, lacking a clear sense of orientation with regard to their own individual future and the future of the world at large, making poor choices when it comes to drugs and sex, and where parenting and parental involvement are areas of increasing interest to scholars and the general public, a book dealing with the decision-making practices and patterns among children and adolescents is welcome news.

This collection of ten essays seeks to elucidate the social, contextual, and cognitive aspects of judgment and decision-making. The rationale for the book comes from a perceived dearth of developmental research concerning the cognitive, emotional, and contextual processes underlying the development of judgment. While most traditional theories of cognitive development regard it as a "unidirectional progression from either intuitive thinking to logical, scientific reasoning … or from states of limited understanding and complexity to more advanced understanding and computational complexity," the essays hope to serve as a starting point for those interested in new models of thinking about the development of judgment that include a "broader array of explanatory variables and contexts" (xii). Thus, part one presents three developmental models offering different explanations of "what develops" and the relative importance of various cognitive and contextual components important for developing judgment. Part two emphasizes the emotional, contextual, and social aspects—that is, the non-cognitive aspects—of decision-making, relevant for those interested in adolescent risk-taking and risky decisions. Part three provides three examples of research that apply developmental and decision-making models to practical research questions affecting social policy, such as legal decisions and abortion decisions. Each part is preceded by a brief editorial introduction and followed by scholarly commentary; these brief essays add value to the book as they coherently summarize and contextualize the diverse issues and perspectives raised in each chapter.

Some of the chapters are less than helpful to either researchers or concerned parents in that they come to conclusions about aspects of adolescent life and experience that have been common knowledge for a long time among diverse groups of individuals, irrespective of their level of education. For example, in the first section of the book we learn that "good options are those that are more likely to lead to positive outcomes than not-so-good options," and that "an important indicator of competent decision making is the ability to choose options that are likely (but not certain) to maintain or improve the decision maker's physical, emotional or financial well-being (and hopefully two or more of these aspects at the same time)" (11). Or, in discussing the role of consultation in abortion decisions among adolescent girls, we are told that "adolescents clearly consider their mother's input to be meaningful for their pregnancy resolution decision" and that they see the mother as "the most important person for helping them cope with unexpected pregnancy" (268), although they place a lot of value on conversations with their best friend and romantic partner (depending on the quality of that relationship).

Being mindful not to decontextualize these and similar statements, however, it is worth pointing out that this methodology belongs to traditional academic discourse in the social sciences. And while this discipline-specific format may seem somewhat slow-moving, the book is not written explicitly for interdisciplinary audiences, but for researchers interested in decision-making or developmental psychology, practitioners, and graduate students. Even so, it includes chapters whose methodology and findings may be of great relevance to parents and caregivers and to policy makers, all of whom face complex challenges in caring for children and youth in today's diverse world. One essay, for example, highlights systematic biases in adolescents' estimates for the base rates of deviant activities and their own deviant behaviour, and identifies a number of similarities in developmental and contextual patterns in judgment across cultures with different hierarchies and ideologies. Another essay brings existing research on adolescent delinquent behaviour to bear on the current justice system and legal reform.

In general, this volume is a valuable contribution to the field of cognitive psychology and sociology; it enriches our understanding of the entangled relationships among social and cultural frameworks, as well as the development of a concept central to Western political, philosophical, and social thought:

selfhood. The value of this book is both cumulative and specific. Cumulative, because the sheer number of chapters dealing with adolescent decision-making in a wide range of theoretical and practical contexts increases our knowledge of developmental psychology and its practical application. Specific, because many chapters call into question particular assumptions that have governed research and policy, in content and in method. There is specific value even in those chapters that present their findings as subtle repositionings of familiar knowledge, as they provide a sound framework for future research on ideas and beliefs our society takes for granted.

Family Investments in Children's Potential

A. Kalil and T. DeLeire.
London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.

Reviewed by Lynell Cadray

Family Investments in Children's Potential focuses on the role parents play in raising their children and the varied investments that influence the outcome of children. These outcomes are directly linked to the cultural, social, and economic backgrounds, genetics, and educational levels of parents. This collection of essays, written from a range of perspectives, serves as a useful guide to parents.

In chapter one, Bradley and Corwyn describe the five "S's" of safety/sustenance, stimulation, socio-emotional support, structure, and surveillance. Some of this development is done in prenatal care and continues throughout life. Socio-emotional support occurs during the child's growth and is based on how the child is socialized to norms and life's expectations. Structure relates to limits imposed upon children during their upbringing, and surveillance refers to maintaining the child's safety during upbringing. Despite the apparent practicality of the five "S's," there are many factors that cannot be guaranteed when raising children and no specific formula of assurance that all outcomes for children will be positive.

In chapter three, Michael considers the family's influences on children's verbal ability and contends that investing time in children, even when economic resources are limited, can be extremely beneficial to children. He contends that children's success is dependent not only on wealth, but on quality time spent with parents.

In chapter six, Fuligni and Yoshikawa highlight the experience of immigrant parents who do not speak the language of their adopted country. Immigrant parents, who often leave their native countries to pursue "better" lives for themselves and their children, place high value on education. Children of immigrants tend to pursue professional, technical, and business degrees, which allows them to pursue careers that are linked to high incomes and which increase their chances for better life styles.

In chapter seven, Lundberg and Rose examine the impact of gender on raising children. Fathers, for example, tend to be more involved with their sons, and research indicates that households with sons spend more money on family expenditures than households with daughters.

Each chapter in *Family Investments in Children's Potential* introduces important issues that require further investigation, issues such as the influence of gender, disability status, and public policy pertaining to families on the outcomes of children.

I Wanna Be Sedated

Faith Conlone and Gail Hudson, eds.
Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2005.

Reviewed by Ruth Nemzoff

I Wanna be Sedated is an uneven collection of tales about parenting emerging adults—i.e., teenagers. The pieces vary from the trivial to the poignant. On the one hand, Jeff Wallace reveals his horror at having to deal with his daughter's first period. This reader felt like telling Wallace to "Grow up Dad!" On the other hand, Barbara Kingsolver is especially apt in her musings on the roots of parents' worry as they help their children apply to college: "will we ever find a place that will hold her and love her as well as I do?" (151).

If one ignores its stereotypic notion of the teenage years as an abhorrent time when parents are totally confused, this book offers some insights. Joyce Maynard confronts us with societal and personal ambivalence about sex; Gail Hudson explores the complexity of the college application process; Peter Applebome forces liberals to reconsider the worth of the boy scouts; and Debra Gwartney writes with passion and detail about a truly difficult situation. The collection even includes an article by Flor Fernandez Barrios about "other mothering." And, as always, Anna Quindlen writes about mothering with humour and penetrating honesty.

However, nowhere does this collection confront the myth that teenagers must be difficult. Nor does it ask why parents would want to be sedated during adolescence, a time that is endlessly fascinating as both children and parents grow and change. Nonetheless, *I Wanna Be Sedated* is worth reading—if one reads selectively and applies critical thinking.

Mommy Guilt: ***Learn to Worry Less, Focus on What Matters Most, and Raise Happier Kids***

Julie Bort, Aviva Plock, and Devra Renner.
New York: AMACOM, 2005.

Reviewed by Lynn Loutzenhiser

The goal of *Mommy Guilt* is to "show you how parenting can become more enjoyable for you, your spouse, and your children" (3). The key is simple: mothers need to learn how to recognize and reduce their "Mommy Guilt" and then everyone in the family will be happier.

Based on a large-scale survey of 1300 parents (predominantly mothers), the authors identify the most common guilt-inducing issues for parents of toddlers to school-aged children (for example, yelling too much at one's children or having an untidy house). They then present a number of strategies to reduce guilt in the context of seven principles that make up the "Mommy-Guilt-Free Philosophy." The principles are simple and straightforward, such as "laugh a lot, especially with your children" and "parenting is not a competitive sport." Through the provision of various exercises, readers are encouraged to identify their level of guilt and then minimize it by applying the seven "Mommy-Guilt-Free" principles.

As a practical "how-to" guide, this book is very successful. It is well written and well organized, includes an appropriate amount of humour, and is enjoyable to read. One strength of this book is the inclusion of practical examples of "Mommy Guilt," alternative ways to think about them, and strategies to deal with them. I particularly like the authors' use of a developmental approach throughout the book. For example, instead of using the "one-strategy fits all" technique, the authors tailor parents' guilt-reducing strategies to fit their child's developmental level. This developmental approach not only assists parents in dealing with their current issues, but also provides them with a glimpse into the future when their coping strategies will need to change.

Although successful at the practical level, this book does little to explain the origins of "Mommy Guilt." The authors raise the matter all to briefly: "We can't deny that we are expected to do it all. The question is, who has that expectation? The answer is us" (8). Thus, from the authors' point of view, mothers feel guilty because of their own expectations. Given that mothers are viewed as responsible for their feelings of guilt, the authors' strategy of achieving enjoyment from parenting by changing one's expectations of oneself makes perfect sense. However, blaming mothers for their guilt and ignoring the social and political context in which this guilt occurs does little to further our understanding of the "Mommy Guilt" phenomenon. It also perpetuates the notion that mothers are solely responsible for familial happiness.

If a critical, social, and political analysis of "Mommy Guilt" is what you are looking for, this book is not for you. If, however, you are seeking practical parenting strategies presented in an interesting and humorous way, you will enjoy this book.

Battle Cries: *Justice for Kids with Special Needs*

Miriam Edelson.
Toronto: Sumach Press, 2005.

Reviewed by Barbara Schwartz-Bechet

As a mother and a professional in the field of special education for over twenty years, I am impressed with Miriam Edelson's *Battle Cries: Justice for Kids with Special Needs*. Edelson is a well-educated, involved, and resourceful parent who asserts that an individual with a disability is, first and foremost, a person and a family member. Edelson begins her book with a first-person account of her battle for justice and equality for her son Jake, a child with severe disabilities who has since passed away. She describes personal challenges, as well as the obstacles she and her family faced when dealing with individuals and social service agencies. Edelson rightly claims that her best attribute is strength of character. This is evident throughout her book, which is based on extensive research on public policy and private support (see part one) that informs the individual portraits she provides in part two.

Part one describes the "terrain" of the disability realm. Chapters cover topics such as services and supports, the marginalization of mothers who take care of children with disabilities, respite, faith and the community, and how society views individuals with disabilities. Edelson includes factual information regarding services, supports, and policy issues across Canada's provinces. General tips on how to find services are included at the back of the text; however, a list of contacts, resources, and telephone numbers is a regrettable oversight that would have been invaluable to readers.

Through the voices of mothers and one father, part two presents the "battle cries" of the book's title. Each portrait presents the story of the child's birth, life with the family, the education and services that the child and family receive, and how family relationships intertwine with their individual communities. The portraits document the heroism of families who advocate on behalf of their children and show that advocacy and appropriate planning can result in functional lives for disabled children.

Edelson uses her first-hand knowledge of mothering a disabled child and social policy to focus her narrative and research questions. She identifies the need to balance the private endeavour of cultivating a family and the use of public support that is available—although less available to children with more severe disabilities. She argues that a sense of community—whether family-based, neighbourhood-based, or culturally-based—must complement society's limited public resources.

A true ethnographic study, *Battle Cries* identifies essential patterns of acceptance, understanding, and growth. Edelson's heartfelt book is written specifically for families of children with disabilities and those professionals who work directly with them.

Afraid of the Day: *A Daughter's Journey*

Nancy Graham.
Toronto: Women's Press, 2003.

Reviewed by Nancy Gerber

Nancy Graham's unflinching account of surviving her mother's depression opens with an epigraph from Jamaica Kincaid's *The Autobiography of My Mother*: "My mother died the moment I was born, and so for the whole of my life there was nothing standing between myself and eternity." This unwelcome delivery into loss and pain also describes Graham's experience: for three months after her birth, on 17 March 1962, her mother was hospitalized for severe postpartum depression that recurred yearly for 20 years.

Martha Bonner, Graham's mother, was a lively young woman with many friends and interests. Born in 1930 in Hamilton, Ontario, where Graham also spent her youth, Bonner left high school at the age of 16 to help support her family and was working in the accounts department at Hydro Electric when she was introduced to her future husband, Henry Reid, on a blind date. Married in 1958, the couple moved to a bungalow in a neighbourhood of the city where farm fields and apple orchards once stood. Thus far, the story is familiar as the narrative of a young, energetic couple married during the post-war boom, eager for a family and their future. Just a few years later, as Bonner sinks deeper and deeper into depression, the familiar outlines of a suburban childhood are ruptured as Graham enters the terrifying world of mental illness and becomes mother and caregiver to her own mother.

