

Media Representations of Adolescent Pregnancy: The Problem with Choice

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Abstract

Although teenage pregnancy has become more socially acceptable than in the past, pregnant teenagers continue to be stigmatized. This paper examines some of the ways in which two widely circulated media representations of adolescent pregnancy, *Papa Don't Preach* and *Juno*, both challenge and perpetuate the stigma.

Résumé

Quoique la grossesse chez les adolescentes soit devenue plus acceptable socialement que dans le passé, les adolescentes enceintes continuent d'être stigmatisées. Cet article examine quelques façons dont deux représentations largement circulées par les médias de la grossesse chez les adolescentes, *Papa Don't Preach* et *Juno*, les deux mettent en question et perpétuent le stigmate.

Introduction

Late in 2007 a movie was released that caused quite a stir, reminding me of a similar event a generation ago, the 1986 release of Madonna's music video *Papa Don't Preach*. The movie and the music video were both progressive and contentious at the time of their release and both stimulated lively public discussions about teenage sexuality, pregnancy, and motherhood. By the spring of 2008, it seemed that most of my friends had seen the movie and were encouraging me to do the same. *Juno* had hit a nerve. Many women, it seemed, could relate. Some of them had experienced teenage pregnancy or, if they hadn't, were likely to have experienced that lesser nightmare: the pregnancy scare. And these women really admired Juno, the title character, for being smart, sassy, and in control and they appreciated the way she broke down negative stereotypes of teen moms as irresponsible, maladjusted, and selfish. Juno might have made the mistake of getting pregnant too young and in less than ideal circumstances but she was back in the driver's seat, making her own choices and doing the right thing. She was a role model. And this is where I became uncomfortable.

Why, you might ask, would a feminist scholar feel uneasy about the popularity of a young, female fictional character who exercises agency and authority over her life? Does this not represent a feminist utopia for girlhood? Ideally, perhaps it does. But this storyline is built upon fairly narrow expectations of girls and of girlhood and overlooks some of the ways that girls' agency is undermined. Because the mass media play a critical role in shaping culture, media representations of adolescent pregnancy have profound effects on pregnant and mothering teenagers.

In this paper I delineate some of the ways that Juno both challenges and reinforces stereotypes of pregnant teenagers and some possible implications of this. I

compare and contrast *Juno* to an earlier and, I argue, more progressive iconic media image of adolescent pregnancy: the music video *Papa Don't Preach* by Madonna (1986). Responses to adolescent pregnancy are complex and overlapping; they differ depending on the marital status, race, class, and even the age of the girl. Consistent with the subjects of these media texts, my analysis focuses on the experiences of unmarried, White, working-class, school-aged girls, though I explore some of the ways that stigmatization of these girls is relevant in the lives of girls and women who do not identify with this group. I examine the dominant discourse as it is applied to adolescent girls in the context of their sexuality, arguing that the choices discourse sets narrow the parameters for girls' socially acceptable behaviour and stigmatizes those who venture outside those boundaries. I contend that pregnant adolescents are evaluated according to White, middle-class standards; that they have faced and continue to face structural challenges for which they are individually held responsible; and that there is a political need for feminist scholars to collaborate with young mothers in an effort to expose this ideology.

Discourse

According to Teun van Dijk, power, domination, and social inequalities are constructed, reproduced, and contested through the text and talk, or discourse, which takes place within any number of social and political institutions including, for example, medical, religious, educational, and, importantly, media institutions. The power of these dominant groups may or may not be contested and the extent to which they remain uncontested will determine to what degree their ideology is integrated into the culture, either through law or convention. When any idea or way of thinking about any subject, for example, teenage pregnancy, becomes the most commonly accepted view, it is known as the dominant, or hegemonic, form (van Dijk 2001). Users of dominant discourses limit their own contestation by setting the parameters for what can be discussed (Cohn 2007; Crichton 2003). Regardless of the

issue, the mass media usually present the dominant discourse and, by contrasting it to a nonsensical position, convince most media consumers that the dominant discourse simply makes sense (Brickell 2000). As long as the dominant discourse positions adolescent pregnancy as not an option it requires a great shift in thinking to consider it an option. Motherhood is never considered a legitimate option for Juno. Once her father reminds her that she cannot even remember to give her younger sister her "breathing meds," the thought of Juno taking care of a child seems foolhardy. Not becoming a mother, in this example through placing her baby for adoption, becomes the only outcome that makes sense to most people in the audience.

