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Smoking Room:
Cigarettes and the Creation of Community among Girls who Smoke

by

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ABSTRACT

Five adolescent girls who smoke were interviewed using a feminist/critical research methodology. It was found that smoking must be considered in the context of the growing up process for these adolescent girls. Smoking is central to their social lives. Because smoking facilitates the formation and ongoing life of the relationship communities they create, girls who smoke find it difficult to quit while they are part of such a group. The disintegration of a social group appears to offer a window of opportunity for smoking girls to quit. Connections were made between the activities of the tobacco industry and the everyday lives of girls who smoke. Implications for practice and further research were explored.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A Story about Girls and Cigarettes

It is a summer day in 1996 and I am sitting in my stepdaughter's bright, plant-filled apartment, watching her put groceries away and listening to her telling me how determined she is to take better care of herself. We've just been shopping and bought bags full of vegetables, fruits, and other nutritious foods to help her keep this resolution. A ray of sunshine pierces a sparkling clean window and falls across one of her two cats as he lies stretched out on the couch, surrounded by colourful pillows that match walls and trim that my creative, fashion conscious stepdaughter has painted herself. Every inch of this eclectic, cheerful room attests to her care and attention to detail. It is an eloquent testament to her determined independence and a symbol of her long struggle to move from childhood to adulthood.

She is apologetically smoking a cigarette. This remarkable nineteen year old[1] woman has smoked since the age of fourteen when she was struggling with suicidal thoughts and episodes of rage. She is very much aware of the health risks she is taking by smoking. When she discovered she was pregnant at the age of fifteen, she quit immediately and did not start again until she had given her healthy baby up for adoption. Since that time she has tried to quit countless times, using different strategies, without success: she talks a lot about how bad the habit is for her, how unpleasant the side effects are, and about the next time she intends to quit. Her difficulty in quitting an expensive habit she knows is destructive to her health is certainly not due to lack of personal strength: in the years since she first began to smoke, my stepdaughter has made astounding positive changes in her life. As determined as she is lovely, she has worked hard to overcome the effects of low self esteem and extreme anxiety about life in general.

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[1] This section was first written in 1996. Since then, Victoria has struggled to stop smoking many times - and has occasionally succeeded for months at a time before succumbing once again to the habit.

I think back to a time when I myself was fourteen. At that age I was too afraid of the wrath of a very strict father to ever seriously consider smoking, but I kept an almost full package of Player's hidden in my underwear drawer. I had found the cigarettes walking home from school one day and can still remember the sense of incredible luck that I felt as I opened the box and saw the rows of fragrant cigarettes still sealed in the foil wrapper inside. Carefully I carried this illicit treasure home. Often were the times I would close my bedroom door, take a cigarette from its hiding place, and with a feeling of guilty pleasure, practice holding it in various nonchalant poses in front of a mirror. In my mind I was transformed into a female James Dean: tough, sexy, slightly dangerous and full of unlimited promise. There was incredible power in these cigarettes: danger and rebellion beckoned.

The Puzzle

I watch my stepdaughter now as she moves about the kitchen. She pauses to take a long drag on the cigarette, her head on a self-conscious angle, lashes lowered, lips pursed in a half smile and her hair falling in a shining blonde curtain across half of her face. There is an intimate relationship here between smoker and cigarette that I, as a non-smoker, can only watch and wonder at. What is it that causes young women, at increasingly younger ages and in greater numbers than boys, to take up smoking? Despite the widespread public knowledge of the health risks of smoking and despite the fact that young women today seem to be more health conscious than in previous generations, they are embracing cigarettes more rapidly than any other group of Canadians.

There is a puzzle here, a contradiction. I see it in my stepdaughter as she simultaneously 'hates being a smoker' and loves smoking cigarettes. I see it in my past self as a struggling adolescent with a strong attraction to the forbidden. I see it in the groups of confident-seeming young women and girls with cigarettes in their hands that gather near schools, on the streets, outside of shopping malls. And I see it in the fact that, despite

being the leading killer of Canadian women, smoking still seems to be largely a non-issue

for the women's movement and for social workers. I want to understand what it is about

smoking that makes it so important in the lives of many young girls today.

I am puzzled by the contradictions, but at the same time I also have an idea that I

understand something about what makes cigarettes so attractive to Canadian girls. This

hunch is based on the knowledge that growing up female in this society is a very

confusing, often painful and largely unequal experience. Despite 30 years of the latest wave

of feminism, girls are still subject to dominant notions of heterosexual femininity. Popular

rhetoric aside, the shining dream of equality for women has slowly faded from our grasp.

Girls are now expected to become adult women who will successfully balance demanding

careers with traditional female roles, demeanours and largely, expectations. This means that

the feelings of low self esteem, lack of power, and uncertainty that were common among

girls of my generation are potentially stronger for girls of today's generation.

I am convinced that cigarettes, on the other hand, still symbolize the same things

that they did in my day: the power, strength, confidence and courage of traditional

masculinity. These traits are personified by the cleft-chinned 'Marlboro man' and the cute

but sensual 'Joe Camel'[2] who, tellingly, regularly appear in women's magazines.

Paradoxically, these masculine traits are seen as enhancing femininity by adding a dash of

deviance, boldness and mystique to the 'sassy' women who dare to smoke. Thus, although

girls may feel they gain some male power by proxy when they smoke, they may also

believe that they become closer to realizing the illusive ideal femininity that they are

expected to measure up to. Indeed, this message is very clear in the cigarette advertisements

for women's brands of cigarettes. For example, the Virginia Slims advertisements which,

for years, attempted to seduce women into a sense of quasi-feminist power and freedom

with the well-known slogan: "You've come a long way, baby", have recently switched to

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[2] As a result of research proving that the 'Joe Camel' cartoon character appealed to and influenced children
as young as three years old (Botvin, Goldberg, Botvin & Dusenbury, 1993) R.J. Reynolds, the maker of
Camel cigarettes, retired the character permanently in July of 1997 (Thompson, 1997).

the slogan: "It's a woman thing" with images and dialogue depicting radiant young women interpreting their mysterious femininity to clueless but helplessly smitten men. The feminist pose is gone in these advertisements, replaced by a return to the 'new' feminine mystique[3].

It is my hunch that the myths of power, rebellion, femininity and masculinity that are sold in these cigarette advertisements have much to do with the fact that young Canadian women are smoking in increasing numbers and at ever younger ages, whether or not the girls themselves ever actually see those cigarette advertisements. In other words, my sense is that I can begin to unravel this mystery when I pay attention to the intersection between the tobacco industry and the complex realities of the lives of girls growing toward adulthood in today's world.

Who am I? - What I bring to the Research

Like the girls I talked to in this project, I am a white woman. I was brought up in a working class immigrant family and neighbourhood in Vancouver. My parents were both immigrants from Germany and my first language was German. I am a feminist and passionate about justice and power issues. I see the power imbalances and poverty that result from systemic inequities as the underlying cause of many social issues. As a feminist and a woman, women's issues are particularly close to my heart. I have developed an analysis of addictions issues which includes the assumption that the world of addictions is embedded in the daily experiences of ordinary people but that its roots lie in the patriarchal structure of society. This background and belief system are what I bring to the research.

Because I value and respect women and girls, I approached this project assuming that girls who smoke are not just hapless pawns of a powerful transnational industry, but rather that they have considerable expertise and skill in terms of navigating and interpreting

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[3] The term "the feminine mystique" was coined by Betty Friedan in her pioneering 1963 feminist manifesto of the same name. In the book she identified a campaign begun after the second world war to get women out of the labour force and back into the home by convincing them they could achieve true happiness only through marriage and motherhood (and the attendant consumerism). She called this ideology "the feminine mystique".

their own life-worlds. I did not assume that cigarettes would be a negative presence in their lives, but remained open to exploring all the ways that smoking could be part of their lived experience. Nevertheless, I also believe that addictions of all kinds "are political. Addictions keep oppressed people oppressed" (Johnson, 1991, p. 39). For this reason I was prepared to explore the possibility that the tobacco industry deliberately targets and recruits teenage girl smokers in ways which the girls themselves may not be aware of.