Graham's narrative veers between the nightmare of psychiatric hospitals and the nightmare of home, where her mother perpetually teeters on the verge of incapacitating depressions. In spite of the considerable grief she feels when she visits her mother in hospital, a reader senses her relief at no longer being responsible for her mother's safety and well-being. At home, Graham becomes exquisitely attuned to minutest shifts in her mother's mood and appearance: a dullness in gaze and increasing lethargy frequently signal the onset of another depressive episode. When depression strikes, Bonner takes to her bed, a shell of a woman unable to eat, dress, or bathe, let alone care for her children or enjoy familial celebrations such as Christmas and birthdays. The unpredictability of these episodes and the disruption that ensues—children who must be shuttled back and forth to relatives, an anxious father performing the dual roles of family caregiver and wage earner—are exacerbated by the father's volatile temper and frequent arguing and constant tension between the two parents. The reader empathizes with Graham when she laments she has a "mother like no other"—a mother who cannot enjoy vacations, her children's achievements, the company of loving friends and family—a woman for whom the most ordinary pleasures—kissing her children goodbye, going for a walk—demand an energy that is just not available.

As is often the case in narratives of childhood, the earliest passages are the most heartbreaking. Here is a prose-poem where Graham imagines her mother receiving her first electroshock treatment, in December 1962 when Graham was an infant, before the onset of awareness and memory: "a needle plunges into a thread-like vein, bleeding muscle relaxant into her body … melancholy eyes staring up in fear of the unknown … her body surrenders to crudely choreographed spasms … eyes screaming in shocked white silence" (34). Such passages resonate with Jo Malin's theory in *The Voice of the Mother* that women's autobiographies often contain an "intertext," an embedded maternal narrative that is a biography of the writer/daughter's mother (1).

Not surprisingly, Graham succumbed to depression in her mid-teens, which she sought to medicate by drinking, creating a vicious cycle that deepened her despondency. In spite of her dependence on alcohol, she was able to work part-time and graduate with honours from McMaster University, demonstrating resilience and ambition she cannot acknowledge. By the time her mother is stabilized on lithium when Graham is in her early 20s, the daughter's struggles with alcohol and self-esteem increase. She develops a raging case of bulimia. She tries to protect family members from knowing she is gay, fearing this will cause her mother to relapse. She moves from job to job, trying to hide her burgeoning depression from concerned friends and colleagues. While she seeks help from therapists, she is unable to find respite from the depression that dominates her existence.

Her slow journey toward recovery begins when she leaves the pressures of an office job for a life more conducive to writing. The acceptance of her prose into a selective program which connects her with an esteemed author, entry into therapy with a compassionate psychiatrist, her reconnection with an inspirational high school English teacher—all of whom are women—provide her with the nurturing she was denied as a child. Gradually she learns not to blame herself for her mother's illness and to appreciate the ways in which she and her mother are both alike and different.

Painfully honest in its depiction of insidious symptoms such as hopelessness and self-punishment, Graham's memoir is an important addition to the literature of depression and an eloquent reminder of how rupture to early mother-daughter bonding has lifelong consequences.

From Work-Family Balance to Work-Family Interaction: *Changing the Metaphor*

Diane F. Halpern and Susan Elaine Murphy, eds.
Mahweh, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005.

Book Reviewed by Justyna Sempruch

In this collection of research studies, Diane Halpern and Susan Murphy are on a revolutionary mission to rewrite the work-life conflict into a dynamic vision of work-family interaction. Embracing research trends, potential challenges, and best practice models across employment strategies and family arrangements, they seek to foster change.

Working parents are often stressed and tired, but so are stay-at-home parents and working adults without children or other care responsibilities. In fact, current research does not support traditional assumptions about happy and relaxed stay-at-home mothers. Working women are less depressed and generally healthier and better integrated in social dimensions of life. Parents in low-paid jobs with high work demand and little control over their work patterns, however, often experience stress. Hence, Halpern and Murphy link the phenomenon of burnout to the social environment and encourage companies and organizations to invest in family friendly work policies.

Boundaries between paid work and family life have always intersected, but in light of the increasing precariousness and instability of employment, the organizational context and culture of the workplace are of crucial importance to working parents. The issues driving incompatibility between work and home make the most attractive employees less interested in professional advancement and, for the obvious reasons of security and comfort, more committed to their families.

As Halpern and Murphy show, to understand how employees respond to work-life demands we need a broad picture of the causes of work-life conflict. Such factors as cultural diversity, race, and individual differences in personality, as well as life style and resources, often determine how two individuals react to the same stressor or the same occurrences of conflict. Non-white employees feel less safe than their white counterparts in discussing non-work issues in the workplace, and often report that their immediate supervisors are more critical of their efforts to balance work and non-work concerns.

Organizational values and sensitivity are needed in conjunction with family policies to bring about effectiveness in balancing the demands of work and home life. The foundational argument here, and perhaps the book's most valuable message, is that eliminating barriers to success implies an understanding that childcare is everyone's business. Another important issue is the lack of role models for women at the leadership level. There is also a need for quality part-time jobs, especially at the professional level, where often there is a stigma associated with part-time employment and remuneration is not proportional to the full-time rate. As paid employment is rarely optional, few families with children can afford to own a home with only one wage earner. The book's final premise is thus to redefine the research agenda: it is time to shift the negative focus (for example, the view that mothers who work full-time neglect their children) to the systematic investigation of conditions that facilitate the work-family balance. To that end, Halpern and Murphy suggest the introduction of cafeteria-style benefit programs that allow employees to craft their benefits package to meet specific family needs. Other methods are job sharing, alternative job arrangements, telecommuting, and on-site day care facilities.

Couples and Pregnancy: *Welcome, Unwelcome, and In-Between*

Barbara Jo Brothers, ed.
Binghampton, NY: Haworth Press, 1999.

Reviewed by Gina Wong-Wylie

Couples and Pregnancy: Welcome, Unwelcome and In-Between, published simultaneously as volume eight of the *Journal of Couples Therapy*, includes seven articles and one commentary on topics such as men's experience of grief after abortion, a therapist's awareness of a client's unwelcome pregnancy, dealing with the death of a baby, and Virginia Satir's perspective that "We are not creators of life; we are only activators" (1).

A major strength of this book is the inclusion of many case studies of couples and clients seen in therapy and clinical settings. Cultural diversity and divergent views of "family" are not included here, however. For the most part, the articles reinforce dominant perceptions and Schoenewolf's article, "Of Breasts and Men: Three Generations of Vampire Coupling," promulgates an especially sexist, racist, patriarchal, and pejorative view of women.

Informative articles are presented that invite readers to consider significant issues such as the psychological impact of pregnancy and birth as they relate to a couple's developmental level and history of coping with change. Lynch provides a critical reminder to therapists to explore a couple's previous unwanted pregnancies and decisions around these significant events. Kleinplatz provides a thorough review of how fertility is understood and conceptualized in North America. She respectfully suggests that infertility is "perhaps … deep within … not linked to biomedical approaches alone" (18).

Unfortunately, Schoenewolf's contribution mars an otherwise useful volume. Replete with expert and pathologizing language, he links the Vampire myth to fantasies of passive-aggressive males and case histories of couples enacting this fantasy. Schoenewolf's description of a fantasy/dream involving a "black girl" and a white male who inserts a syringe into the girl's neck and sucks her blood is disturbing and racist. Further, his Freudian psychoanalysis connects these fantasies to phobia about women's breasts. In fact, this article perpetuates a disparaging view of women and men alike, and I am not convinced by the rationale provided for its inclusion despite objections by three members of the editorial board. An article on grief after miscarriage or identity development of new parents would have been a more meaningful addition to this resource.

Overall, *Couples and Pregnancy* provides practical guidance to therapists working with couples and individuals around issues of fertility. I would recommend this book to counselors, social workers, and psychologists, but would advise them to skip the article by Schoenewolf and seek out resources that embrace cultural diversity and offer more balanced views of family systems.

Work and Life Integration: *Organizational, Cultural, and Individual Perspectives*

Ellen Ernst Kossek and Susan J. Lambert, eds.
Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005.

Reviewed by Cayo Gamber

This volume is comprehensive in that the researchers have studied a broad range of individual workers (differing in age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and skill level—from managerial and professional workers to lower-level wage earners), companies, geographical locations (both domestic and international), and types of studies (from individual case studies to multi-method studies). The organizational scholars chosen to contribute to this work bring well-considered research, insightful theoretical perspectives, and sound praxis to their individual contributions. Given that American workers not only work the longest work hours of any industrialized nation, but also are subject to "the most unequal income and benefit distribution in the industrial world" (171), a volume such as this is both timely and indispensable in its close and exhaustive study of the ways in which "[j]ob quality; the ability to control when, where, and how one works; performing tasks that enhance skills and careers; work and societal cultures that value personal life; and opportunity structures that facilitate job security, mobility, and access to work-family supports" contribute to successful work-life integration and balance (4). In addition, this volume is timely in arguing that quality enhancement rather than cost containment should guide the way in which employers invest in their employees.

In their cross-cultural analyses, the researchers also substantively address matters of equity and social justice. For example, many American workers experience "the pressure to get tasks done faster; the pressure to work longer hours; and the pressure to work 24/7, or anywhere and anytime, which has been created by the widespread availability and use of cell phone, e-mail, voice mail, and fax machines" (46). Many European workers, on the other hand, live in countries where "labor and/or government have been active in attempting to create a social force that legitimizes the value of time spent by parents with family" (57) and, as a result, "limits are being placed on the maximum hours employees may work per week, and rest periods and holidays are being mandated" (8). Moreover, in countries such as Norway and Sweden, family care is constructed as a collective, rather than an individual, responsibility; thus, one's community and government are expected to intervene in work-life/work-family relationships. In this volume, cross-cultural comparisons also include an investigation into the ways in which globalization impacts southern-hemisphere countries, where globalization, on the one hand, can increase women's "opportunities for employment and economic independence" and, on the other hand, can reinforce "traditional gender hierarchies in developing societies by placing women in segregated and low-wage work" (367). The scholars argue that as we become increasingly interconnected, attending to the conditions of all workers in all countries will be vital to improving work-life policies.

In their feminist analyses, the contributors point out that while women traditionally were held responsible for work-family "issues," today both men and women not only are responsible for balancing work and family, they also are impacted by the fact that the work and life spheres "are socially constructed as separate and discrete, are set in adversarial relationship to each other, and are differentially valued" (174). In addition, work spheres themselves are gendered: "linear thinking, rationality, assertiveness, and competitiveness—typically are thought of as masculine" while "empathy, listening, and sensitivity —typically are thought of as feminine" (175). The researchers argue that men and women should not be seen as intrinsically different. Often it is organizational structures that maintain male privilege in the work place and that make it appear that men are more attached to work than women. That is to say, women may display less attachment to their work "not because they are women but rather because they are stuck in dead-end jobs" (330). Moreover, in evaluating work-life integration, it is worth recognizing that "the division of labor within households is not taken into consideration in typical work structures": "[m]en spend an average of 40 minutes each day on cooking and routine housework, compared to women for whom it occupies up to 2 ½ hours" (333). In fact, "[n]ot only do organizations fail to recognize that women carry more responsibility at home, but it is common for these facts to be turned around and used as the basis for prejudice against women" (333).

I wonder if, perhaps, the researchers might have gained from expanding the definition of "life"—that is, not focusing their research on life as it is framed by family responsibility. Editors Kossek and Lambert had considered such an expanded definition and decided against it, however, when practitioners in the field argued that redefining the field in terms of "quality of life" issues rather than work-life issues would make it even more difficult to sell work-life innovations to American employers (515).

In its charge to change the work place to fit the workers, this volume will appeal—widely and fully—to academics, practitioners, policy makers, and organizational leaders.

Birth and Birthgivers:
The Power Behind the Shame

Janet Chawla, ed.
New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2006.