Literary texts, including media representations, are an important source of information about society, not because they reveal the truth about human nature but because they "provide examples of various discourses in circulation" (Gavey 1996, 55). While discourses are always subject to contestation and change, our experiences and the meanings that we make of them are mediated by and filtered through the discourses most familiar to us, usually, though not always, the culturally dominant discourses. Media representations are never value-free, they do not simply describe events but actively construct evaluative versions of events. Culture shapes media and media shapes culture. This has important social and political implications (Potter and Wetherell 1987, 6). As an example, Carmen Luke believes that "the texts and artefacts of mainstream culture construct motherhood and childhood...as a powerful normalizing discipline with and against alternative and feminist constructs" (Luke 1996, 184).

"Normal" is defined by what is projected as well as by what is silenced. In her study of mainstream parenting magazines, Luke found that "parenting magazines present only one version of motherhood...which largely excludes women and children of color, single mothers, poor mothers, fathers, and non heterosexual family formations" (1996, 184). The magazines' images and text suggest that children's

well-being is highly dependent on being cared for by a married heterosexual couple within a nuclear family (Luke 1996, 183). Angela McRobbie writes about the media portrayal of the "yummy mummies," wealthy celebrities such as Victoria Beckham whose maternity clothing comes from upscale boutiques and whose children are cared for, largely, by nannies. She argues that the "yummy mummy" is positioned against the largely absent image of the "pramface," that is, "the face of impoverished, unkempt, and slovenly maternity," restigmatizing single motherhood and acting as a deterrent. According to McRobbie, "yummy mummies" signify a new moral economy within which being poor is just one more stigma (2006).

If normal parents are White, wealthy, heterosexual, and beautiful, then every other parent is not normal. Pregnant teenagers live with the implications of this on an on-going basis, from interpersonal to institutional encounters, from nasty comments heard on the bus to inappropriate educational requirements (Kaufman 1999). Shanti Kulkarni found that adolescent mothers are aware of and constantly respond to the stigma. She speculates that a number of the young women she interviewed stayed in abusive relationships precisely to oppose the negative stereotypes; if she is in a committed relationship, she cannot be called a slut (Kulkarni 2007, 16-17). Despite the efforts of the feminist movement, patriarchal feminine ideals remain foundational to media representations of women. These ideals remain largely uncontested and are even reinforced by our families and communities, impacting girls' and women's sense of self (2007, 20).

Kathryn Addelson argues that responsibility, as distinct from blame, takes into account all points of view, the insiders' and the outsiders'. She suggests that there is a need to consider girls' standpoint on the issue of choice: that is, the context of their decisions about sexuality, pregnancy, and motherhood. Currently, we are hearing primarily from outsiders, the we who have solutions for them (Wong and Checkland 1999, 174-75). Although women who have experienced teenage pregnancy are ideally

storied to disrupt the dominant discourse, they are rarely well-situated to do so. Feminist scholarship, by virtue of academic privilege, has an important role to play in amplifying girls' voices contesting the dominant discourse through, for example, reconstructing adoption "as a 'real' choice" (Caragata 1999, 113), revealing hidden dimensions of girls' sexuality (Tolman 2005), or showing that adolescent pregnancy, rather than disrupting girls' development, can be a healthy route to adulthood (Leadbeater and Way 2001, 3-4).

Although teenage mothers are engaged in creating counter hegemonic discourses concerning adolescent sexual and reproductive rights (O'Reilly 2007; *girlmoms.com*; *teenmoms.page*) their voices continue to be marginalized. In a search of the Canadian News Index from 1980 to 1992, Dierdre Kelly found that 3% of articles about teen mothers were produced by young moms (2000, 81). When given an opportunity to speak, teen moms' narratives are often positioned in ways that serve the dominant discourse. Judi Kidger observed that adolescent mothers who worked as sex educators in high schools told stories of pregnancy and mothering in ways that enabled them "to reinvent themselves as both good girls and good mothers at one and the same time" (2005, 492). They are not unique in this. There is ample evidence, in both academic studies and the mass media, of young mothers positioning themselves against the implicit stereotype of the irresponsible pregnant teenager who has made bad choices (Gulli 2008; Kirkman *et al.* 2001; Kidger 2005; Kulkarni 2007; Luneau 2008; Whelan 1990). Importantly, these cultural products, which play a crucial role in perpetuating negative stereotypes of teen pregnancy and parenting, are informed by academic inquiry (Reekie 1998, 13). Van Dijk emphasizes that having the power to influence institutional texts is, itself, a "'symbolic' resource" available to only a few. Critical discourse analysts, therefore, recognizing the privileged position they occupy with their ability to contribute to the public discourse, work with and for marginalized groups to expose and remediate

social inequalities (van Dijk 2001, 355).