I am not a smoker myself and, aside from some experimental smoking during high school, I have never been a smoker. Nevertheless, I have had personal connections with smoking throughout my life in the form of friends, relatives and colleagues who have smoked and, more recently, a partner and step-daughter who smoke. I am aware that the fact that I do not smoke had some detrimental effects on my research, in that the girls I interviewed were initially quite distrustful of me and assumed that I would be attempting to influence them to quit. Nevertheless, I believe we were able to overcome this period of initial distrust as our relationships developed and the girls realized that I was not judging them. At the same time, I believe that the fact that I am not a smoker was also helpful to my research, in that I was able to explore the world of smoking girls without having smoking experience of my own to cloud my perceptions.

Developing an Interest in Girls and Cigarettes

My scholarly interest in smoking began in 1993 when I did a policy analysis of the CRD Clean Air Bylaw in Victoria as part of a pre-requisite course for the School of Social Work. My research for this analysis turned up the fact that female service workers are a high risk and relatively powerless group affected by second hand smoke in their work environments. I was surprised by the severity of the health risks posed both by smoking and exposure to second hand smoke. My paper (Tonn, 1995) was widely read within the CRD and the Medical Health Officer of the time, Dr. Sean Peck, consulted with me and found my feminist research approach intriguing and helpful.

In 1995 I was part of the inaugural session of a Social Work course exploring substance use from a feminist perspective. During the first class, as we introduced ourselves and our experiences with substance use, I was struck by the fact that none of the 20 or so mainly female students mentioned smoking. Yet I later discovered that about a third of us were current smokers, others were past smokers, and almost all had a close friend or family member who smoked. This began my curiousity about why smoking does not seem to be considered a 'serious' addiction on the same level as other addictions despite the devastation it causes in terms of health effects. In the course of researching a term paper on women and smoking for the class I was astounded to find that girls in North America are currently the only growing group of smokers. Again I wondered why, given this fact and the preponderance of health risks from smoking affecting females, smoking was not a major feminist or social work issue. During this time I had watched my own teenage step-daughter first take up smoking and then, several years later, struggle with trying to quit. All of these experiences culminated in my interest in girls who smoke.

Purpose and Research Questions

Few studies to date explore the issue of smoking among girls. A comprehensive literature search turned up very few articles specifically about adolescent female smokers, while many of those about adolescent smokers did not differentiate between boys and girls. The purpose of this research was to unravel a part of this complex puzzle and to allow the voices of the girls themselves to be heard. Using an emerging feminist/critical research methodology I tried to see and describe the life-worlds of these girls as through their own eyes. Because the issue of smoking among girls is an important but largely neglected one, it is crucial for more research to be done in this area. Lorraine Greaves, a feminist researcher who has been instrumental in raising awareness of the issue of women's smoking in Canada, asserts that the

> urgency of developing a greater understanding of women's smoking cannot be overstated. The full blossoming of the potential global female smoking epidemic is

only now beginning, with alarming projections of massive female morbidity and mortality. The meaning of women's smoking is connected to many other aspects of women's lives. Understanding these connections could inform more effective efforts at prevention and cessation of women's smoking. (1996, p. 136)

It is my hope that this study will to contribute to a better understanding of the issue of

smoking among girls and inform cessation efforts.

Research questions for this study were:

1) What does smoking accomplish in the lives of girls who smoke?

2) How do girls themselves experience smoking in the context of their lives?

3) What are the factors which influence girls' smoking behaviour?

The thesis continues as follows. In Chapter Two I outline the conceptual

framework that informed this study. Chapter Three presents a discussion of the

methodology used in this research, while Chapter Four introduces the girls whose stories

appear in this paper. In Chapter Five I explore how smoking fits into the context of the

growing up process for these adolescent girls and how the tobacco industry influences that

process. Chapter Six presents my argument that smoking is central to the creation of

community among these girls. Finally, I conclude in Chapter Seven by exploring my

contention that the disintegration of social smoking groups presents a window of

opportunity for these girls to quit smoking and implications for policy, practice and further

research.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

> We have yet to develop egalitarian and inclusive theories that respond to the diversity of women's situations, their cultural and personal experiences of dependency, or the role of addiction in the structure of their lives. (Alexander, 1997, pp. 25, 26)

I began this project with the belief that the issue of adolescent girls' smoking is a complex one. I felt that I needed to a have a good understanding not only of tobacco literature and addiction, but also of the lived experience of adolescent and pre-adolescent girls in Canada today in order to begin to grasp this issue. However, because there is still relatively little in the tobacco research literature about girls, and only slightly more that is specifically about women and tobacco[4]. I have had to depend a fair amount on research about adult women and addictions in general in order to formulate a conceptual framework that makes some sense of the issue of teenage girls' smoking.

I begin my research at the most beaten part of the path by considering some of the health risks associated with smoking and some of the statistics about women's and adolescent girls' smoking. I also analyze the dichotomy of smoking as an empowering/ destructive function in the lives of women who learn to take on traditional female caregiving roles. Next I explore the addictions literature and explicate a feminist theory of addiction that acknowledges the political biases in addictions research and theory, takes into account historical patterns of female substance misuse, makes connections between addiction and oppression, and explores the significance of the concepts *deviance, pleasure* and *dependency* as applied to female smokers. Finally I examine the realities of girls' lives today as they move from the world of children into the world of adults and conclude with a gender analysis and a discussion of the discourse of femininity.

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[4] According to Jacobson (1981) the first report on smoking and health by a US Surgeon General, in 1964, addressed the issue of women smokers almost exclusively in relation to preliminary findings on the effects of smoking on the unborn child. "Women continued to be ignored in the Surgeon General's reports on smoking until 1973, when a section on smoking in pregnancy appeared. The problems of the woman smoker herself were not publicly recognised until after the publication of the 1979 report. This was the first of its kind to review some of the evidence for sex differences in smoking trends" (pp. 75-6).

Health Risks for Female Smokers

Nicotine is now considered to be the most addictive of all chemical drugs (Cunningham, 1996). According to Hoffman, nicotine contains both stimulant and sedative properties at the same time, is six to eight times more addictive than alcohol, and has a higher relapse rate than among heroin users (as cited in Kasl, 1992, p. 204). In addition, nicotine is the most deadly of addictions: whereas alcohol is linked to 100,000 deaths a year in the United States, nicotine is linked to about 1,000 deaths a day, or 356,000 deaths a year (Kilbourne, 1991). Thus, nicotine is potentially 3.5 times more lethal than alcohol. Cunningham reports that cigarette smoke has been found to contain over 4000 chemicals, at least 43 of which have been proven carcinogenic in humans and animals and others of which are toxic. In Canada, more than 45,000 people die smoking related deaths each year. This yearly total "exceeds the 42,000 Canadian deaths in all the years of World War II. The total also exceeds the number of annual deaths from car accidents, suicide, murder, AIDS, and illicit drug use **combined** [emphasis in the original]" (p. 8). Smoking has become the leading killer of women in Canada, with more than 15,000 women dying every year from smoking related diseases (Greaves, 1990).