Reviewed by Nané Jordan

Janet Chawla's edited volume on "birth and birthgiving" in India is a significant collection of essays signaling new directions for critical, complex, passionate research and writing on birth and birthgiving within a context of ever increasing globalization. Focusing on the threatened practices of indigenous birth knowledge and the work of *dais* (traditional midwives) in India, this book celebrates indigenous traditions relating to birth and their practitioners, birthgivers.

Chawla's opening essay records through a religio-cultural lens her journey toward *dais*-focused research, initiated by MATRIKA. She enters the complexities of Western and Indian feminisms, motherhood discourses, essentialism, the biomedical technologizing of birth in India, caste and gender disparities, religion, the targeting of *dais* in development discourses, and the problem of representing research subjects. Chawla studies "genealogies of the sacred as they pertain to birth and birthgivers" (52). For example, she discusses female procreative blood and its relationship to the "demonic" feminine in Vedic and

Brahmanic texts. Reframing the "polluting" power of female blood, Chawla asks, "what is this power, this bodily capacity to disrupt meditations?" (56). Chawla discusses the communicative entrance of MATRIKA researchers into the *dais* world of birth through "word-pictures" where *narak*—or Hell – was a central image. Variously referred to in conjunction with puberty rites, birth and postpartum practices, and as the underground fertile dwelling of the goddess-like *Bemata*, this complex term is used by *dais* "without distaste or moral judgement" (60). Chawla transcribes *narak* as signaling the inner world of the female body (and the earth), as an ethno-medical concept that allows for "a host of therapeutic interventions" (60).

Contributors to this book include Vidya Rao, Manju Kapoor, Anuradha Singh, Deepti Priya Mehrotra, Sarah Pinto, Sabadhra Devi Rai, and Alpana Sagar. Rao's essay describes the rich tradition of "*sohar* songs," a form of Indian music linked to the human life cycle. Sung by women to celebrate the birth of a child, Rao details how *sohars* map the living, emotional landscape of birth, the longing of a mother for her husband/beloved, the speaking of her birth pain, "pleasure, shame, silence and speech" (96).

Pinto's essay reads the "birth-work" of *dais* as a complex set of social relations, whose differing tasks, like birth attending, postpartum massage, and placenta/blood clean-up, are marked by caste and identity. Mehrotra's piece describes her work as a MATRIKA researcher, working with "voices from the ground" (173) to tell *dais*'s birth stories, how they came to learn their craft, and documents their practices. Singh explores layered, textual, cosmological *Ayurveda* conceptions of maternity; "she both *knows* the body and *is* the body" (147). Kapoor narrates the satisfying home birth story of her fourth child (her first to be born at home) through engaging description of her thoughts and dialogue with those around her. Devi Rai sheds light on the unaccounted for monetary and social value of *dais*'s work. And Sagar, a medical doctor herself, explores the "business" of childbirth in India from doctors' and women's perspectives, considering how to make birth safer for poor women.

I highly recommend this book for anyone wanting to understand not only indigenous birth practices in India, but seeking to enrich their knowledge of the importance of birth giving traditions and midwifery dynamics within mother-and female-centred birth care.

Contributor Notes

Janice Ahola-Sidaway is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. One of her main research interests has been school-work transitions of young women. She is currently a member of two SSHRC-funded interdisciplinary teams, one focusing on maternal identities of young mothers and the other focusing on society-centered pedagogical experiences of young women in undergraduate engineering programs.

Judith Arcana's poetry and prose are published widely; new work is forthcoming (or has recently appeared) in *5AM* and *Diner* in the United States, *Studio* in Canada (online), and two international anthologies. Among her prose books is *Grace Paley's Life Stories: A Literary Biography*. Her latest book is a collection of poems: *What if your mother* (Chicory Blue Press, 2005). A native of the Great Lakes region, Judith lives now in the Pacific Northwest.

Katherine Arnoldi is a writer, graphic novelist, artist, teacher, and activist for equal rights to education for teen mothers. Her graphic novel, *The Amazing True Story of a Teenage Single Mom* (Hyperion, 1998) was named one of the "top ten books of the year" by *Entertainment Weekly*, was nominated for the Will Eisner Award in the Graphic Novel,and received two American Library Awards. She has received two New York Foundation of the Arts Awards, the Juniper Prize, the Newhouse Award, the DeJur Award, and the Henfield TransAtlantic Fiction Award. She is currently completing a Ph.D. in Creative Writing at Binghamton University. Her short story collection, *All Things Are Labor* will be published by the University of Massachusetts Press in August, 2007.

Lucy E. Bailey is an Assistant Professor in Social Foundations and Qualitative

Research at Oklahoma State University in the United States. Her research interests include women's studies, critical race studies, the history of education, and qualitative research methodologies. She recently served as co-editor for a collection of women's Civil War letters, entitled *Bold Script and War Work*, scheduled to be published with Ohio University Press in Spring, 2008. She is currently at work on a project that investigates perceptions of teachers bodies in the classroom as well as a manuscript analyzing the writings of a nineteenth-century educator and writer who saw mothers as key instruments in the educational development of children. Please direct any correspondence to lucy.bailey@okstate.edu.

Rachel Berman has a Ph.D. in Family Studies from the University of Guelph. She is a faculty member in the School of Early Childhood Education at Ryerson University, where she teaches undergraduate courses on working with families and a new graduate course "Social Research with Children." Rachel has also taught feminist research methods at McMaster University and York University.

Mary Kay Blakely joined the Journalism School faculty in September, 1997, and teaches Advanced Writing in the magazine sequence. A contributing editor to *Ms.Magazine* since 1981 and former "Hers" columnist for *The New York Times,* she is the author of the critically acclaimed *Wake Me When It's Over* and *American Mom.* Her essays on social and political issues have appeared in *The New York Times, The Washington Post, Mother Jones, LIFE, Vogue, Family Circle, Self, Parents, Newsday, Los Angeles Times Magazine, Lear's, Glamour, Working Woman* as well as other national publications. Her work has been collected in fourteen writing anthologies and published in Australia, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and Japan. Blakely is on the National Advisory Board for *Women's Enew*s, the National Writer's Union and MOMbo, a syndicated radio program. Her television appearances include news commentaries on the *Today Show, Oprah, Larry King Live, CBS This Morning, Charlie Rose, C-SPAN, Good Morning America, CNN* and other news programs.

Gemma Briggs, a Ph.D., is a student at the University of Manitoba, Department of Community Health Sciences is supported by the SSHRC-funded Raising and Levelling the Bar grant. She has worked as a researcher in child health for six years. Her research focuses on children and youth, injury prevention, and health policy.

Marni Brownell, Senior Researcher Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, is a core member of the joint Canadian Institute for Advanced Research/SSHRC-funded "Raising and Levelling the Bar" national collaborative research initiative on children's learning, behavioural and health outcomes. Her research focuses on the social determinants of children's health.

Deborah L. Byrd is Associate Professor of English and Women's Studies at Lafayette College, where she teaches nineteenth-century British poetry and both literature-based and interdisciplinary Women's Studies courses. She has published on James Joyce, Joan Vinge, John Fowles, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Elizabeth and Robert Browning.

Lynell A. Cadray is currently the Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, Assistant Dean and Chief Diversity Officer at Emory University's School of Law. She is a native of New Orleans, LA, and received her B.A. from Tulane University in Social Sciences and her M.A. from Georgia State University in Women's Studies. She is actively involved in various leadership positions at Emory University including the President's Commission on the Status of Women and the Women in Leadership Committee. She recently served on various committees with the Law School Admission Council, including the Minority Advisory Committee, the Services and Programs Committee and currently serves on the Test Development and Research Committee. Throughout her career, Cadray has been an advocate for women. Her Master's thesis, titled, "Juggling It All: The Coping Mechanisms of Married Employed Mothers," focused on work-life balance and issues related to mothers employed and raising children. Cadray has a strong commitment to helping young women with issues as they relate to marriage and family, while juggling their careers. When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with her family, writing, reading, traveling and gardening.

Tatjana Chorney began her studies at the University of Belgrade, Yugoslavia; emigrated to Canada in 1992, obtained an Hon.B.A from York University, and then an M.A. and a Ph.D from the University of Toronto. She became a mother during her undergraduate studies at York, and a single parent during her Ph.D. studies. Currently, she is Assistant Professor at the Department of English, cross-listed faculty member of Women's Studies, and affiliated with the program for Sociology and Criminology, at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Canada. She teaches courses in early modern literature and culture, as well as writing by women. For the last few years, she has been working with the regional school board and local inner city communities to improve the academic success of students in inner city schools. She is conducting SSHRC-funded research in the area of the digital humanities and pedagogy.

Tanya Darisi is a doctoral student in Applied Social Psychology at the University of Guelph. Her primary research interest includes investigating the impact of social categories on the construction and negotiation of identity, espeically those applying to gender.

Patrice DiQuinzio is Professor of Philosophy and Director of Women's Studies at Muhlenberg College. Before that Patrice served as Assistant Dean of the Undergraduate College at Bryn Mawr College, and Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Scranton. She has published a number of articles on feminism and political philosophy and has edited two collections of work on women, ethics, social theory, and public policy. Patrice has also published a book on the difficulties that feminist thinkers have encountered in their attempts to develop theories of femininity, women's oppression, and women's liberation that adequately address the topic of motherhood. Patrice is also a member of the board of trustees of the National Association of Mothers' Centers, headquartered in Levittown, New York. Her books include: *Women and Children First: Feminism, Rhetoric, and Public Policy; The Impossibility of Motherhood: Feminism, Individualism, and the Problem of Mothering;* and *Feminist Ethics and Social Policy.*

Pamela Downe is an Associate Professor of Women's amd Gender Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. As a medical anthropologist, most of her research has focused on the health repercussions of violence against women as well as maternal health and cross-cultural care.

Rishma Dunlop is editor of Folio, the literary section of *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering.* She is an essayist, dramatist, poet and fiction writer. She is the author of three books of poetry: *The Body of My Garden, Reading Like a Girl*, and *Metropolis*. She is co-editor of *Red Silk: An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women Poets* and editor of *White Ink*, a forthcoming anthology from ARM's Demeter Press. Her radio drama, *The Raj Kumari's Lullaby,* was commissioned and produced by CBC Radio and published in *Where is Here? The Drama of Immigration*. Her poetry has won awards including the 2003 Emily Dickinson Prize, and has been published in Canada, the US, South Africa, and the UK. Her work has been awarded grants from the Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council and Canada Council of the Arts. Rishma Dunlop is a professor of English and Education at York University, Toronto. She is Poet-in-Electronic Residence at the Centre for Cross Faculty Inquiry, University of British Columbia for 2006-2007 and editor of *Studio*, an online poetry journal. She will be Coordinator of Creative Writing in English at York University in July 2007.

Miriam Edelson is a social activist, mother and writer living in Toronto. *Battle Cries: Justice For Kids with Special Needs* was published in 2005. *My Journey With Jake: A Memoir of Parenting and Disability* appeared in 2000. Her creative non-fiction and commentaries have appeared in *The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star,* CBC Radio, *This Magazine* as well as other periodicals. Born in New York, Edelson spent her teens in Toronto and completed her undergraduate studies at McMaster and Laval Universities. After joining the staff of a national union based in Ottawa, she completed her Masters in political science at Carleton University. She is fluent in French and is currently pursuing doctoral studies in sociology and bioethics part-time at the University of Toronto. Edelson lives in Toronto with her partner Andy King and her daughter Emma.

Sandra Fonseca is a Ph.D. candidate in Education at the University of Ottawa and a member of a SSHRC-funded interdisciplinary team currently investigating the maternal identities of young mothers. Her doctoral research focuses on the education of teen mothers who are on social assistance. Her inquiry centers around the experiences of teen/young mothers and professional staff within several organizations that support the schooling of the teen/young mothers.

Cayo Gamber is an Assistant Professor of Writing, The George Washington University. In her research she interrogates how competing voices negotiate, regulate, and/or affirm lesbian mothers; how popular culture icons—such as the Barbie doll and Nancy Drew—both encode uncontested conceptions of mass production and consumption, and, encode alterity as these icons are subverted, redefined, and personalized by individual consumer. Currently she is working on a book-length study of the culture of memorializing and commemorating warfare. In particular, she is interested in how specific narratives of war and commemorations to remember those who died have come to inform our national, institutional, social, cultural, political, popular, and personal understandings of the wages of war in modern times.