Choices

Teenage pregnancy and parenting have always been part of the human experience but they have not always been perceived, as they are now, as crises or even as problems. While it is not immediately clear what causes public concern about teen pregnancy, it is clear that this phenomenon is not related to the numbers of adolescent pregnancies. Teenage pregnancy rates in Canada are 50% lower than in the United States and have seen a decline since at least 1974 with the Canadian pregnancy rates for 15- to 19-year olds dropping from 53.7 per 1,000 in 1974 to 38.2 per 1,000 in 2000 (Kelly 1996, 422; McKay 2004). Despite these declining numbers Canadian scholars assert that social stigma about teenage mothers continues to be quite prevalent (Kaufman 1999; Kelly 1996, 422; Wong and Checkland 1999, xviii-xix). So what is behind this consternation?

If culture and ideology are, indeed, inscribed on women's bodies and if women's bodies are also sites of resistance to such ideologies (Darling-Wolf 2009, 251-57), adolescent pregnancy provides a unique window into historically- and culturally-specific social structures. In her discussion of adolescent sexuality, pregnancy, and abortion Rosalind Petchesky writes, "getting pregnant...has no intrinsic social or political meaning; it receives its meaning from the historical and political context in which it occurs and the circumstances...of the woman involved" (Petchesky 1990, 207). A feminist position suggests that teenage sexuality and pregnancy represent challenges to contemporary North American patriarchal constructs of gender, family, and gender-specific class and race (1990). *Papa Don't Preach* illustrates this well: the character's White, female, working-class, cultural minority identity is not challenged but, rather, underscored by her unmarried teenage pregnancy. Juno, on the other hand, is also a White working-class girl and placing her baby for adoption offers her the possibility of upward mobility while assuring her child an upper-middle-class standing. We witness

shifts in the father-daughter relationships as the pregnancies in both *Juno* and *Papa Don't Preach* challenge paternal authority. The daughter in *Papa Don't Preach* appears to have successfully negotiated a more adult status than *Juno* but both fathers have been forced to relinquish some control, both in terms of the daughters' sexuality and with regards to their pregnancy outcomes.

While she acknowledges that she may be oversimplifying, Deborah Rhode writes that opposition to teen pregnancy falls into two ideological camps. Conservatives view teen pregnancy as a personal moral issue, which leads to the consideration of other moral issues, such as abortion and contraception, an attack on patriarchal family hierarchy, and, citing welfare costs, an issue of financial dependence on the state (Rhode 1993). The liberal position, which gained momentum in the 1970s, contests the conservative perspective. Liberal ideology points to health and socioeconomic issues, arguing that teen pregnancy reduces the mother's academic opportunities thereby limiting her financial independence and life choices. Conservatives believe that teenagers should not be having sex, liberals believe that teenagers should not be having babies. Their proposed solutions follow logically, though both assessments of the problem are flawed (1993, 312-16).

Both the liberal and conservative discourses conflate teenage pregnancy with unplanned pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy with unwanted pregnancy. But, of course, this is not always the case. Young women become pregnant for a variety of reasons as do older women (Phoenix 1991, 87). Both discourses predict financial hardship but research regarding maternal outcomes for adolescent women is equivocal, to say the least. Recent studies suggest that the predicted dire outcomes for the women and their children have been overstated; in fact, many fare quite well. Over their lifespan, young mothers' lives tend to follow a similar pattern to those of their peers who delayed childbearing. Class standing, rather than age at first childbirth, appears to be a primary determinant of women's life outcomes (Kelly 1999, 56-59; Phoenix 1991, 89-90). The

challenges faced by adolescent mothers tend to be similar to their peers who delayed mothering, though they are often complicated by the specific stigma which is reserved for the younger mothers (Furstenberg *et al.* 1987, 145-46).