In comparison to men, women are more likely to start smoking earlier and less likely to quit (Kaplan & Weiler, 1997). "Moreover, even women who do stop seem to return to cigarettes more rapidly than do men who have undergone the same course [of treatment]" (Jacobson, 1981, p. 15). Although smoking has declined by 28.3% among North American men since 1955, it has only declined 4% among women, and adolescent girls are the only population group among whom smoking is actually on the increase (Kaplan & Weiler, 1997). "The prevalance [sic] of smoking among girls aged 15 to 19 rose to 29 per cent in 1994 from 26 per cent in 1991, Health Department figures indicate. Smoking among teen girls now exceeds that among boys, the figures show" ("Anti-smoking", 1997). The 1995 federal Youth Smoking Survey found that 15% of girls as

opposed to 9% of boys in the 13-14 age range are smokers (Helm, 1997). And among aboriginal groups, teenage girls' smoking is even higher (Greaves, 1995).

As a result, women now have higher rates of tobacco-related diseases and conditions than they used to including many which are specific only to women (Cunningham, 1996; Greaves, 1996; Kaplan & Weiler, 1997). For instance, lung cancer has now outstripped breast cancer as a killer of women (Cunningham, 1996) and women who smoke while on the birth-control pill are at greatly increased risk for stroke or heart disease (Habib, 1998). As well, nicotine addiction of the fetuses of pregnant women has recently been added to the list of recognized risks for pregnant women and fetal and infant health (Greaves, 1996; "You've Come," 1997).

For the purposes of this paper, it is less important to understand all the details of the health risks, as it is to acknowledge that about half of all those who die from smoking related illnesses began smoking during their teenage years (Kaplan & Weiler, 1997). In fact, a recent study of lung cancer patients in Massachusetts directly confirmed the deadly consequence of early onset of smoking when it found that, for former smokers, age at smoking initiation was the most significant inverse correlation with a DNA condition that indicates high cancer risk. Essentially, the finding was that cancer risk increased as age of smoking initiation decreased (Wiencke, Thurston, Kelsey, Varkonyi, Wain, Mark & Christiani, 1999). Unfortunately, the teenage market is critical to the continuing prosperity of the tobacco industry, as 90% of all smokers begin smoking before the age of 19 (Silbiger, 1997). The industry targets young people as vigorously as it publicly denies targetting them. In 1988, an Imperial Tobacco company document included the following:

> If the last ten years have taught us anything, it is that **the industry is dominated by the companies who respond most effectively to the needs of younger smokers.** Our efforts on these brands will remain on **maintaining their relevance to smokers in these younger groups**...[emphasis in original]. (as cited in Cunningham, p. 170)

The tobacco industry is helped by the fact that, among adolescents, tobacco is typically the first drug used. This is significant considering that "the earlier in life that a child tries

cigarettes, the more likely it is that he or she will become a regular smoker as an adult and hence dependent on nicotine" (Kaplan & Weiler, p. 48).

Traditional Female Caring Responsibilities and Smoking

A series of studies done in Britain highlight the relationship between oppression and addiction to nicotine among working class smoking mothers. Graham (1994), the author of the studies, found that "cigarette smoking is enmeshed in the strategies by which women experience and survive inequality" (p. 121). Class differences in women's smoking were found to be particularly strong among women before and during pregnancy and among women caring for two or more young children. There were no differences in health knowledge among mothers of different classes, just in how that knowledge was put into practice: mothers with more resources[5] were more successful in quitting than those with fewer resources (Graham, 1994).

For mothers with heavy caring responsibilities and meager financial resources, smoking provided a number of functions: a break from caring tasks; a way of structuring time and containing domestic responsibilities; a way of controlling mood; a symbolic breathing space when faced with impossible demands; a social time with other adults; time-out from financial scrimping; and, finally, a way of managing stress and anger and avoiding child abuse. Smoking is considered so essential in such low-income households, that

> like food and fuel, spending on tobacco is inversely related to income: more is spent proportionately on tobacco as household income falls....[It] is the one item of expenditure where the poor spend more than the rich. While many would regard it a luxury item, tobacco spending has the hallmark of a necessity. It is something that mothers identify as essential to their survival. (Graham, 1994, p. 119)

Such evidence points to the contradictory pressures bearing on women caring for children: maternal smoking is a habit through which the welfare of children is both

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[5] Graham (1994) found that mothers with fewer resources and heavier caring responsibilities were more likely to be smokers and less likely to quit. The resources she looked at were diverse: she found that mothers with unemployed partners, single mothers, mothers who lived in rented rather than owned accommodation, mothers who lived in less safe or less child-friendly neighbourhoods, and mothers on welfare or without medical benefits were all more likely to be smokers and to be heavy smokers.

threatened and protected. And the studies suggest that women are well aware of the

contradictory kind of support that smoking provides (Graham, 1994). For these women,

and others, smoking is an element of their social competence (Greaves, 1995).

> Giving up smoking would constitute for these women...'de-skilling', a process
> with losses attached. When the issue is looked at in this way, the women...can be
> seen as demonstrating their agency in part through smoking, and, as they clearly
> expressed, they would suffer a void in their sense of self and their ability to
> negotiate social life if they were to give up the behaviour. (p. 207)

This information is important foundational knowledge for understanding, in chapter five,

how cigarette smoking can become identified as an adult activity in the minds of girls. It

also provides an insight into why quitting may be so difficult for girls, despite their

knowledge of health risks associated with smoking. It brings up the issue of class and how

that intersects with smoking behaviour. Finally, it predicts that, for girls as well as for

women, smoking may be a contradictory habit that provides a number of functions in their

lives. This idea will be explored in greater detail later.

Girls and Cigarettes

Recent Statistics Canada research shows that, while in the past adolescents began

smoking around age 16, many are now starting at about the age of 12 or younger (van

Roosmalen & McDaniel, 1992). Most researchers agree that the factors that lead children to

begin smoking are very different than those for adults. For children[6], these factors are

largely social (Jacobson, 1981; Thrush, Fife-Shaw & Breakwell, 1997). Morgan and

Grube (as cited in Thrush, Fife-Shaw & Breakwell, 1997) suggest that perceived approval

and behavioural example may be important in determining adolescent smoking behaviour.

Smoking among teenage girls may take on a different pattern than for teenage boys

as they begin to realize that the traditional power of adult males, despite the equality rhetoric

of our times, still evades their grasp. "Psychologist Carol Gilligan has written that

girls...withdraw as they start to perceive women's still-unequal place in the world. This

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[6] In this case, the term children refers to all people who are not adults. Throughout this paper, when I refer
to children I am including older children such as adolescents unless specified. When I refer to adolescents, I
mean children who have entered puberty.

realization could be another factor in making girls more vulnerable to smoking, says

Lorraine Greaves, a London, Ont., sociologist who studies women and smoking" (Frost &

Baxter, 1996, p. 33). Indeed, this may explain why girls are much more vulnerable than

boys to two other factors that are strongly correlated with smoking: low self-esteem

(Abernathy, Massad & Romano-Dwyer, 1995; Frost & Baxter, 1996) and depression

(Patton, Hibbert, Rosier, Carlin, Caust & Bowes, 1996). As Passero (1997) shows,

studies with adults have borne out the link with depression:

> It seems the factors that led subjects to light up also foster depression. Among them were low self-esteem, troubled relationships and feelings of isolation....
> Unfortunately, females are at a greater disadvantage than males: Not only are women twice as likely as men to suffer depression, research has shown they're less adept at finding effective coping strategies. Rather than deal with the source of the stress, they tend to rely on temporary balms, such as smoking or overeating. (p. 54)

Another way in which smoking patterns between adolescent boys and girls seem to

differ is in their intersection with class. Kaplan and Weiler (1997) clearly identify a

disturbing overall trend of increased smoking among youth of lower socioeconomic status.

Yet smoking among girls now exceeds that of boys, and adolescent girls are the only

growing group of smokers in North America. Clearly, something other than the issue of

class is affecting girls' smoking rates, or they would be the same as those for boys. There

is an urgent need for more research in this area. Evidently many more working/welfare

class girls smoke than those of the middle/upper class. Yet many middle/upper class girls

are smokers as well. Are there differences in how and why girls of different classes

smoke? What are the similarities? These are questions that need to be explored and were

unable to be answered with this study. Certainly all adolescent girls in this society are

subject to the growing up process and the gender relations which shape it. They must all

interact with the discourse of femininity, a term which will be explored later. They are all

intensely social beings. I believe that all these factors are important pieces of the puzzle.