Nancy Gerber is the author, most recently, of *Losing a Life: A Daughter's Memoir of Caregiving* (Lexington Books, 2005). She has also written a monograph on mothers as artists entitled Portrait of the Mother-Artist: Class and Creativity in Contemporary American Fiction, foreword by Andrea O'Reilly (Hamilton, 2003). She can be reached at n.gerber@att.net.

Fiona J. Green, Chair, Women's and Gender Studies Department at the University of Winnipeg, has published research on feminist mothering in the journals *Socialist Studies* and the *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*, and in the edited volumes, *Mother Outlaws* and *Motherhood to Mothering.* More recent/forthcoming publications addressing reality TV representations of mothers are in the journal *Storytelling* and the book *Mediated Moms: Mothering and Popular Culture.*

Aline Gubrium is Assistant Professor of Public Health at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. She received her Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Florida. She is currently conducting several research projects looking at women's experiences with long-term, provider controlled contraceptives (Depo Provera, Norplant/Implanon, and the IUD).

Tara Mae Hillyer, a Toronto-born artist, has traveled throughout Canada, the United States, Cuba, and South Africa studying art, healing, and culture. Her

BA in psychology, as well as postgraduate work in wilderness recreation and wilderness therapy put a formal structure to her deep-seated interest in the anthropological and psychological side of spirituality. It is from these eclectic sets of training and experiences that Tara Mae Hillyer was able to find the guidance, support, and strength to conduct her own healing exercises using art, as revealed in her photographic exhibit "Reclaiming Freedom; Finding my Sacred Connection to Men." Hillyer continues to explore new avenues of art and healing through photography and visual arts, writing, music (both voice and instrumental) and celebrates these forms with the release of her premier CD in August 2007. Listings of public performances, workshops, lectures, and individual consultations can be reviewed on-line at www.taramaehillyer.com.

Linda Hunter is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Guelph as well as the department's Undergraduate Coordinator. Linda's research interests include the depiction of gender in the media and the sociological, historical, and political analysis of HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. Linda is also researching teaching methods and the application of interdisciplinary programs such as fine art, to the study of sociology. Linda has worked with the AIDS Committee of Guelph and Wellington County and the Stonehenge Therapeutic Community. She has made numerous presentations on topics of health, gender, and media, to organizations, conferences, schools, and the community and has worked as a regular gender and media columnist for CBC national radio. Linda lives with her supportive partner and her two incredible daughters.

Nané Ariadne Jordan is a doctoral student in the Centre for Cross-Faculty Inquiry in Education at the University of British Columbia. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in photography from the University of Ottawa, and completed her Master of Arts in Women's Spirituality at New College of California with a thesis exploring intersections of ecofeminism, midwifery practices and politics, and women's "natural," physiologic birth experiences. Her midwifery apprenticeship and work as a home birth attendant and post-partum doula within pre-regulation Canadian midwifery informs her research in women's health and spirituality. She continues her art practice, and is developing theory of sacred economy rooted in a poetics of the placenta and its dialogue of mother / baby blood. Her Ph.D. research explores spirituality, gender and feminist curriculum and pedagogy in higher education through women's experiences and practices.

Deirdre M. Kelly is Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. She is the author of *Pregnant with Meaning: Teen Mothers and the Politics of Inclusive Schooling* (Peter Lang, 2000,) and *Last Chance High: How Girls and Boys Drop in and out of Alternative Schools* (1993, Yale University Press).

Deborah Keys is a research fellow at the Key Centre for Women's Health in Society at the University of Melbourne, Australia. She is a sociologist whose research interests encompass sexuality, identity, youth homelessness, drugs, sexual health and motherhood. She is currently engaged in research with young mothers experiencing homelessness.

Renée Knapp is Director of Marketing and Assistant to the Director of the Association for Research on Mothering. Prior to joining ARM in 2005, Renée was Marketing Manager for Canadian Scholars' Press Inc./Women's Press in Toronto. In 1997, she graduated from the University of Toronto with dual Honours degrees in Women's Studies and English.

D. Memee Lavell-Harvard is currently President of the Ontario Native Women's Association, a full time student currently completing her Ph.D. in Education at the University of Western Ontario), and is the first Aboriginal person ever to receive a Trudeau Scholarship. Harvard is also a full-time mother of two little girls, Autumn Sky (eight years) and Eva Lillie (two years). Ms. Lavell-Harvard's research addresses the epidemic of low academic achievement and high drop out rates among Aboriginal populations in Canada.

Linda Liebenberg, Ph.D., Director of Research for the Pathways to Resilience Project at Dalhousie University, is a methodologist with an interest in both image-based methods and mixed-methods designs. Her research examines the use of both visual methods and mixed method research designs and how these facilitate an understanding of women and children in developing contexts, in particular South Africa. Other projects she has coordinated relate to out-of-school youth in informal settlements surrounding Cape Town (Department of Educational Psychology and Specialised Education, Stellenbosch University, South Africa)and research with women on farms in the Winelands region of South Africa (Department of Psychology, Stellenbosch University).

Lynn Loutzenhiser, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at the University of Regina in the Faculty of Arts, Department of Psychology. She is a child clinical psychologist with research and clinical interests in the areas of parenting and early childhood. She is also the mother of two preschool-aged children, Joshua and Maya.

Brenda F. McGadney-Douglass received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois and both undergraduate and graduate from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Her career in applied social work practice, education, research, and academic administration spans three decades in the United States, Canada, and Ghana and other West African countries. She has focused the majority of her research and teaching on applied gerontology, international social work, health care for the poor and underserved, and the international legal and social issues of refugees and asylum-seekers, generally related to social justice for women and children. Her field research in Ghana began in 1999 and has been continuous to the present time with field data collection in 1999, 2001/02 and 2005. She served as Visiting Scholar at the University of Ghana in 2001-2002, and taught again at the Legon campus in 2005. Currently, she is preparing to be the external evaluator of a two-year active citizenship and civic empowerment social transformation project headed up by a colleagues at Bowling Green State University and Centre for Community and Educational Development for marginalized Blacks women and youth in South Africa.

Louise Moody is the Executive Director of Humewood House Association, anagency providing a range of support services to young mothers in Toronto, including a new supportive housing project in North York to be opened in 2008. A young mother herself and life long learner, Louise is committed to ensuring young mothers have the resources they require to be successful through community-based responsive services.

Ruth Nemzoff is a former assistant minority leader of the New Hampshire Legislature and New Hampshire's first female Deputy Commissioner of Health and Welfare. She is currently a resident Scholar at the Brandeis University Women's Research center and adjunct assistant professor at Bentley College. While a visiting scholar at the Wellesley Center for Research, she wrote an historical analysis of the "Changing Perceptions of Mother of Children with Disabilities." She has also published articles about environmental advertising and women in business and politics. She has served on the boards of the NH United Way, NH Business Development Corporation, Boston's Jewish Family and Children's Services and of Newbury College. She founded a nursery school, a counseling service, and the National Women's Legislative Lobby. Currently, she serves as the chair of the advisory committee, Center for Women and Politics, University of Massachusetts. In 2007, she received the Millicent McIntosh Award for life time contributions to Feminism from Barnard College of Columbia University, Ruth is currently working on a book about parenting adult offspring to be published by Palgrave/McMillan.

Andrea O'Reilly is an Associate Professor in the School of Women's Studies at York University. She is author/editor of twelve books on Mothering/Motherhood: including *Mother Outlaws: Theories and Practices of Empowered Mothering* and *Maternal Theory: Essential Readings*. She has presented her research at 50- plus conferences in more than a dozen countries and was a keynote speaker on the "Feminist Mothering" Panel at the 2006 National Women's Studies conference. O'Reilly is founder and director of the Association for Research on Mothering, (ARM); the first feminist research association on the topic of mothering-motherhood with 500 plus members worldwide. She is founder and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*. In 2006, as director of ARM, she founded Demeter Press, the first feminist press on motherhood. As well, she is founder of the feminist mothers group "Mother Outlaws." In 1998 she was the recipient of the University wide "Teacher of the Year" award at York University. She has given many talks and conducted numerous workshops on motherhood and mothering. She hasbeen interviewed widely, including appearances on "More to Life,""Planet Parent," "Canadian Living Television," "Sex TV," "Next. New. Now, " CBC radio, and *Time Magazin*e.

Ruth Panofsky is Book Review Editor of the *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* and Associate Professor of English at Ryerson University. She teaches and researches in the areas of Canadian literature and culture. Her monograph, *The Force of Vocation: The Literary Career of Adele Wiseman*, was published by University of Manitoba Press in 2006. She is also Poetry Editor of *Parchment: Contemporary Canadian Jewish Writing* and the author of two volumes of poetry: *Laike and Nahum: A Poem in Two Voices* (Inanna Publications, 2007) and *Lifeline* (Guernica Editions, 2001).

Joanna Radbord is a lesbian feminist mother and a lawyer with the firm of Epstein Cole, LLP. Her practice focuses on family law and gay and lesbian equality rights, and she is particularly interested in the legal regulation of lesbian mothering. Joanna was involved with *M. v. H.*, a Supreme Court of Canada decision resulting in the recognition of same-sex relationships in dozens of federal and provincial statutes. She was counsel to a lesbian father in Forrester v. Saliba, which states that transsexuality is irrelevant to a child's best interests. She has acted for the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund in cases involving the feminization of poverty, particularly the spousal support variation case Boston and the retroactive child support case DBS. She was co-counsel to the Ontario and Quebec same-sex couples who won the freedom to marry in Halpern and on the Reference re Same-Sex Marriage before the Supreme Court. Joanna also appeared as counsel in Rutherford, achieving immediate legal recognition for lesbian mothers, and represented the Rutherford families as intervener counsel in *A.A. v. B.B. v. C.C.,* the case allowing recognition of three parents in law.

Lindsey Rock is a 28-year-old mama. She is a full-time Women's Studies/Film Studies double major at the University of Alberta. Her work on the "Discourses of the Girl-Mom" has been presented at several conferences around Canada, including the ARM conference on "Young Mothers" in the spring of 2005. She can be reached at: <Chocobotkid@hotmail.com>.

Sara Ruddick lives in New York City where she taught for many years at New School University. Her most recent collection, *Mother Troubles*, co-edited with

Julia Hanigsberg, a legal theorist who lives in Toronto, considers dilemmas of motherhood for which there are no easy answers. This book represents an early attempt too think about institutions and cultures of motherhood that might serve mothers well. In her first collection, *Working It Out*, published in 1976 and co-edited with Pamela Daniels, women wrote personal essays about their struggles doing their chosen work. This was followed by another collection of personal essays, *Between Women* edited with Carol Ascher and Louise de Salvo published in 1984 and later published in a second edition with an introduction by Carolyn Heilbrun. These essays, taken collectively, continued to tell the story of women's struggles doing work of their own, raised the issue of "objective" knowledge, and explored a then unexplored personal relationship between biographer or critic and their subject. During these years she began to think about mothers' thinking and in 1980, published the essay "Maternal Thinking" and, in 1989, the book *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*, published with a new introduction in 1995. Throughout these years she has written steadily, though not copiously, about war, non-violence, maternal thinking, and the connections and contrasts between them. Two decades after promising that *Maternal Thinking* was at least connected to a politics of peace she is still trying to create transformative understandings of mothering as a resource for non-violent practices, still trying to forge the links that would make thinking maternally a way of thinking against the grain of violence.

Noralou Roos, founding Director of the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, holds a Canada Research Chair and was recently awarded the Order of Canada. Her research focuses on understanding how populations use the health care system and the relative role of medical care and other factors as determinants of health.

Lori Saint-Martin is a professor in the literature department at the Université du Québec à Montréal. She has published two books of short fiction, *Lettre imaginaire à la femme de mon amant* (1991) and *Mon père, la nuit* (1999), French translations of six English-Canadian novels, in collaboration with Paul Gagné, and several books of non-fiction on women's writing in Québec, including *Le nom de la mere: Mères, filles et écriture dans la littérature québécoise au féminin (The Name of the Mother: Mothers, Daughters and Writing in Quebec Women's Fiction*), 1999. Her current research project is on fathers and children in contemporary Québec fiction (supported by SSHRC grant). With Paul Gagné, she has two children, Nicolas, born in 1993, and Anna, born in 1995.