Despite their different approaches, conservative and liberal discourses end up converging, centering on the issue of choice, their differences simply reflected in the particular choice with which they are concerned. Conservatives consider sex outside of heterosexual marriage to be immoral and support movements such as abstinence-only sex education and chastity pledges. Liberals, who tend to be more accepting of teenage sexual activity, still consider adolescent mothering unacceptable (Rhode 1993, 312-16) and tend to support, for example, sex education that emphasizes healthy choices. It appears that liberals are able to suspend judgments about individuals' morality only to judge the outcomes of their behaviour.

Both conservative and liberal discourses are evoked in the same breath when the "stupid slut" label is applied to pregnant and mothering adolescents as it is currently, primarily by other adolescents. The slut label is applied automatically because the young woman has had sex; she has transgressed the conservative moral code. But if it is discovered that she had sex without using contraception the "stupid" qualifier is added because she has apparently ignored the liberal admonition to make healthy choices (Kelly 2000, 27-31).

But girls really are in a double bind. Using contraception can also result in the slut label. A girl who plans to have sex is unfeminine; according to the romance narrative, sex is supposed to "just happen" (Beres 2009). Regardless of whether contraception is available, she could find herself in a situation where the choice is between consenting to sex or not consenting and experiencing some form of violence, sexual or otherwise (Gavey 2005). The amount of power she will have in relation to her boyfriend will depend on their age, race, and class hierarchies as well as other factors, such as each of the partners' perceived

attractiveness and popularity. If the girl becomes pregnant she will likely be labelled a stupid slut because of her decision to have sex without using contraception (Kelly 2000, 25-31; Tolman 2005). If her subsequent decisions are bad she may well be coerced into making what are considered good decisions. The choices discourse becomes a vehicle for exercising even more control over people who appear unable or unwilling to make good choices, cloaking social control mechanisms in a tone of neutrality. The moral inferences are just below the surface.

The "Good Girl Life Plan"

Kathryn Addelson's "Good Girl Life Plan" (1994, 115; 1999, 87) outlines one dominant, possibly *the* dominant, discourse concerning contemporary expectations of North American girlhood. The "Good Girl Life Plan" represents the projected linear expectations for White, middle class, North American girls: that they get an education before they commit to a relationship; that they marry a man before having sex; and that they have babies and grandchildren within a heterosexual, patriarchal family structure. Although the sequential steps of the "Good Girl Life Plan" might vary according to race and class (Addelson in Wong and Checkland 1999, 157), non-White, working-class girls' lives tend to be evaluated in comparison to this unstated standard: whatever privilege or status a girl may enjoy is compromised by her "poor choices" or non-compliance with the plan.

Addelson's "Career of the Unwed Mother" (1994, 118; 1999, 87) represents the possible missteps on the way to a proper future. These missteps, such as unmarried pregnancy or motherhood, which characterize bad girls and bad mothers are also, inevitably, decision points for adolescent girls. Addelson refers to these choices as "elevators" which can lift girls back onto the "Good Girl Life Plan." For example, if she becomes pregnant outside marriage, a girl can correct that misstep by having an abortion or by placing her child for adoption. In this way, she can return to school or courtship and carry out the life plan according to the cultural prescription. Juno considers first abortion and then

adoption in order to get back onto the "Plan."

These charts were first published in 1994 but, with some slight changes, the general trajectory remains relevant. In particular, as the age at puberty slowly drops and the age at marriage continues to rise, there is no longer a widely held expectation that sex be contained within marriage although, again, this varies by cultural background and class standing (Kelly 2000, 52). The new cultural prescription requires that when they have sex good girls do so within committed, loving, heterosexual relationships (Tanenbaum 1999; Tolman 2005).

Clearly, even the revised Good Girl imperative is oppressive. First of all, it negates girls' desires and plans for their lives. And secondly, the liberal ideology of choice, which is fundamental to the "Plan," rests upon an assumption of equality. For many pregnant teenagers, this is where the logic breaks down. An ideology of choice may seem liberating but, in fact, girls do not always have equality of opportunity in sexual and reproductive decision making (Checkland and Wong 1999, 180-81). As Dierdre Kelly makes clear, "The good choices discourse is particularly insidious because it works to obscure unequal power relations based on age, gender, class, and race" (2000, 61). The widely held assumption that all women have meaningful choice in matters of sexuality and reproduction, for example, elides structural inequalities and holds them individually responsible for such things as access to contraception, abortion, decent housing, quality childcare, employment and education. The more marginalized she is, by virtue of her race, class, age, or sexuality, the less real choice she will be able to exercise, and the more stigma she will face. The Good Girl Life Plan and the choices discourse support and reinforce each other, stigmatizing girls with their emphasis on individual responsibility.