Addiction - What's it all About?

Political Bias in Addictions Theory and Research

> Society benefits from women's smoking in that women's full expression of discontent, the unscreened response to the realities of oppression, stress, and conformist pressure, is muted and siphoned off through the addiction to and the act of smoking. (Greaves, 1995, p. 207)

Official views of addiction in terms of theories and prevention/treatment models are political. Although some countries have begun to look at addictions in a more holistic way[7], the United States still clings to a disease model of addiction and is increasingly turning to science and medicine to explain and cure addiction instead of looking at social factors (G. Barnes, personal communication, September 26, 1995). This accomplishes at least two things.

First, it keeps discussion between the tobacco industry and the medical community open and lends credibility to the tobacco industry's attempts to continue to confuse the scientific debate over the health effects of smoking with pseudo-scientific 'evidence'. For instance, clear evidence has come to light to show the process by which early damaging research on the health effects of smoking funded by tobacco companies was suppressed and later biased research was engineered to be sympathetic to tobacco industry claims and to shift attention away from tobacco as a health risk (Cunningham, 1996; Pollay, 1997). More recently, the Fraser Institute, a Vancouver-based right-wing think tank, has published a book claiming there is no sound medical evidence that second hand smoke causes cancer. A spokesperson for the Fraser Institute says his group published the book in order to "raise the level of debate on the evidence" (Watts, 1999). Pollay (1997) notes that the industry's strategy

> doesn't require winning or resolution of the debates its principals manage to create or inflame. It is enough to foster and perpetuate the illusion of controversy in order to 'muddy the waters' around potentially damaging studies and streams of research. This serves at least two important ends: offering reassurance and a basis for rationalization to the otherwise concerned, thereby calming public opinion; and

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[7] The Canadian drug and alcohol community has largely accepted a more holistic view of addiction based on the bio-psycho-social model which originated in Europe and is widely used there.

encouraging friendly, ignorant, or naive legislators away from relying on scientific findings threatening to the industry. (p. 54)

This strategy proved so successful for the tobacco industry in combating the early lung cancer studies of the 1950s that it has continued to be used to great advantage in combating scientific findings pertaining to every aspect of tobacco and tobacco control. "It should be no surprise, then, that these tactics are also used to combat the issue of cigarette advertising and its effects, particularly its role in recruiting new smokers," asserts Pollay (p. 54).

Secondly, the American insistence on giving primacy to the disease model of addiction ensures that the traditional views and economic priorities of an increasingly politically conservative climate remain unchallenged. It fits with the traditional research view which sees women substance users as undifferentiated from men and also tends to individualise the issue of substance use for women (Ettorre, 1994; Greaves, 1995). Mainstream addictions 'experts' more often than not fail to see the variety of reasons why women use drugs differently from men. Thus, the need for programs tailored to the needs of women is not acknowledged. However, women's substance abuse is seen as more of a social problem than men's because it implies instability in the family, so placing the blame squarely on women (Ettorre, 1994). Thus, traditional views of women's addiction have refused to challenge existing power structures. This study and others by feminist researchers are an attempt to begin to redress this imbalance.

While health policies play down the significance of social and material circumstances in nicotine addiction, the research on women's smoking suggests that they are integral to the maintenance of smoking habits. They provide the contexts in which and against which women continue to smoke (Graham, 1994). In Britain, as here, the 'public health' issue of smoking is tackled from a 'lifestyles' perspective which refuses to acknowledge structural factors leading to and supporting smoking among women. In analyzing such policy decisions about how to interpret the issue of smoking, Johnson shows that "scientific explanations and interpretations are political, and...addictions are political. Addictions keep oppressed people oppressed" (1991, p. 39). She reviews the

biases that have remained in research about women and alcohol, even to the present, and looks at how those biases were maintained. Essentially, she says, these biases serve to maintain the existing power relations in society.

Johnson (1991) insists that the emerging 'knowledge' about women and addictions must be questioned continually because it has "power to denigrate or power to strengthen women's lives" (p. 34). She notes that those who hold the power in society (mainly white men) are those who are still largely defining the research questions and policies surrounding drug use, distribution, taxation, research and publication, funding, treatment and rehabilitation. This means that real change can only take place after "a transformation in social values and a redistribution of power" (p. 39).

Women and Addictions in 'Herstory'

Greaves (1995) notes that women's smoking behaviours have "always been interpreted and influenced by social, political, and economic interests" (p. 198). In her study of multiple-drug use in American history, Worth (1991) uncovered a strong link between "the widespread perception of women as culturally non-competent and drug-abuse [among women]" (p.2). As she examined the patterns of legal and illegal drug misuse by American women over the past 180 years, she found that periods of increased drug addiction coincided with times when women reexperienced their social inferiority. At these times, responses such as female hysteria and substance use could be seen as chosen behaviours to express the anger, discontent, and pain that women felt in relation to male expectations of female behaviour (Goldberg, 1995; Worth, 1991). Inversely, periods such as the 1920s and 40s, when drug misuse among women declined, were times when women organized to fight for legal rights, assumed new social roles, and entered the work force in larger numbers (Worth, 1991).

Essentially, Worth's (1991) analysis is that drug use among women has historically been reflective of a system which silenced and controlled. Both the controlling (placing women into repressive sexual and social roles and confining them largely to unpaid, low-

paying and unsatisfying jobs) and the silencing (prescribing drugs for the anxiety and despair generated by these conditions) led to women's addiction. Worth insists that this pattern will continue until "the anxiety generated by oppressive social roles or the despair and illness connected to poverty [are directly addressed]" (p. 8). Her analysis has obvious implications for the fact that teenage girls are currently the only group of smokers growing: does this mean that we are in a time when teenage girls are 're-experiencing their social inferiority'? Many experts who work with adolescent girls are of the opinion that this is the case (for example Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993; Pipher, 1994), and I will explore this notion in greater depth in the sections 'Teenage Girls in Canadian Society' and 'A Gender Analysis'. Certainly, this is a time when girls may be expecting social equality in the face of their observation of ongoing inequality. These higher expectations combined with ongoing gender inequities may lead to greater confusion and resentment than ever before (Greaves, 1990).

Connections between Oppression and Addiction

According to Van Den Bergh (1991), within our patriarchal system, women and other oppressed groups are denied the same access to power given to white men. The need to control is pervasive in patriarchy and leads to oppressive behaviours towards others, including sexism, racism, classism and the technique of dividing and conquering. She suggests that, because patriarchy does not encourage people to believe in their own value and worth as individuals, but instead measures worth only by what can be obtained in competition, people can feel alienated from that which provides meaning and purpose to life. As she puts it, "addictions...become a way to either temporarily experience a sense of omnipotence and control, or a way to escape from feelings of helplessness, despair and powerlessness" (p. 22).

According to Kasl (1992) oppression is a maintenance function of patriarchy because it "creates the emptiness and fear that lead toward addictive behaviour. The desire to live gets turned into a struggle to survive the pain of our system. Instead of affirming

life, we are taught to medicate ourselves in order to cope with it" (p. 55). Thus, short term

relief of pain through substance use is exchanged for long term destruction. As Kasl notes,

patriarchy is based on domination and subordination, which result in fear. The dominators

express this fear through control and violence, while the subordinated express it through

passivity and repression of anger. Thus, "patriarchy, hierarchy, and capitalism create,

encourage, maintain, and perpetuate addiction and dependency" (p. 53). This theorizing is

borne out by current smoking patterns. Kaplan and Weiler (1997) note that North American

smokers are more likely to be poor women, adolescents and unemployed adults. For

women, the strongest predictor of smoking is the amount of economic and social

disadvantage they experience. Among adolescents, a disturbing trend is the higher

percentage of smokers from the lowest socioeconomic groups (Kaplan & Weiler, 1997). In

Canada, First Nations smoking rates are the highest of any other group (Greaves, 1995).