Jane Satterfield is the recipient of a 2007 National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship in Literature. Her poetry collections are Assignation at Vanishing Point (Elixir, 2003) and Shepherdess with an Automatic (WWPH, 2000). Among her awards are three Maryland State Arts Council Grants, Fellowships from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Sewanee Writer's Conference. Chapters of a new nonfiction manuscript, *Daughters of Empire: A Year in Britain and Beyond* have been awarded the Florida Review's Editors' Prize, the John Guyon Award in Literary Nonfiction and the Heekin Foundation's Cuchulain Prize in Rhetoric for the Essay. Her poetry has been anthologized in *Sweeping Beauty: Contemporary Women Poets Do Housework* (University of Iowa Press, 2005) and *White Ink: Poems about Mothers and Mothering* (Demeter, 2007). Her essays and reviews have appeared in *Antioch Review, Massachusetts Review, Crab Orchard Review, Seneca Review, Pleiades* and the *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*.

Barbara Schwartz-Bechet, Associate Professor of Graduate Special Education and Guidance and Counseling at Bowie State University/University System of Maryland, has been, and continues to be, a special education parent advocate for over 20 years. She received her doctorate in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis from Columbia University in New York City. Dr. Schwartz-Bechet began her career with the University of Maryland System over eleven years ago. She has since presented her research at national and international conferences, published several articles and reviews, has received several grants in the area of special education, and has been recognized for her work with the local schools that she regularly collaborates with. Her research interests currently include professional development of special education schools, mothers' advocating for their children with special needs, and athletic opportunities for children with special needs. Newly remarried, she has a wonderful, supportive husband of three years and a fourteen-year-old -son who is a member of the National Junior Honor Society. She and her family are active in outdoor recreational activities, and all three play ice hockey as their primary sport.

Jill Scott joined the Department of German at Queen's University in 2001. She is originally from Winnipeg, where the winters are cold and the people are friendly. She has also lived in several German cities: Tübingen, Meersburg am Bodensee, and Berlin. Her most recent publications include: *Electra After Freud: Myth and Culture* (Cornell University Press, 2005) as well as articles on H. von Hofmannsthal, A. Schnitzler, R. Musil, W. Benjamin, Novalis and H. D. Wagner, H. Cixous, I. Dinesen, G. Gambaro, and D. Coupland.

Justyna Sempruch is an Assistant Professor at Women's Studies, Queen's University. She completed her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of British Columbia, and published on philosophical and socio-political intersections of gender, nationality and psychoanalysis, as well as on literature of cultural diaspora and nomadism. She has co-edited an anthology on *Multiple Marginalities: An Intercultural Dialogue on Gender in Education* (2006: Ulrike Helmer Verlag), and her monograph, *Fantasies of Gender. The Witch in Western Feminist Theory and Literature* is currently in print (2007) with Purdue University Press Series in Comparative Cultural Studies. Justyna is also committed to interdisciplinary approaches, focusing on global or cross-cultural aspects of feminist studies. This specific premise lies at the heart of her current transnational research (2004-2007) on the politics of parenting which addresses the changing concepts of family as well as feminist understanding of women's participation in economy. Within this research scope, she is co-editing her second anthology, *Demystifying the Family/Work Contradiction* which will be published by University of British Columbia Press in 2008.

Susan Silver is an Associate Professor at the Ryerson School of Social Work. She has a Ph.D. in Social Work from Bryn Mawr College, Philadelphia and a Masters of Social Work from the University of Toronto. She has conducted a number of research studies exploring issues of access and inclusion in relation to health care, employment and income security.

Dorsía Smith Silva teaches English at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras. Her most recent articles appear in the anthology Narrating the Past and journal La Torre. She is currently co-editing a book and researching Caribbean women's narratives.

Judith Stadtman Tucker is a writer and activist. She is the founder and editor of the *Mothers Movement Online*, and a member of the NOW Mothers' and Caregivers' Economic Rights Committee. She previously served as co-coordinator for the May 2006 ARM Conference on Caregiving and Carework.

Corinne Wilson is, amongst many other things, a mum, a Ph.D. student, and lecturer at Coventry University, UK. Her main areas of research interest are gender, children and young people, gender and interpersonal violence, and feminist methodology and epistemology. Her current area of research is around the experience of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood in the UK.

Sue Wilson is the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Community Services at Ryerson University and a Professor in the School of Nursing She has a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Toronto and an MBA from York University in Toronto. Her published work has focused on women and the family.

Gina Wong-Wylie, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology at Athabasca University in Alberta, Canada. She is a Registered Psychologist and devotes her counselling practice to focusing on pre and postnatal issues with women. Gina's area of research interest also includes prenatal/perinatal psychology, issues related to mothering, and mental health and maternal wellness issues from feminist and cross-cultural perspectives.

———Call for Papers———

The Association for Research on Mothering (ARM) is thrilled to host our 11th Anniversary conference:

Maternal Health and Well-Being:

***(Physical, Psychological, Social, Economic,
Sexual Political and Spiritual Issues)***

with embedded conference on Young Mothers

October 18-20, 2007

Final call for submissions July 25, 2007

We welcome submissions from scholars, students, activists, artists, mothers and others who work or research in this area. Cross-cultural, historical and comparative work is encouraged. We encourage a variety of types of submissions including academic papers from all disciplines, workshops, creative submissions, performances, storytelling, visual arts and other alternative formats.

Topics can include (but are not limited to):
maternal health promotion and education; globalization and maternal health; maternal health activism; reproductive justice; public policy and maternal health; the environment and maternal health issues; mothers and healthy living; maternal health and challenges within Indigenous communities; mothers with disabilities; mothers with illnesses; HIV/AIDS; breast cancer; mental health issues; postpartum depression; disease prevention; psychiatry; psychology; medicine; pregnancy; childbirth; breastfeeding; young mothers; mothers and aging; work and family balance; maternal nutrition; disordered eating; mothering children with disabilities; violence against mothers and children; sexual abuse, healing through the arts; addictions and recovery; raising healthy children; politics of reproduction; abortion; sterilization; maternal sexuality; maternal health promotion and education; LBGT maternal health issues; menstruation; menopause; mothers and the health professions; representations/images of mothers and health/well-being issues.

.

Confirmed Keynotes include:

•**Elena Gutiérrez,** University of Illinois-Chicago, co-author, *Undivided Rights*

•**Cori Howard,** journalist, author of *Between Interruptions: 30 Writers Tell the Truth About Motherhood*

•**Sheryl Nestel,** OISE/University of Toronto, author of *Obstructed Labour*

•**Michelle Owen,** University of Winnipeg, author of *Dissonant Disabilities*

•**Debora Spar,** Harvard School of Business, author of *The Baby Business*

•**Penny Van Esterik,** York University, author of *Food and Culture*

•**Gina Wong-Wylie,** Campus Alberta Applied Psychology Counselling Initiative (CAAP)

If you are interested in being considered as a presenter, please send a 250 word abstract and a 50 word bio by July 25, 2007 to: arm@yorku.ca.

Association for Research on Mothering
726 Atkinson, York University, 4700 Keele Street
Toronto, ON, Canada M3J 1P3
Telephone: (416) 736-2100 x 60366 Fax: (416) 736-5766
Email: arm@yorku.ca
or visit our website at http://www.yorku.ca/arm

To present at this conference, one must be a member of ARM
http://www.yorku.ca/arm/armmembership.html

Call for Papers

The editorial board is seeking submissions for Vol. 10.1 of the
Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering (ARM)
to be published in Spring/Summer 2008.

The journal will explore the subject:

Carework and Caregiving: Theory and Practice

The journal will explore the topic of Caregiving and Carework from a variety of perspectives and disciplines. Topics can include (but are not limited to):

•Caregiving as work •Care and Social Power •Valuing paid and unpaid carework •Carework: Research objectives and findings •Carework and Social Policy: Analysis, activism and advocacy •Caring for Children: social norms, cultural ideals, feminist discourse, scientific inquiry and expert advice •Framing carework: Defining the process and practice of care •Mothering and the politics of care: Family values, feminism and ethics of care •The globalization of care •The right to care •Legal questions and solutions •The work of the body: Experiences of intimacy and embodiment in caregiving •Writing about care and carework – popular and dissenting discourses •Sharing care: Progress and resistance to fully-shared parenting for gay, lesbian and heterosexual couples.

We welcome submissions from scholars, students, activists, artists, mothers and others who work or research in this area. We also welcome creative reflections such as poetry, short stories, and artwork on the subject.

Submission guidelines:

Articles should be 15 pages (3750 words).
Complete style guide is available on our website at:
http://www.yorku.ca/crm/Journal/guide.htm
Articles should be in WordPerfect or Word and IBM compatible.
**Please include your 50 word biographical note and a
250 word abstract with your submission.

For more information, please contact us at:

Association for Research on Mothering
726 Atkinson, York University,
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON, Canada M3J 1P3
Call us at (416) 736-2100 x 60366,
Email us at: arm@yorku.ca
Or, visit our website: http://www.yorku.ca/crm

Submissions must be received by November 1, 2007.

To submit work to the journal, one must be a member of ARM.

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS…..

Professor Andrea O'Reilly is beginning a three-year SSHRC-funded research project on the topic "Being a Mother in the Academe."

The project will be based on interviews with 50 mothers across Canada, the United States, and Australia. The interview will be approximately one to two hours in length.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please email Andrea O'Reilly <aoreilly@yorku.ca>.

Full details of the study, including ethics protocol are available from Andrea.

———Call for Papers———

The editorial board is seeking submissions for Volume 10.2 of the
Journal of The Association for Research on Mothering (ARM)
to be published in Fall/Winter 2008.

The journal will explore the subject:

Mothers and Daughters

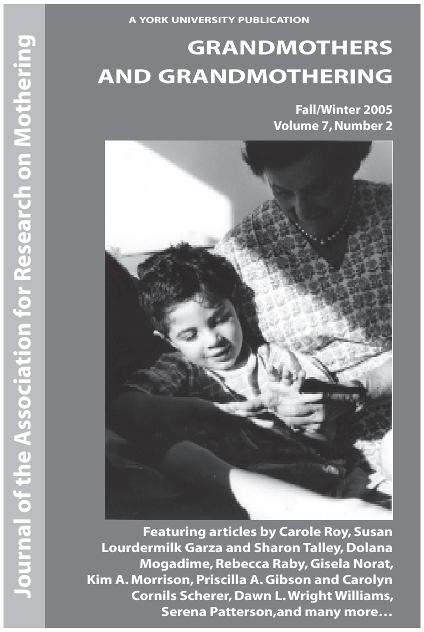
ARM's first conference in 1997 was on the topic of "Mothers and Daughters."As well, this topic was a central theme at ARM's 10th anniversary conference "The Motherlode" in 2006. ARM, however, has yet to publish a journal issue on this important motherhood theme. Consequently, ARM has chosen the topic of "Mothers and Daughters" for the second issue of its 10th volume. We invite submissions on the topic of "Mothers and Daughters" from a variety of perspectives and on a wide range of themes. Submissions from scholars, students, activists, artists, mothers and others who work or research in this area are welcome. Cross-cultural, historical and comparative work is encouraged.

Submission guidelines:
Articles should be 15 pages (3750 words).
Book reviews should be no more than 2 pages (500 words),
Complete style guide is available on our website at:
http://www.yorku.ca/arm/styleguide.html
Articles should be in WordPerfect or Word and IBM compatible.
**Please include your 50 word biographical note and a
250 word abstract with your submission.

For more information, please contact us at:
Association for Research on Mothering
726 Atkinson, York University,
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON, Canada M3J 1P3
Call us at (416) 736-2100 x 60366,
Email us at: arm@yorku.ca
Or visit our website: http://www.yorku.ca/arm

Submissions must be received by May 1, 2008.
To submit work to the journal, one must be a member of ARM.