Setting the parameters for what can be considered the gendered discourse of women's sexual and reproductive choice makes it difficult to see those spaces where women do not have choice or have only constrained choice. Carefully reflecting on the discourse can lead us to discover fissures

therein (Plummer 1995).

Reflections

A cultural commitment to an ideology of choice with regards to issues of sexuality is reflected in media engagement with adolescent pregnancy and mothering. When the mass media portray adolescent mothers, they generally depict images of the morally defective teen mom. Two images that offer some challenge to the hegemonic discourse are *Papa Don't Preach* and *Juno*. In *Papa Don't Preach*, Madonna plays a White, Italian-American, unmarried, working-class, pregnant teenager. Her girlfriends tell her she is too young to be a mother and that she should "give it up" for adoption. Madonna decides to keep her baby and appeals to her father for advice and support. In *Juno* the main character is a sixteen-year old White, working-class high school student who also discovers that she is unintentionally pregnant. After considering an abortion, she decides to place the baby for adoption and, by searching the wanted ads, finds a wealthy, White, married, heterosexual, early middle-age couple to adopt her baby.

Conservatives have been ambivalent about these two texts. On the one hand, they applaud both young women because neither had an abortion. Agreeing with this assessment, liberals and feminists have accused both texts of promoting an anti-abortion message. On the other hand, liberals and conservatives alike have criticized the two texts for glorifying teenage mothering (Dullea 1986; Garcia 1986; Gulli 2008; Luneau 2008; Miller 2008). And, according to Rhode's breakdown, liberals would support Juno placing her baby for adoption though they would not support the girl in *Papa Don't Preach* keeping her baby.

In terms of an alternate reading, *Juno* offers some laudable moments of feminist resistance. One such moment occurs when Juno points out the sexual double standard to her boyfriend, Paulie, who faces no ostracism for being an adolescent father. Juno yells at him, "You don't have to have the evidence under your sweater!" Another important moment comes when Juno's stepmother loses her temper with the ultrasound

technician after she suggests that teenagers are ill-equipped for mothering. While this scene does acknowledge motherhood as a legitimate choice for adolescents, it implies that this is only if they can be good mothers. Unfortunately, the point is further undermined by the stepmother's use of racist language.

The scene where Juno and Paulie have intercourse presents Juno as a strong teenage girl in a committed, loving, heterosexual relationship (read: feminine) who is in charge of, and making choices about, her sexuality (read: liberated). When they both acknowledge that he has "wanted this for a long time" (*Juno* 2007) I was left wondering whether she felt any pressure to comply with Paulie's desire for sex or any worry about what might happen if she did not. This scene reinforces another dominant narrative, that teenage pregnancy is the result of two teenagers fumbling around in the dark. This stereotype is contradicted by recent research which shows that teenage girls are less likely to be impregnated by teenage boys than they are to be impregnated by boys and men who are sometimes much older than they are (Males 1992 & 1996; Manlove *et al.* 2006; Taylor *et al.*, 1999).

Although audiences were left with a sense that Juno is a powerful character, she is often portrayed as very childish: her language use and appearance are juvenile; she states that she decides against abortion because the clinic "smelled"; she chooses the Loring's from the wanted ads because, in their photograph, "they are beautiful"; and she explores the Loring's bathroom in a manner typical of a young child. Even if she eventually proves herself responsible she is most certainly incapable. Ultimately, this movie promotes the choices discourse and the Good Girl Life Plan. Sex is a bad choice, adoption is a good choice. Neither she nor the people around her seem to question the White, middle-class, North American expectations for her life. On at least two occasions Juno's aberrant pregnancy is contrasted to the "typical" pregnancies of "our moms and our teachers"; the anguish and grief most women feel about placing a child for adoption are glossed over. By the end of the movie, Juno hops on her bike with her

guitar on her back, to go hang out with her boyfriend. She is absolutely unencumbered by a child and is decidedly back on the Good Girl Life Plan.