Globally, these trends are mirrored on a much larger scale. The tobacco industry

has taken advantage of the poverty, lack of education, strenuous living conditions, and

political powerlessness that exist in many less developed parts of the world to aggressively

market cigarettes (Cunningham, 1996; Kluger, 1996). Increases in cigarette smoking in

these markets more than make up for the declines in smoking in the developed world. The

combination of fewer regulations, little knowledge of health consequences, and the lack of

an organized opposition translate into major growth opportunities for the transnational

tobacco industry. It is predicted that, over the next decade or so, smoking may become the

leading cause of death in the world. As well, tobacco use in less developed countries

results in hardships which are not mediated by the more or less successful social programs

found in some areas of the more developed countries. These hardships include the lack of

suitable health care, greater suffering through disease, lack of welfare programs to support

families of dead or dying wage earners, and poorly ventilated homes and workplaces with

no clean air or fire prevention regulations. The dictates of opportunistic capitalism have

meant that dominant countries (such as Canada and the United States) have on occasion

coerced less powerful countries to accept transnational cigarette trade through threats of trade sanctions and withdrawal of foreign aid (Cunningham, 1996).

In his work on addiction, Stanton Peele emphasizes the link between coercive hierarchical domination, passive acceptance of authority, and addiction (as cited in hooks, 1993). Likewise, bell hooks asserts that "[living] without the ability to exercise meaningful agency over one's material life is a situation that invites addiction" (p. 68). She finds it meaningful to make a connection between the struggle to recover from the effects of political oppression and exploitation and the effort to break with addictive behaviour. In the same vein, Ettorre (1994) maintains that the ways in which women throughout the world use substances reveal common patterns of the experience of oppression. Ettore believes that women

> choose to use substances as a way of adjusting or modifying their behaviour in response to their oppressive social situations. In this light, their choice is perceived as creative, if not empowering. In other words, it is perceived as a viable course of action in an unpleasant, if not demeaning, situation for them as women. (p. 97)

These ideas have implications for the issue of girls' smoking as girls are subject to oppression under patriarchy by virtue of their age and gender. This will be examined in greater detail in the section entitled 'A Gender Analysis'.

Deviance, Pleasure and Dependency as Feminist Addictions Concepts

Three concepts that emerged from my readings on a feminist perspective towards women and addiction are those of *deviance*, *pleasure*, and *dependency*, and how they describe the particular realities of women who smoke. Worth (1991) talked about attitudes to women's drug use over the years: as the drugs that doctors had prescribed to upper and middle class women became outlawed and visible drug use shifted from middle to lower-class women, attitudes changed. While 'legitimately' addicted women had at first been treated as diseased, women using drugs became increasingly viewed as pathological and socially *deviant* (Worth, 1991). Ettore (1994) expanded on this concept, noting that women substance users will experience themselves as being symbols of deviant and marginal women. Drug use is seen as emblematic of their failure as proper women but also,

perhaps, a visible way to rebel against the stereotype of 'good women' in society. Thus, drug use can become a symbol of non-conformity, a badge of honour. Tobacco use, specifically, which enjoyed a brief run as an acceptable habit for upper and middle class women in North America, has once again become a symbol of the marginalized: the poor and working class woman, the "bad mother", the adolescent "bad girl", the rebel.

Some years ago, an American Cancer Society report found that cigarette smoking among teenage girls was highly identified with an anti-authority, rebellious syndrome in relation to the adult world (Kilbourne, 1991). And this attitude among girls and young women continues, as exemplified by a recent newspaper article on cigar smoking which identified cigars as the latest fashion accessory for the chic set and noted that young women are smoking as many as men. " 'Everyone is just sick and tired of being a goody-two-shoes,' explains 27-year-old Sharon while exhaling from a smoldering, Churchillian stogie in a tony Toronto restaurant. 'We just want a little self-indulgence. Cigars provide that. All my friends are really into them, too'." (Bourette, 1995, p. F2). The tobacco industry capitalizes on the connection between rebellion and smoking as will be examined in chapter five.

Ettorre (1994) also suggests that we need to look more closely at the pleasurable effects of substances and in particular, to see why and how women experience their substance use as pleasurable. She notes that *pleasure* for women includes the notion of empowerment. She shows that, for those in subordinate social positions, a link between pleasure and empowerment has been demonstrated. Pleasure implies a certain amount of autonomy: taking something for themselves, rather than giving and receiving pleasure as is the usual case for those in subordinate positions (Ettorre, 1994). hooks (1993) also talks about the importance of pleasure, whether dangerous or not, as common to those who live in constant hardship. For girls, as we will see, a significant piece of the pleasure they take from smoking is related to its social aspects.

Finally, Ettorre (1994) points out that the term *dependency* has two meanings for women: addiction and subordination. For women in general, society considers the addiction kind of dependency as unacceptable, while the subordinate kind of dependency is not only acceptable, but a prescribed norm. For women who misuse drugs, these two meanings conflict, yet they both stem from patriarchy, which dictates that female dependency of the subordinate kind should be the central operating principle in her life, and thereby witholds the means by which she could gain legitimate power. The pain stemming from this dependency can then lead to the dependency of addiction. Ettorre suggests that, in fact, women's entire lives can be described in terms of dependency, because the caring work that women do as part of their subordinate status leads to being depended on by others. And the burden of this responsibility can also lead to an addiction dependency (Ettorre, 1994).

> Whether smoking is used either to demonstrate active rebellion and resistance or passive capitulation to patriarchal reality, it is making a statement regarding our interactive relationship with our socio-cultural milieu. (Greaves, 1995, p. 213)

For girls who smoke, the confusion that comes from the mixed messages they receive about their subordinate status as females moving into adulthood in a patriarchal society can certainly generate the kind of pain that might to lead to dependency on cigarettes.

Girls - What's Going On Here?

Teenage Girls in Canadian Society

> What *is* it about female growing up that diminishes, instead of dilating, their potential? The answer to that, of course, is in the whole of female history at least since the Industrial Revolution, and each girl, as she steps giddily into the open spaces of her maturity, has as much chance of replaying that history of loss, waste, and pain as she has of living the prototypical life of liberation. (Kostash, 1987, p. 311)

<u>Girl poisoning culture - training female impersonators</u>[8]

Although the next generation of women seem to be entering a world of greater opportunity than women have ever had before, the paradox is that adolescent girls as a group are having more trouble now than in the past (Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993; Pipher, 1994). "They are coming of age in a more dangerous, sexualized and media-saturated culture. They face incredible pressures to be beautiful and sophisticated, which in junior high means using chemicals and being sexual. As they navigate a more dangerous world, girls are less protected" (Pipher, p. 12). As Pipher shows, they struggle with mixed messages and have difficulty sorting them out because they don't make sense: "Be beautiful, but beauty is only skin deep. Be sexy, but not sexual. Be honest, but don't hurt anyone's feelings. Be independent, but be nice. Be smart, but not so smart that you threaten boys" (p. 36).

Recent studies of adolescent health have shown that girls suffer far more from stress, eating disorders, depression, and concern over their appearance than do boys (Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993).