The *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* proudly presents the publication of Volume 7.2 on the topic of



Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering

A YORK UNIVERSITY PUBLICATION

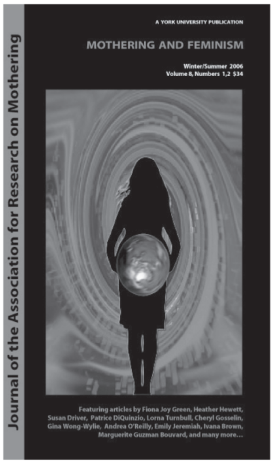
GRANDMOTHERS AND GRANDMOTHERING

Fall/Winter 2005
Volume 7, Number 2

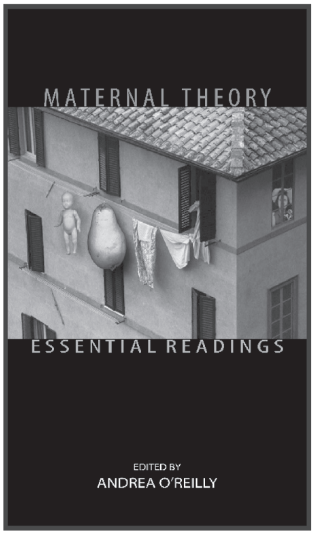
Featuring articles by Carole Roy, Susan Lourdermilk Garza and Sharon Talley, Dolana Mogadime, Rebecca Raby, Gisela Norat, Kim A. Morrison, Priscilla A. Gibson and Carolyn Cornils Scherer, Dawn L. Wright Williams, Serena Patterson,and many more…

Among the 12 articles included in this issue are: "Pesky Raging Grannies: Speaking Truth to Power with Wisdom, Humour and Spunky Actions"; "Teenage Girls and their Grandmothers: Building Connections Across Difference"; "Latina Grandmothers: Spiritual Bridges to Ancestral Lands"; "Telling Our Grandmothers' Stories: Teaching and Celebrating the History of the Women in Our Lives"; "The Social Construction of Success for Grandchildren by African American Grandmothers"; and "'This is So You Know You Have Options': Lesbian Grandmothers and the Mixed Legacies of Nonconformity."

To order your copy, please contact us at:
Association for Research on Mothering
726 Atkinson, York University,
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON, Canada M3J 1P3
Call us at (416) 736-2100 x 60366,
Email: arm@yorku.ca Fax: (416) 736-5766
Website: www.yorku.ca/crm


Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering
A YORK UNIVERSITY PUBLICATION
MOTHERING AND FEMINISM
Winter/Summer 2006
Volume 8, Numbers 1,2 $34
Featuring articles by Fiona Joy Green, Heather Hewett, Susan Driver, Patrice DiQuinzio, Lorna Turnbull, Cheryl Gosselin, Gina Wong-Wylie, Andrea O'Reilly, Emily Jeremiah, Ivana Brown, Marguerite Guzman Bouvard, and many more…


ROCKING THE CRADLE
Thoughts on Motherhood, Feminism and the Possibility of Empowered Mothering
Andrea O'Reilly
"Until Our Hearts Are On the Ground"
Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance and Rebirth
MATERNAL THEORY
ESSENTIAL READINGS
EDITED BY ANDREA O'REILLY
WHITE INK
poems on mothers and motherhood
RISHMA DUNLOP


MATERNAL THEORY
ESSENTIAL READINGS
EDITED BY
ANDREA O'REILLY

"Until Our Hearts Are On the Ground:"

Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance and Rebirth

edited by Dawn Memee Lavell-Harvard & Jeanette Corbiere Lavell

"Until Our Hearts Are On the Ground"
Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance and Rebirth
D. MEMEE LAVELL-HARVARD AND JEANNETTE CORBIERE LAVELL, EDITORS

THIS LANDMARK COLLECTION

is comprised of sixteen chapters by writers including Kim Anderson, Joanne Arnott, Cheryl Gosselin, Roxanne Harde, and Rosalyn Ing.

The collection features four sections:

*"Entrance into the Womb: Becoming an Aboriginal Mother"
*"Conceptions and Practices of Aboriginal Mothering"
*"'Big Mother': The Role of the State in the Performance of Mothering"
*"Literary Representations of Aboriginal Mothering"

Ms. Lavell-Harvard is currently President of the Ontario Native Women's Association, a full time student currently completing her PhD in Education at UWO, and is the first Aboriginal person ever to receive a Trudeau Scholarship. Ms. Harvard is also a full time mother of two little girls, Autumn Sky (8 years) and Eva Lillie (two years). Ms. Lavell-Harvard's research addresses the epidemic of low academic achievement and high drop out rates among Aboriginal populations in Canada.

Jeanette Corbiere Lavell is Ojibway First Nation, and member of the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island. In 1970 her marriage resulted in the loss of her rights to membership to her Reserve under the Indian Act. This initiated a three year pursuit to ensure that the rights of Indian women were equal to the rights of Indian men in the Indian Act. Jeannette is one of the primary and founding Board members of: Ontario Native Women's Organization (ONWA) and Indian Rights for Indian Women Native Women's Organization of Canada. Currently, Jeannette teaches Fine Arts and Parenting at Wasse-Abin Wikwemikong High School.

OCTOBER 2006
250 pages $29.95

ORDER FORM

Association for Research on Mothering (ARM)
Room 726, Atkinson College, York University
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3
Tel: (416) 736-2100 x 60366 Email: arm@yorku.ca

Lavell/Lavell-Harvard ***Until Our Hearts...***
_________@$29.95pb _____________

Postage and Handling (see below) _____________

Total (all orders must be prepaid) _____________

Name ______________________________________

Address ____________________________________

____

City ______________________ Prov _____________

Postal Code ____________ Country ______________

Phone _______________Email __________________

PAY BY CREDIT CARD
VISA ______ MASTERCARD_____

Card # ____

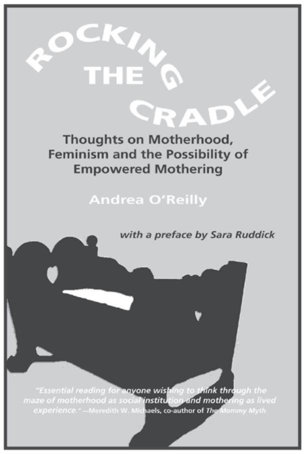
Expiry Date ____________________

Signature ______________________________________

(fax form to 416-736-5766 OR
send form and cheque / money order through regular mail)

Postage and Handling: in Canada/U.S add $5.00 for one book, and $1.00 for each additional book.
*Overseas orders add $12.00 for one book, and $5.00 for each additional book.

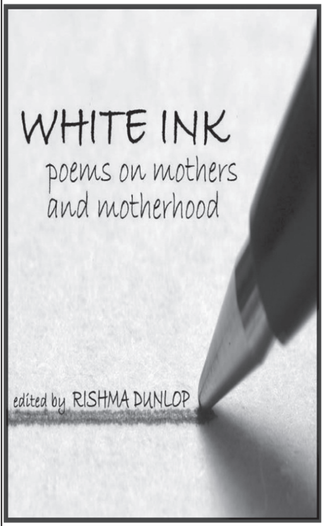
http://www.yorku.ca/arm


ROCKING THE CRADLE
Thoughts on Motherhood, Feminism and the Possibility of Empowered Mothering
Andrea O'Reilly
with a preface by Sara Ruddick
"Essential reading for anyone wishing to think through the maze of motherhood as social institution and mothering as lived experience." —Meredith W. Michaels, co-author of The Mommy Myth

20% off all pre-orders! **August 2007**

WHITE INK: Poems on Mothers and Motherhood

edited by Rishma Dunlop



August 2007 250 pp
$29.95 (CAD/USD)

***"White Ink",* is borrowed from Hélène Cixous' metaphor for mother's milk, a metaphor that grounds women's writing in the female body.**

White Ink is a rare and unique anthology of poems on the theme of mothers. Beginning with a comprehensive critical introduction by editor and poet Rishma Dunlop, this book explores the changing role of the mother in contemporary society by bringing together diverse poetic voices – female, male, Canadian and international.

Poets include:

Lorna Crozier, Patrick Lane, Samuel Menashe, Marilyn Hacker, Alicia Ostriker, Eavan Boland, Adrienne Rich, Daphne Marlatt, Lorri Neilsen, Susan Holbrook, Anne Fisher-Wirth, Sharon Olds, Mahmoud Darwish, Annie Finch, John Barton, John Terpstra, Priscila Uppal, Christopher Doda, Judith Arcana, and Ann Compton.

Rishma Dunlop is the winner of the 2003 Emily Dickinson Award. She is the author of three books of poetry: *Metropolis* (Mansfield Press, 2005), *Reading Like a Girl* (Black Moss Press, 2004) and *The Body of My Garden* (Mansfield Press, 2002). Rishma is also co-editor of *Red Silk: An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women Poets* (Mansfield Press, 2004), and her work has appeared in numerous journals and magazines. She is a professor of literature and education at York University in Toronto, Canada.

ORDER FORM

Association for Research on Mothering (ARM)
Room 726, Atkinson College, York University
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3
Tel: (416) 736-2100 x 60366 Email: arm@yorku.ca

Dunlop.. *White Ink*
_________@~~$29.95~~pb $23.95 ____________

Postage and Handling (see below) ____________

Total (all orders must be prepaid) ____________

Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

____

City ____________________ Prov ____________

Postal Code ____________ Country ______________

Phone ______________Email __________________

PAY BY CREDIT CARD

VISA _____ MASTERCARD_____

Card # ____________________________________

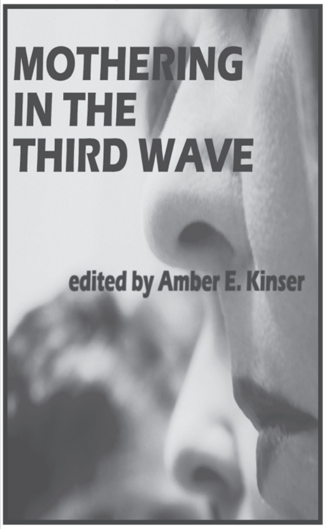
Expiry Date ___________________

Signature ____________________________________

(fax form to 416-736-5766 OR
send form and cheque / money order through regular mail)

Postage and Handling: in Canada/U.S add $5.00 for one book, and $1.00 for each additional book.
*Overseas orders add $12.00 for one book, and $5.00 for each additional book.

http://www.yorku.ca/arm


MOTHERING IN THE THIRD WAVE
edited by Amber E. Kinser

20% off all preorders! **December 2007**

Queer Parenting

edited by Rachel Epstein

Queer Parenting

edited by Rachel Epstein

December 2007
250 pages $29.95

This long overdue anthology reflects current thinking, research, debates, issues, experiences and concerns related to LGBTT2IQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, 2-spirit, intersex and queer) parenting and raising children and makes an invaluable addition to the important, developing body of work and discussion of queer parenting.

Queer Parenting, begins to reflect the enormous diversity that exists across queer parenting experiences and raises interesting and possibly provocative questions about the implications of queer-identified people raising children. This collection moves discussions of queer parenting from the defensive position it has historically been placed in (i.e. "proving" that the children are okay) to embrace the broad complexity of issues that concern queer parents and their children.

The collection features chapters on topics including: queer parenting and adoption; historical perspectives on queer parenting; parenting and legal/policy change; planning parenthood; valuing queer families; international perspectives on the experience of queer parenting; multiracial queer parenting; LGBTT2IQ family experiences in early childhood education; family and spirituality; children and disclosure of queer identities; queer families in pop culture; negotiating stepfamilies; representations of queer parenting in literature, and queer parenting and activism.

Rachel Epstein has been doing research, writing, education and community development on issues related to queer parenting for 15 years. She works as a mediator with queer families, and, since 2001, has coordinated the LGBT Parenting Network (FSA Toronto/Sherbourne Health Centre.) She has facilitated the Dykes Planning Tykes course since 1997 and was part of developing Daddies & Papas 2B, a course for gay men considering parenthood, in collaboration with the 519 Church St. Community Centre. Rachel is also a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education, York University. She is fortunate to co-parent a fabulous 14-year-old girl, and is stepparent to an equally fabulous 21-year-old boy.