Compare *Juno* to *Papa Don't Preach*

Simply *making* this video broke the rules; at the time adolescent pregnancy was not a discussion topic for general consumption. But it was timely. In the late 1970s and early 1980s in the United States and somewhat later in Canada abortion was becoming more accessible to teenagers and, for girls who carried their pregnancies to term, adoption was becoming increasingly rare (Maticka-Tynedale 2008; Moore and Rosenthal 1994; Petchesky 1990; Petrie 1998; Solinger 2005). As we have come to expect, Madonna's character is not a good girl. She says to her father, "I'm not a baby"; she embraces her sexuality at the same time as she challenges parental authority. She acknowledges two pregnancy options, adoption and motherhood, and challenges the patriarchal script that her pregnancy is poorly timed. There is some contradiction here, though. The camera shot of the elderly couple on the ferry and her plan to marry her boyfriend could be seen as referents to the Good Girl Life Plan.

Importantly, though, *Juno* explores class issues in ways that *Papa Don't Preach* does not. The Loring's class status affords them the privilege of considering adopting a child and Vanessa Loring's White yuppie status marks her as a legitimate mother even after she becomes single. But I wonder, would these stories have been as compelling had the girls been Black, Asian, or Aboriginal? Given the historical and on-going devaluation of non-White mothers and non-White babies in North America, I suspect not (Kelly 2000; Roberts 2006, 446-52). Frank Furstenberg *et al.* (1987) point out that the obligation to make good choices appears to be premised on the belief that middle-class White girls have so much more to lose in terms of educational, career, and social opportunities by early parenting than do their non-White, working-class peers (Kelly 2000, 44-45; Luker 1996, 154). Even so, the "Good Girl" rules apply without exception. Although choices are

differentially constrained, blame is delegated to everyone, and those whose choices are most constrained are often those who experience the most stigma.

Papa Don't Preach challenged the choices discourse and offered teenage girls some new possibilities, that they could enjoy being sexual and keep their babies if they wanted. In comparison, *Juno*, while also challenging negative stereotypes of pregnant teenagers, is disappointing in terms of the narrow range of options it presents. *Juno* and *Papa Don't Preach* rely heavily on the choices discourse; both girls have apparently made some bad choices and become pregnant. The consequences they face serve as cautionary tales to other girls about the importance of making good decisions. Both scripts depict adolescent sexuality as dangerous in that sex leads to pregnancy and pregnancy is a crisis. Additionally, both texts emphasize the romance narrative. The heterosexual love interest is prominent in both stories; in *Papa Don't Preach* the young woman's relationship with her boyfriend is a significant factor in her decision to keep the baby. And, in the end, both girls get their men.

Conclusion

Adolescent pregnancy is an emotional issue; the pregnant teenage body challenges patriarchal family structure, gender roles, sexuality, and class structure. Because the mass media play a critical role in shaping culture, media images of adolescent pregnancy have profound effects on the lives of pregnant and mothering teenagers and their families. The choices discourse and the Good Girl Life Plan support and reinforce each other, setting narrow parameters for girls' lives, stigmatizing those who venture outside those boundaries, and eliding structural inequalities with their emphases on individual responsibility. Any debate about choice assumes that young women have the agency required to make such choices. But, clearly, structural constraints limit girls' ability to make any choices, good or otherwise (Rhode 1993, 324). Added to this burden is the reality that "the individual being condemned for having made bad choices is

often female and poor, a member of a racialized 'caste,' or both, and that the standard of assessment reflects a White, middle-class ideal" (Kelly 2000, 62).

Like all discourses, the choices discourse is subject to on-going contestation. *Juno* and *Papa Don't Preach* challenge the choices discourse, presenting a more empowering picture of adolescent pregnancy than that of deviant other. But, considering that the mass media provide insights into the dominant discourses, it appears that girls are more constrained by the Good Girl Life Plan today than their mothers were in the 1980s. As young mothers, alongside feminist scholars, continue to experience incremental success in challenging the healthy choices discourse it is important to remember that simply deconstructing this ideology can be liberating. Exposing the dominant discourse opens a space for girls and women to explore alternate discourses, providing new contexts within which to place our experiences and, rather than assigning blame, consider our collective responsibilities.

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