> Dr. Emily Hancock, a psychologist in Berkeley, California, and author of *The Girl Within*...said various studies and her own interviews with dozens of high school girls and college women had revealed that self-esteem in girls peaks at the age of nine, then begins to plummet. (Brody, 1997, p. A12)

Young women in Canada today continue to feel much less generally competent than do young men (Bibby & Posterski, 1992; Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993)."Further, adolescent boys dream bigger dreams than girls do—and they are more likely to believe that their dreams can become reality" (Debold, Wilson & Malave, p. 10). By junior high girls usually sense their powerlessness but are unable to articulate what is happening to them. They notice that the world is dominated by men but "they don't focus on the political—their complaints are personal" (Pipher, 1994, p. 41). Unlike boys, who act out their distress on the world around them, girls tend to internalize their distress. They blame themselves for

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[8] The term "female impersonators" is used in this sense by Pipher (1994, p. 22).

not being able to cope and become depressed, anxious and often suicidal (Debold, Wilson

& Malave, 1993).

> Girls know they are losing themselves. One girl said, 'Everything good in me died
> in junior high.' Wholeness is shattered by the chaos of adolescence. Girls become
> fragmented, their selves split into mysterious contradictions. (Pipher, p. 20)

Pipher calls the world that today's girls enter during adolescence a "girl-poisoning culture"

that "limits girls' development, truncates their wholeness and leaves many of them

traumatized" (p. 12).

Physical changes a betrayal

> Suddenly her body is no longer at her own disposal but has become a zone where
> others have competing interests - parents and boyfriends and social workers and ad
> agencies - and a territory liable to a whole series of catastrophes: diseases,
> pregnancy, rape, abortion. Her self-consciousness is acute; she has become a new
> person, one she will spend a lifetime trying to appease - the woman who has
> stepped outside her own body and reviews it "objectively" and who finds it
> wanting. (Kostash, 1987, pp. 174, 175)

Recently, a large study of over 17,000 girls in the United States found that the average age

for the advent of puberty is now nine, "two years earlier than what has been considered

normal since the 1960s" (Gadd, 1998, p. D2). The physical changes that girls' bodies

undergo at this time "visually disconnect them from the world of childhood and identify

them with women, and thus with images of women. Girls become looked at, objects of

beauty (or not)" (Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993, p. 13).

> Girls come to understand that their expressions of desire—curiosity,
> outspokenness, pleasure—are seen as sexual or are sexualized by the adults around
> them. While this begins early in childhood, at early adolescence when girls begin to
> feel explicitly sexual impulses, they find their behavior misinterpreted and
> themselves in trouble or danger....Sexuality poses a terrifying dilemma for
> girls....Adolescent girls are simply not safe in their bodies, and most of the danger
> has to do with sex. For most girls, their awareness of and exposure to physical
> danger becomes acute in adolescence. (pp. 50, 51)

At school, girls become subject to sexual harrassment. "While junior-high boys have

always teased girls about sex, the level of the teasing is different. Girls are taunted about

everything from oral sex to pubic hair, from periods to the imagined appearance of their

genitals. The harassment that girls experience in the 1990s is much different in both quality

and intensity" (Pipher, 1994, p. 69). In chapter four we will see that the girls in this study

are not immune to this kind of harassment. Girls are powerless to stop the physical changes

in their bodies that bring them into the riptides of sexuality (except by extraordinary

measures such as eating disorders) and they are powerless also to stop from entering into a

relationship with the cultural ideology of femininity. This experience can be deeply

traumatic. "Trauma is the human psyche's response to extreme powerlessness, loss of

control, and the threat of annihilation....Girls' most traumatic loss is the ability to live fully

and powerfully in their bodies" (Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993, p. 48).

Denying the active self/ losing voice

Adolescence is when girls experience social pressure to put aside their authentic selves and to display only a small portion of their gifts. This pressure disorients and depresses most girls. They sense the pressure to be someone they are not. They fight back, but they are fighting a 'problem with no name'. Girls become 'female impersonators' who fit their whole selves into small, crowded spaces. (Pipher, 1994, p. 22)

Years ago, Simone de Beauvoir acknowledged the importance of adolescence for women

as the transition point from authentic person to feminine object. She

believed adolescence is when girls realize that men have the power....They do not suffer from the penis envy Freud postulated, but from power envy....'Young girls slowly bury their childhood, put away their independent and imperious selves and submissively enter adult existence' (Pipher, 1994, pp. 21, 22).

In order to receive approval adolescent girls begin to see that they must deny the active

parts of themselves and concentrate on being - feminine - rather then doing (Holmes &

Silverman, 1992). Their identity rests not on what they accomplish but on who they are, or

rather, what they are: their bodies, their sexuality. "Unlike boys, for whom the body is an

instrument of activity, of *doing*, girls merely inhabit their bodies; a girl *is* beautiful, *is*

sexy. And so... a girl's only mode of activity through her body is on the body itself - to

change it" (Kostash, 1987, p. 178).

Because with boys failure is attributed to external factors and success is attributed to ability, they keep their confidence, even with failure. With girls it's just the opposite. Because their success is attributed to good luck or hard work and failure to lack of ability, with every failure, girls' confidence is eroded. All this works in subtle ways to stop girls from wanting to be astronauts and brain surgeons. Girls can't say why they ditch their dreams, they just 'mysteriously' lose interest....Girls are more likely than boys to say that they are not smart enough for their dream

careers. They emerge from adolescence with a diminished sense of their worth as individuals. (Pipher, 1994, p. 63)

As they struggle against losing their childhood power, girls stop trusting those around them, particularly adults. They know it can be dangerous to try to speak about what is happening to them, and this wariness gradually turns inwards and helps them 'forget' what they are reluctant to know (Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993; Pipher, 1994). This may partially explain the wariness with which I was treated as I began to recruit girls for this study. "At this time the phrase 'I don't know' enters girls' speech, indicating girls' confusion about what they believe, what they know" (Debold, Wilson & Malave, pp. 12, 13). Although young women may later remember some of the self-denying choices they made at this time, most girls are unable to articulate the trauma as it happens to them. "The issues that adolescent girls struggle with are barely discussed in the culture. Language doesn't fit their experiences. Protest is called delinquency, frustration is called bitchiness, withdrawal is called depression and despair is labeled hormonal" (Pipher, p. 40). Again, this loss of voice may help explain why it was so difficult for girls to talk about the issue of smoking, even after they began to trust me: they no longer trusted their own knowledge.

Loss of self

To totally accept the cultural definitions of femininity and conform to the pressures is to kill the self....Girls have long been trained to be feminine at considerable cost to their humanity.....Another way to describe this femininity training is to call it false self-training. Girls are trained to be less than who they really are. They are trained to be what the culture wants of its young women, not what they themselves want to become....Many girls lose contact with their true selves, and when they do, they become extraordinarily vulnerable to a culture that is all too happy to use them for its purposes. (Pipher, 1994, p. 44)

Eventually, girls entering adolescence stop struggling against losing themselves and give in to the inevitability. "A negotiation takes place where girls trade in parts of themselves in order to become women within this culture" (Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993, p. 10). As this loss is still raw and extremely painful, adolescent girls need to protect themselves from the pain and grief at what they have lost. Debold et al. suggest that the knowledge of this loss is buried in the subconscious, actively ignored and 'forgotten'

because this knowledge would threaten the new 'self' being developed in its place. Instead, in order to protect their new false selves, adolescent girls begin to scapegoat other girls who do not conform.

> Like any recent converts to an ideology, girls are at risk of becoming the biggest enforcers and proselytizers for the culture. Girls punish other girls for failing to achieve the same impossible goals that they are failing to achieve. They rush to set standards in order to ward off the imposition of others' standards on them. The content of the standard is variable — designer jeans or leather jackets, smoking cigarettes or the heavy use of eye shadow. What's important is the message that not pleasing others is social suicide. This scapegoating functions as the ultimate form of social control for girls who are not sufficiently attentive to social pressures. (Pipher, p. 68).

Although the rules for proper feminine behaviour are never clearly stated, the punishment for breaking them can be harsh. Friendships are of crucial importance to teenage girls, so this peer punishment is extremely effective. In chapter four, we will see in detail the intensity of friendships between teenage girls in this study.