ORDER FORM

Association for Research on Mothering (ARM)
Room 726, Atkinson College, York University
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3
Tel: (416) 736-2100 x 60366 Email: arm@yorku.ca

Name ____________________________________

Address ____________________________________

____

City ______________________ Prov ____________

Postal Code _____________ Country _______________

Phone _______________Email __________________

Epstein ***Queer Parenting ...***
_________@ (~~$29.95) pb~~ **$23.95** _____________

Postage and Handling (see below) _____________

Total (all orders must be prepaid) _____________

PAY BY CREDIT CARD

VISA _____ MASTERCARD_____

Card # _______________________________________

Expiry Date ____________________

Signature ______________________________________

(fax form to 416-736-5766 OR
send form and cheque / money order through regular mail)

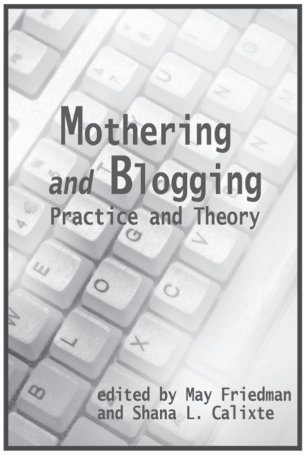
Postage and Handling: in Canada/U.S add $5.00 for one book, and $1.00 for each additional book.
*Overseas orders add $12.00 for one book, and $5.00 for each additional book.

http://www.yorku.ca/arm


MOTHER KNOWS BEST
talking back to the "experts"
edited by Jessica Nathanson and Laura C. Tuley

20% discount on all pre-orders! **Spring 2008**

MOTHERING AND BLOGGING:
Practice and Theory
edited by May Friedman and Shana L. Calixte



Spring 2008
220 pages $29.95

THIS IMPORTANT, TIMELY COLLECTION considers how critical mothering and writing about motherhood have, in the last few years, begun to engage with a new form of communication. All over the Internet, mommy bloggers are commenting on the radical act of being mothers and women withi a world hostile to both of these identities. What are some of the questions posed by this new context for motherhood? What are the implications for sites of marginalization and diversity within the blogosphere?

Shana L. Calixte, is a PhD Candidate in the School of Women's Studies a York University in Toronto, Canada. Her current academic work is focused on the history of Caribbean Girl Guide associations and HIV/AIDS education. Her recent publications include a co-authored chapter entitled "Liberal, Socialist, and Radical Feminism: An Introduction to Three Theories About Women's Oppression and Socia Change" (Feminist issues: Race, class, and sexuality, 2004), and "Things Which Aren't To Be Given Names: Afro-Caribbean and Diasporic Negotiations of Same Gender Desire and Sexual Relations" (Canadian woman studies/ Les cahiers de la femme, 2005). Shana lives with her family and their new son Dré in Toronto.

May Friedman lives in Toronto with her partner and two children. May combines social work with graduate studies and, of course, mothering. One of her most cherished activities is sitting on the sofa reading mommyblogs, an activity she hopes to put to work in the context of her forthcoming dissertation.

ORDER FORM

Association for Research on Mothering (ARM)
Room 726, Atkinson College, York University
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3
Tel: (416) 736-2100 x 60366 Email: arm@yorku.ca

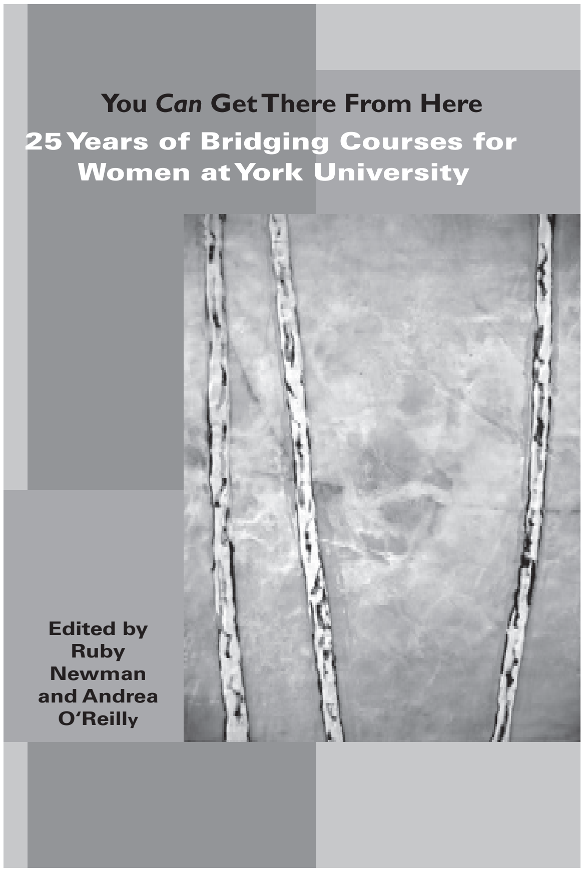
Friedman/Calixte. *Mothering and Blogging*
_________@ $23.95 ____________
Postage and Handling (see below) ____________
Total (all orders must be prepaid) ____________

Name ____________________________________
Address ____________________________________
____
City ______________________ Prov ____________
Postal Code ____________ Country ______________
Phone _______________Email __________________

PAY BY CREDIT CARD
VISA _____ MASTERCARD_____
Card # ______________________________________
Expiry Date ___________________
Signature ______________________________________
(fax form to 416-736-5766 OR
send form and cheque / money order through regular mail)

Postage and Handling: in Canada/U.S add $5.00 for one book, and $1.00 for each additional book.
*Overseas orders add $12.00 for one book, and $5.00 for each additional book.

http://www.yorku.ca/arm


You *Can* Get There From Here
25 Years of Bridging Courses for Women at York University
Edited by Ruby Newman and Andrea O'Reilly

In 1981, York University initiated a unique and innovative preuniversity "Bridging" Program designed and taught for women. Over two thousand women have graduated from this program, many of them going on to pursue post-graduate and graduate degrees. This book celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of this program. The book is divided into three sections. The first section looks at the history of the program, while the second section examines the pedagogy and curriculum. In the third section, thirty-six graduates recall their classroom experiences and the paths they have traveled since completing the program. This volume bears witness to the profound and lasting difference education makes in the lives of women.

"In a series of passionate personal reflections by instructors and students, Ruby Newman and Andrea O'Reilly trace the origin of the Bridging Program and detail the transformative nature of this experience for both instructors and students. The courage, enthusiasm and dedication of these women shine through their narratives."
—**NANCY MANDELL**, Associate Professor and Chair, Sociology Department, Faculty of Arts, York University

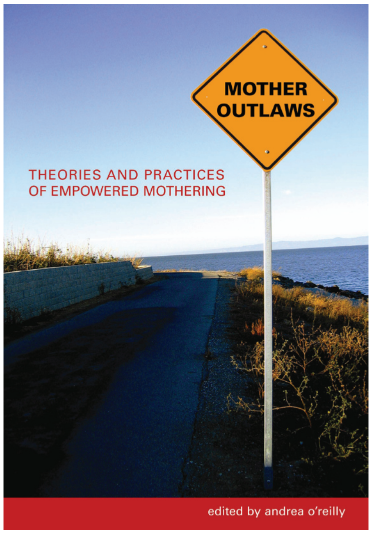
"Much to tell, much to teach, a remarkable book recording women's transformative work for women in a higher educational setting."
—**DOROTHY E. SMITH**, Professor Emerita, University of Toronto and author of *The Everday World as Problematic and Mothering for Schooling*

TO ORDER:

School of Women's Studies
c/o 206M Founders College, York University,
4700 Keele Street,
Toronto, ON, Canada M3J 1P3
Tel: (416) 736-2100 x 77818
Fax: (416) 650-3900
Email: cirvin@yorku.ca

Mother Outlaws: Theories and Practices of Empowered Mothering

Edited by Andrea O'Reilly



Andrea O'Reilly, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the School of Women's Studies at York University. She is co-editor/editor of five books on Motherhood: *Redefining Motherhood: Changing Identities and Patterns* (Second Story Press, 1998); *Mothers and Daughters: Connection, Empowerment and Transformation* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); *Mothers and Sons: Feminism, Masculinity and the Struggle to Raise our Sons* (Routledge Press, 2001); *From Motherhood to Mothering: The Legacy of Adrienne Rich's* Of Woman Born (SUNY, 2004); *Mother Matters: Mothering as Discourse and Practice* (ARM Press, 2004); and author of *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart* (SUNY, 2004). O'Reilly is founding president of the Association for Research on Mothering (ARM); the first feminist association on the topic of mothering-motherhood with more than 600 members worldwide, and is founding and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*. Andrea and her common-law spouse of twenty-three years are the parents of three children.

Adrienne Rich in *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* distinguished between two meanings of motherhood, one superimposed on the other: the *potential* relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children; and the *institution* which aims at ensuring that that potential and all women shall remain under male control. The term motherhood refers to the patriarchal institution of motherhood which is male-defined and controlled and is deeply oppressive to women, while the word mothering refers to women's experiences of mothering which are female-defined and centred and potentially empowering to women. The reality of oppressive motherhood thus must be distinguished from the possibility or potentiality of empowered mothering. While most feminist scholars now distinguish mothering from motherhood and recognize that the former is not inherently oppressive, empowered mothering has not been theorized in feminist scholarship.

The theory and practice of empowered mothering recognizes that both mothers and children benefit when the mother lives her life, and practices mothering, from a position of agency, authority, authenticity and autonomy. Secondly, this new perspective, in emphasizing maternal authority and ascribing agency to mothers and value to motherwork, defines motherhood as a political site wherein mother can affect social change through feminist child rearing and in the world at large through political-social activism. This collection examines how mothers seek to imagine and implement a theory and practice of mothering that is *empowering* to women as opposed to oppressive, under five sections: Feminist Mothering, Lesbian Mothering, African American Mothering, Mothers and Daughters, Mothers and Sons.

May 2004 0-88961-446-6 pb 454 pp C$49.95 US$39.95
7 x 9 Women's Press

Distributed by Georgetown Terminal Warehouses
To Order:
(tel)1-866-870-2775 (fax) 1-905-873-6170 or orders@gtwcanada.com

For additional information, or to request an examination copy of this title for course consideration, please contact:
Cheryl Steele
Marketing and Sales Associate
CSPI/Women's Press, 80 Bloor Street West, Suite 801
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2V6
csteele@cspi.org 416-929-2774 ext 18

New from **SUNY Press**

TONI MORRISON AND MOTHERHOOD

A Politics of the Heart

ANDREA O'REILLY

229 pages • $23.95 pb • 0-7914-6076-2 • $84.50 hc • 0-7914-6075-4

Mothering is a central issue for feminist theory, and motherhood is also a persistent presence in the work of Toni Morrison. Examining Morrison's novels, essays, speeches, and interviews, Andrea O'Reilly illustrates how Morrison builds upon black women's experiences of and perspectives on motherhood to develop a view of black motherhood that is, in terms of both maternal identity and role, radically different from motherhood as practiced and prescribed in the dominant culture. Motherhood, in Morrison's view, is fundamentally and profoundly an act of resistance, essential and integral to black women's fight against racism (and sexism) and their ability to achieve well-being for themselves and their culture. The power of motherhood and the empowerment of mothering are what make possible the better world we seek for ourselves and for our children. This, argues O'Reilly, is Morrison's maternal theory—a politics of the heart.

"Motherhood is critically important as a recurring theme in Toni Morrison's oeuvre and within black feminist and feminist scholarship. An in-depth analysis of this central concern is necessary in order to explore the complex disjunction between Morrison's interviews, which praise black mothering, and the fiction, which presents mothers in various destructive and self-destructive modes. Kudos to Andrea O'Reilly for illuminating Morrison's 'maternal standpoint' and helping readers and critics understand this difficult terrain. *Toni Morrison and Motherhood* is also valuable as a resource that addresses and synthesizes a huge body of secondary literature."

—Nancy Gerber, author of *Portrait of the Mother-Artist: Class and Creativity in Contemporary American Fiction*

ORDER FROM
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS
c/o CUP Services • P.O. Box 6525 • Ithaca, NY 14851
(to order by mail)
1-800-666-2211 / 607-277-2211 (to order by phone)
1-800-688-2877 (to order by fax)
orderbook@cupserv.org (to order by e-mail) www.sunypress.edu (to order online)

New from the Association for Research on Mothering

Mother Matters
Motherhood as Discourse and Practice

Edited by Andrea O'Reilly

258 pages • $19.95 pb • 1-55014-436-7

This volume, playing upon the double entendre of the word *Matter*s, examines the substance and significance of motherhood. As motherhood is the subject *matter* of the volume, the volume similarly examines how motherhood *matters*—is of importance—to women and society more generally. In considering these *matters* the volume examines motherhood both as it is represented and lived. In particular, the volume looks at how the contemporary ideology of good motherhood is represented in diverse popular discourses—film, popular literature, children's fiction, magazines, judicial rulings, and parenting books. Likewise it examines how the messy and muddled realities of motherhood are camouflaged—masked—by the normative discourse of motherhood and how, in turn, practices of mothering—in all of their complexity and diversity—challenge the denial of such difficulty and difference in the normative discourse. The eighteen chapters in this volume were selected from the first ten issues of *The Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*. *Mother Matters* was published to celebrate the publication of ARM's tenth journal issue and to affirm that, indeed, Mothers and Mothering do Matter!

"An excellent collection that illustrates both the variety of exciting approaches contemporary feminist scholars are bringing to the study of motherhood, and the very complex relationship of ideology and women's experiences of motherhood."

—Patrice DiQuinzio, Director of Women's Studies, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania

ORDER FROM
ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH ON MOTHERING
Room 726, Atkinson College, York University,
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3
Tel: (416) 736-2100 x 60366 Email: arm@yorku.ca

Motherhood
Power and Oppression

Edited by Marie Porter,
Patricia Short and Andrea O'Reilly

ISBN 0-88961-454-7
C$34.95 US$27.95
pb 300pp 6 x 9
Women's Press, Toronto

In feminism, the institution of mothering/motherhood has been a highly contested area in how it relates to the oppression of women. As Adrienne Rich articulated in her classic 1976 book *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, although motherhood as an institution is a male-defined site of oppression, women's own experiences of mothering can nonetheless be a source of power. This volume examines four locations wherein motherhood is simultaneously experienced as a site of oppression and of power: embodiment, representation, practice and separation. *Motherhood* includes psychological, historical, sociological, literary and cultural approaches to inquiry and a wide range of disciplinary perspectives—qualitative, quantitative, corporeal, legal, religious, fictional, mythological, dramatic and action research. This rich collection not only covers a wide range of subject matter but also illustrates ways of *doing* feminist research and practice.

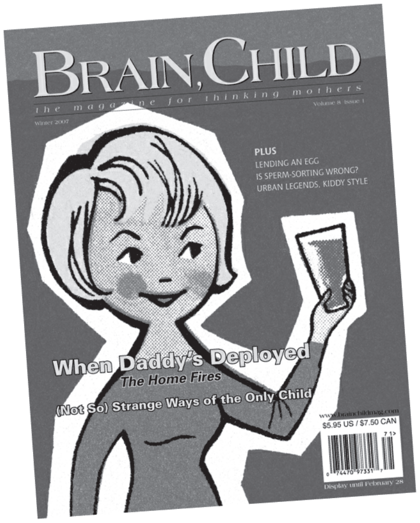
Contents:
Introduction by Marie Porter and Andrea O'Reilly; **Section I: Embodiment**—1) The Kindest Cut? The Caesarean Section as Turning Point, Australia 1880–1900 by Lisa Featherstone; 2) Narrating Breasts: Constructions Of Contemporary Motherhood(s) In Women's Breastfeeding Stories by Susanne Gannon and Babette Müller–Rockstroh; 3) Scandalous Practices and Political Performances: Breastfeeding in the City by Alison Bartlett. **Section II: Representation**—5) *'Pax Materna'* or Mothers at War with

the Empire? Canadian and Australian Perspectives on the Motherhood Debate in the British Empire During the Great War by Karin Ikas; 6) Mothering and Stress Discourses: A Deconstruction of the Interrelationship of Discourses on Mothering and Stress by Erika Horwitz and Bonita C. Long; 7) A Lesser Woman? Fictional Representations of the Childless Woman by Enza Gandolfo; 8) (Mis) Conceptions: The Paradox of Maternal Power and Loss in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Paradise* by Andrea O'Reilly; 9) Human and Divine Mothers in Hinduism by Tamara Ditrich. **Section III: Practices**—10) Resistance Narratives From Mothers of Married Daughters in Singapore by Hing Ai Yun; 11) Survival Narratives of Ethiopian Jewish Mothers and Daughters in Israel by Ruby Newman; 12) Down Under Power? Australian Mothering Experiences in the 1950s, 60s by Marie Porter; 13) Mothers at Home: Oppressed or Oppressors or Victims of False Dichotomies? by Elizabeth Reid Boyd; 14) Mothers at the Margins: Singular Identities and Survival by Patricia Short. **Section IV: Separation**—15) Naming Maternal Alienation by Anne Morris; 16) Women of Courage: The Non–Custodial Mother by Julie Thacker; 17) Abandoning Mothers and Their Children by Anita Pavlovic, Audrey Mullender and Rosemary Aris; 18) When Eve Left The Garden: A Modern Tale About Mothers Who Leave Their Families by Petra Büskens; 19) Conclusion by Patricia Short.

About the Editors:
Marie Porter is a lecturer in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, University of Queensland, Australia. **Patricia Short** is a lecturer in the School of Social Science, University of Queensland, Australia. **Dr. Andrea O'Reilly** is Director of the Association for Research on Mothering (ARM) and Associate Professor of Women's Studies, York University. She is the author of *Mother Outlaws* (Women's Press, 2004).

To order contact:
Georgetown Terminal Warehouse Limited
34 Armstrong Avenue
Georgetown, ON L7G 4R9
1.866.870.CSPI(2774) Fax: 905.873.6170 orders@gtwcanada.com

For additional information, or to request a copy of this book for the purposes of course consideration, please contact:
Cheryl Steele, Marketing & Sales Associate
CSPI/Women's Press, 180 Bloor Street West, ste 801
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2V6
tel: 416-929-2774 x 18 csteele@cspi.org


BRAIN,CHILD
the magazine for thinking mothers
PLUS
LENDING AN EGG
IS SPERM-SORTING WRONG?
URBAN LEGENDS, KIDDY STYLE
When Daddy's Deployed
The Home Fires
(Not So) Strange Ways of the Only Child
$5.95 US / $7.50 CAN


LITERARY
Mama
Reading for the Maternally Inclined
Edited by Andrea J. Buchanan & Amy Hudock

mamazine.com
: : if mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy! : :

mama
ZINE.com

features
columns
poetry
"mama likes" blog
gifts
subscribe free

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

International Feminist Journal of Politics

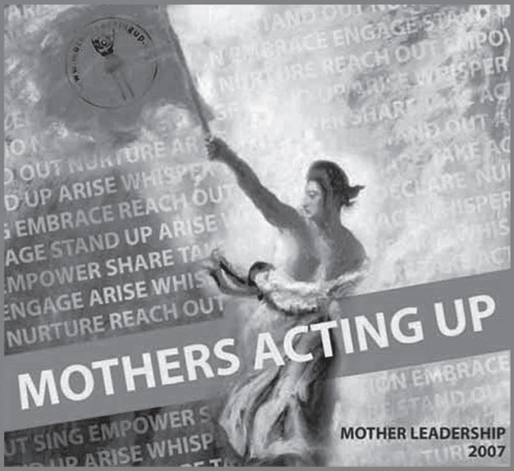
International Feminist Journal of Politics is a unique cross-cultural and international forum to foster debate and dialogue at the intersection of international relations, politics and women's studies. Developed by a team of leading feminist scholars, this journal brings together some of the most influential figures in the field to build a global critical community of writers and readers. This journal features research on women, gender relations and sexuality from the perspectives of: International relations; political theory; globalization studies; international political economy; comparative politics; peace research; international law; devlopment studies; political geography; cultural studies

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
2007- Volume 9 (4 issues per year)
Print ISSN: 1461-6742; Online ISSN: 1468-4470
Institutional (print + online): £332; $547
Institutional Online: £315; $519
Personal: £79; $124

eupdates Taylor & Francis Group Register your email address at **www.informaworld.com/eupdates** to receive information on books, journals and other news within your areas of interest.

For further information, please contact Customer Services at either:
Routledge Customer Services, T&F Informa UK Ltd, Sheepen Place, Colcheste,
Essex, CO3 3LP, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 20 7017 5544 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7017 5198
Email:tf.enquiries@tfinforma.com.Website:www.informaworld.com/journals Routledge Customer Services, Taylor & Francis Inc, 325 Chestnut Street, 8th Floor, Philadelphia, P19106, USA. Tel: +1 800 354 1420 (toll-free calls from within the US) or +1 215 625 8900 (calls from overseas) Fax: +1 215 625 2940
Email:customerservice@taylorandfrancis.com.Website:www.informaworld.com

View an online sample at:
www.informaworld.com/ifjp


MOTHERS ACTING UP
MOTHER LEADERSHIP
2007


HARPER LEE
TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD
MARGARET ATWOOD
THE HANDMAID'S TALE

Association for Research on Mothering

ARM 2007/08 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please indicate your membership option
(one year and two year memberships/subscriptions are available):

Full ARM Membership **includes: subscription to the** ***Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*** **•members directory •listserve •reduced conference fees**

☐ individual $ 85.00 Cdn/US*
☐ 2 yrs/ind. $160.00 Cdn/US*
☐ institution $120.00 Cdn/US*
☐ 2 yrs/inst. $230.00 Cdn/US*

Sustaining Full ARM Membership**: as a sustaining member, your extra contribution will help ensure that ARM, a non-profit organization, can continue to meet its operating costs. 2007/08 sustaining members will receive a free back issue.**

☐ 1 yr individual/institutional sustaining membership $150.00 Cdn/US*
☐ 2 yrs individual/institutional sustaining membership $275.00 Cdn/US*

Basic ARM Membership **includes: •members directory •listserve •reduced conference fees**

☐ individual $60.00 Cdn/US*
☐ 2 yrs/ind. $110.00 Cdn/US*
☐ student/unwaged $45.00 Cdn/US*
☐ 2 yrs/student/unwaged $80.00 Cdn/US*

Subscription to the ***Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*****: (a biannual publication)**

☐ individual $34.00 Cdn/US*
☐ 2 yrs/ind. $62.00 Cdn/US*
☐ institution $80.00 Cdn/US*
☐ 2 yrs/inst. $150.00 Cdn/US*

**Overseas residents must add $12.00 in U.S. funds to cover mailing costs.*

Available back issues

Vol. 2 No. 1 Mothers and Sons	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 2 No. 2 Mothering in the African Diaspora	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 3 No. 1 Becoming a Mother	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 3 No. 2 Mothering, Fathering, and … Peace	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 4 No. 1 Mothering, Sex and Sexuality	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 4 No. 2 Mothering and Literature	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 5 No. 1 Mothering, Popular Culture & the Arts	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 5 No. 2 Mothering in the Academy	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 6 No. 1 Mothering, Law, Politics & Public Policy	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 6 No. 2 Mothering & Work/Mothering as Work	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*

Association for Research on Mothering

Vol. 7 No. 1 Mothering, Religion & Spirituality	☐ $15.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 7 No. 2 Grandmothers and Grandmothering	☐ $18.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 8 Nos. 1,2 Mothering and Feminism	☐ $34.00 Cdn/US*
Vol. 9 No. 1 Young Mothers	☐ $18.00 Cdn/US*

Please add $5.00 per issue to cover shipping costs in Canada, and $12.00 per issue for orders to the US or overseas.

Please make cheque payable to ARM in either Cdn. funds, U.S. funds, or international money orders. Visa/Mastercard credit card payments are also accepted on our website: www.yorku.ca/arm. Important note: ARM membership must be renewed annually in January.

Please indicate the following:

☐ **2007 ARM Membership** ☐ **2008 ARM Membership**

Name____
Address____
____
Telephone____________________**Fax**________________
—
Email____
Ten key words to describe interests in the area of mothering/ motherhood:_______________________________________
____
____
____
Permission to include in membership directory: ☐ yes ☐ no
Would you like to be added to ARM listserve?: ☐ yes ☐ no

For credit card payment: I, ___________________________,
authorize a debit on my card for the amount of ____________
Visa/Mastercard no. ________________________ **Exp.** _____
Name on card_______________________________________
Signature _____________________________ **Date** _________

To join ARM please send this completed form and payment to the address indicated on the back of this page!

Mail in your membership form today!
Just fold here and tape together.

Stamp

Association for Research on Mothering
726 Atkinson College,
York University
4700 Keele Street,
Toronto ON M3J 1P3
Telephone: (416) 736-2100 x 60366
Fax: (416) 736-5766
Email: arm@yorku.ca
Website: www.yorku.ca/arm