A Gender Analysis

Definition of gender

> One is not born, but rather becomes a woman....It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature. (de Beauvoir, 1952, p. 301)

Gender is a category which classifies people on the basis of sexual traits. 'Gender' as a category should not, however, be confused with 'sex' as a category. Sex categorizes human beings purely in biological terms: by the reproductive organs they carry, or (since that is not always so clearcut) by the sexual chromosomes they carry. Gender, on the other hand, is a cultural and political understanding about what the possession of those biological sex characteristics means.

> Like class, [gender]...has both external and internal dimensions: that is, the classification or labeling is seen and read by others as well as by the self, and the similarities may be interpreted as shared interests, things one has in common with others. Gender may or may not matter to us or to others: in our social and political world it always matters. We interpret the meaning of gender within a culture by examining issues such as voting rights, childcare, comparable worth, participation in the armed services, abortion, reproductive technology, to name a few. We can discover what has been seen socially as feminine, that is, what generally has been done by as well as to women. (Farganis, 1989, p. 215)

This kind of examination of the meaning of gender within a particular culture and timeframe is what is known among feminists as a 'gender analysis'. Farganis points out that the meaning of gender is a consequence of social and historical conditions and so must always be related to specific locations and moments in time.

Current status of women worldwide

[T]he historical emergence of capitalist class formation is inextricably bound up with the emergence of particular definitions of masculinity and femininity, in turn tied to those of race and nation. Class relations, in other words, are not simply defined by relations of production in the factory or other capitalist workplace; they are also structured and anchored by antagonistic gender relations....'Femininity' has been used as that against which 'man' defines himself in societies of all stripes - feudal, agrarian, slave and class based. Gender distinctions have generated, and been seen as crucial for, social order in pre- and post-capitalist societies alike. (Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer & Hebron, 1991, p.20)

Despite signs of women's global progress toward gender equity over the past twenty years (particularly in such areas as education and access to health services) there is no country or major field in which women have reached equality with men. In the economic world, women hold a majority only in part-time, low-paid or unpaid work. They hold at most five percent of top management jobs and ten percent of political posts (Sivard, 1995). Of 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty worldwide, 70% are women. Poverty among women is on the increase, and this trend has been linked to women's unequal situation in the labour market, treatment under social welfare systems, and status and power in the family. Every day, at least 1600 women worldwide die of complications from pregnancy or childbirth. Women are the majority of the world's illiterate. Worldwide, women work more hours than men but the majority of their work is unpaid, unrecognized and undervalued. Women hold less than 20% of global jobs in manufacturing. They receive a disproportionally small share of credit from formal banking institutions. In most countries of the world women are not treated as equal to men under the law: this includes property rights, inheritance rights, marriage and divorce, rights to acquire nationality, rights to manage property or seek employment ("Empowering women", 1998).

<u>Continuing inequality based on gender</u>

When culturally and politically created differences between men and women become ingrained in the social structures of a society over time (religion, government, family, law, history) they begin to seem 'natural' and inevitable. This viewpoint is illustrated by the familiar Freudian notion that "anatomy is destiny" (Freud, 1963). It becomes hard for people living within the society to 'see' themselves and each other except through the lens of the particular gender meanings that have been created within that society. Those who try to step outside of the boundaries created by their society's gender meanings are usually penalized in some way. Yet living within those boundaries can be difficult as well.

Currently, within North America, the popular cultural and political rhetoric tells us that everyone in our society is equal and there is a 'level playing field' for everyone to succeed, regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic status, provided they are willing to work hard. The reality is different. For young women, "the dream is that they experience equality. The findings indicate that young women in the 90s are not equal to men. They receive treatment that is inferior, even though their behaviour tends to be superior" (Bibby & Posterski, 1992, p. 136). Despite the rhetoric, this reality is not news to most young people today.

> Girls and boys both seem to understand that life for boys and girls, men and women is very different. The Michigan Board of Education recently published a statewide study of students' perceptions of what it means to be male or female in this society. When asked how their lives would be different if they were the opposite sex, nearly 50 percent of the girls spoke of advantages to being a boy, while only 7 percent of the boys saw advantages to being a girl. While the girls found it interesting or exciting to think of life as a boy, nearly 20 percent of the boys gave extremely hostile, derogatory responses. A surprising number of boys said that they would commit suicide if they were girls. (Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993, p. 9)

<u>Socialization</u>

The inequities created for women by the gender meanings of patriarchal societies have given rise to more and less successful women's movements for greater equality in various places and at different times since the advent of patriarchy. In North America, the

current feminist movement has sought to demonstrate that traditional gender meanings in our society are a product of power relations, and that they create an ongoing cycle wherein males and females are socialized in different ways which then results in differences between them. These differences, feminists argue, are not natural but are political and cultural creations. "Academics have given their support to such a view by arguing that the more our society rids itself of such sexist socialization tendencies, the more women and men will come to resemble each other" (Bibby & Posterski, 1992, p. 137).

Yet, according to Peirce (1990), the socialization of girls and boys in our society still tends to be traditional and children learn traditional gender roles at very early ages. It begins at home with parents emphasizing the social aspects of their daughters' development and the physical aspects of their sons' development, and continues with encouragement to play with gender 'appropriate' toys. Socialization during these early years is also reinforced by learning from and modelling by peers and on television. Later, the school setting becomes an important contributor to the socialization process, both through the use of biased curriculum and textbooks, as well as peer modelling and interaction.

> In classes, boys are twice as likely to be seen as role models, five times as likely to receive teachers' attention and twelve times as likely to speak up in class. In textbooks, one-seventh of all illustrations of children are of girls. Teachers chose many more classroom activities that appeal to boys than to girls. Girls are exposed to almost three times as many boy-centered stories as girl-centered stories. Boys tend to be portrayed as clever, brave, creative and resourceful, while girls are depicted as kind, dependent and docile. Girls read six times as many biographies of males as of females. Even in animal stories, the animals are twice as likely to be males. (Pipher, 1994, p. 62)

Studies continue to show that teachers help reinforce traditional gender socialization, usually unconsciously, by calling on girls less often than boys, interacting more intensely with boys, and by rewarding girls for obedience and other non-academic behaviours while rewarding boys for academic behaviours (Peirce, 1990).

The upshot is that, by adolescence, both girls and boys have very definite understandings about what set of behaviours constitute 'masculine' and 'feminine'. For

girls the emphasis is on social approval and depends on being popular and pretty. For boys

the emphasis is on the desire for mastery and ambition and includes being good at math and

athletics (Peirce, 1990). Thus, girls become dependent on the approval of others for their

own self-worth, while boys become dependent on themselves for their self-worth. The

media also help reinforce traditional gender roles for young women. "This is done in part

through their perpetuation of physical beauty as the standard for women—in commercials,

advertisements, and stories for beauty products as well as in their use of attractive people as

models and actors—and in part through their portrayals of women" (p. 495).

Self-esteem related to gender-based body images

Girls know that beauty is 'skin deep.'...The disabling effects of the importance
placed on physical appearance in females, combined with a rigid and fixed
definition of beauty, can be seen in the numerous studies that demonstrate a higher
amount of anxiety and discomfort experienced by female teenagers toward their
bodies than by male teenagers. (Steiner-Adair, 1990, p. 167)

Many studies examining how cultural standards impact on youth have found that teenage

girls are more influenced by, and more vulnerable to, cultural ideals of body images than

are boys. Research has also shown that women's self-esteem, self-confidence, and anxiety

levels are more directly related to their body image than in men, and that women and girls

are more harshly judged and punished on the basis of their body build than men (Steiner-

Adair, 1990).

The fact that, in study after study, women and girls are less likely to [have a healthy
self-esteem]... than men and boys should be no surprise. We live in a culture that is
ambivalent toward female achievement, proficiency, independence, and right to a
full and equal life. Our culture devalues both women and the qualities which it
projects onto us, such as nurturance, cooperation, and intuition. It has taught us to
undervalue ourselves. (Orenstein, 1994, pp. xix, xx)

Women, work and childcare

The romantic notions that adolescent girls today have about their ideal future are still

by and large extremely traditional and very much influenced by the beliefs about gender that

they have been socialized into. Yet, just like the rhetoric about equality, these traditional

dreams are not reflected in the reality of women's lives today. The reality is that almost half

of all women with children under the age of six work outside of the home, and despite their

increasing numbers in the paid work force, women's situation there relative to men has actually worsened over the past decade. Marriage, pregnancy and childcare continue to have major impacts on Canadian women's job continuity but not on that of men (Kostash, 1987).

Surveys show that the vast majority of Canadians, both men and women, continue to believe that a woman's place is in the home if she has preschoolers. Both teenage boys *and* girls continue to believe that child care is primarily the responsibility of women, and teenage girls believe that doing housework is not within the nature of masculinity (Kostash, 1987). In short, patriarchal notions about gender are still alive and well in the Canada of today, and they still serve to subjugate and devalue women and girls and their roles in and contributions to our society. This is important foundational knowledge for understanding why it is that teenage girls in our society have such a difficult time in adolescence, and why these difficulties might lead to or sustain cigarette smoking.

Femininity as Discourse[9]

> For women, gender is an accomplishment that is sustained through ongoing, everyday practices that resonate with (or react against) dominant definitions of what it means 'to be a woman.' In our culture, the meanings affixed to 'being women' are increasingly mediated by social texts, specifically women's magazines as a commercial medium that orchestrates women's activities in relation to their bodies....While these texts do not 'determine' women's practices, as a social discourse they mediate practices of femininity among both magazine readers and nonreaders. In other words, while 'gender' is an individual accomplishment—expressing compliance or resistance—it is not carried out in a context of women's making. (Currie, 1997, pp. 460-461)

As the North American women's movement has shifted and changed in the past thirty years, the strong emphasis on the process of socialization to explain the continued

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[9] The term "femininity as discourse" was coined by Dorothy Smith (1990). Her use of the term 'discourse' draws on Foucalt but expands his notion in order to give central focus to the social relations which are organized by the texts embedded in them. Her idea of discourse is not limited to text, however, "though it is organized by and in relation to the text" (p. 162) and includes media, talk, and the activities (or work) of accomplishing the social relations organized by the texts.

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perpetuation of patriarchal gender meanings and gender roles has been challenged. This is

reflective of the debate about the relative importance of 'nature or nurture' on human

behaviour that has been ongoing for over a century. Research in the area of genetics in the

past decade has provided strong evidence suggesting that we human beings are far more

creatures of our genetic makeup (or 'nature') than previously suspected (Wood, 1999). At

the same time, feminist theorists have objected to the passivity and nonagency of girls and

women implied by theories of socialization. So if socialization is not the *entire* answer,

how *can* we explain the mass continuation of certain sets of cultural and political

ideologies? We know they are not 'natural' because different cultures and people groups

have different sets of ideologies or doctrine that govern their social relations, and that these

change within the same group and place over time. A look at feminist research on women's

magazines, a bastion of femininity if there ever was one, is instructive to see how feminist

theories about this have changed over the past five decades.

> For these [women's magazines] ...are about more than women and womanly
> things, they are about femininity itself - as a state, a condition, a craft, and an art
> form which comprise a set of practices and beliefs. In this they present a paradox,
> for they are specialist periodicals yet concern themselves with a general audience:
> everyone born female is a candidate for their services and sacraments. This points
> to a hidden message behind their presence on the bookstalls. The fact that they exist
> at all makes a statement about the position of women in society as one which
> requires separate consideration and distinctive treatment. (Ferguson, 1983, p. 1)

Research on women's magazines (beginning with Betty Friedan's work in the 1950s) has

been important in that, in the face of neglect by mainstream researchers, feminists have

been able to document the systemic stereotyping of women in the popular media. In the

1970s, such research concentrated on the representations of women in magazines and

framed these as ideological constructions of femininity from which female readers of all

ages could and did draw meaning for their own lives. These representations were seen both

as uncritical reflections of women's actual lives in a patriarchal society and as a conscious

conservative agenda reflecting dominant views of what women should aspire to be (Currie,

1997).

In the 1980s, the theoretical thinking became more specific: researchers began to look at women's magazines not just as uncritical reflections of women's lives under patriarchy but as more sinister 'scripts' of femininity which promoted the socialization of women and girls into subordinate 'sex roles'. The messages inherent in these 'scripts' were assumed to be unknowingly internalized by readers who have little resistance or even awareness of them. The feminist theories about media at this time attributed enormous power to women's magazines to "unilaterally reproduce existing social arrangements" (Currie, 1997, p. 456). Researchers at this time also began to explore the history of women's magazines in greater detail, finding a rich tradition dating back to the seventeenth century. Comparisons began to be made between the notions of femininity found in magazines at different historical periods with what was actually known about women's lives at those times.

It was at this time also that theories of ideology, socialization and sex roles pertaining to women's magazines began to be challenged by feminists whose research indicated that women and girl readers of magazines are anything but passive receptacles for the scripts of patriarchal oppression. This theoretical rethinking was, as we have already seen, part of a greater project to understand how social relations actually work. Researchers of women's magazines found that "ideological messages were undercut by readers' reflexivity and reflectiveness" (Currie, 1997, p. 457). The pendulum began to swing in the other direction as some researchers began to insist that women and girls are perfectly capable of 'subversive' readings of such texts and to point to the liberatory potential of such reading.

Drawing on their own furtive magazine reading, some feminist cultural critics noted that they found magazines highly pleasurable, and the notion of pleasure became the new postmodern catchword which had the possibility of redeeming the act of magazine reading as a "potential avenue...for social change" (Currie, 1997, p. 458). This has led some postmodern cultural critics to celebrate "the pleasure of creative self-expression through

consumption" as productive activity which "generates multiple meanings and subjectivities" (p. 459). Some of these claims have in turn been rejected by those who have noted that "the claims advancing a subversive role for women's magazines are based, for the large part, on the practices of academic critics as researcher-readers" (p. 459) and that such agency cannot be assumed to be the everyday activity of 'real' women readers. Indeed, although more respectful of magazine readers, such claims of readership agency do not adequately account for the enormous commercial success of magazine advertising. Instead of being subverted, the status quo has been enormously bolstered by this commercial success.

It was also in the late 1980s that Dorothy Smith began to work on this problem as part of her twin projects: to explore the social from the standpoint of women's experience, and to examine the social organization of the 'knowledge' or ideology that is the foundation of contemporary capitalist relations of ruling (Smith, 1990). With her notion of the "discourse of femininity" Smith turned the concept of 'gender relations' inside-out from making statements about gender or gender-differences/gender roles to looking at "social relations that gender" (p. 160). Instead of looking at femininity as an ideology into which girls and women as objects are passively socialized, Smith suggests that femininity can be seen as "the actual social relations of a discourse mediated by texts in which women are active as subjects and agents" (p. 161). She conceives of such a discourse as the organized actual activities of people.

> In our time to address femininity is to address, directly or indirectly, a textual discourse vested in women's magazines and television, advertisements, the appearance of cosmetics counters, fashion displays and to a lesser extent books. ...Discourse also involves the talk women do in relation to such texts, the work of producing oneself to realize the textual images, the skills involved in going shopping, in making and choosing clothes, in making decisions about colors, styles, makeup, and the ways in which these become a matter of interest among men. (p. 163)

Using the framework of "femininity as discourse," women's magazines become 'social texts' instead of 'social scripts'. Instead of displacing human agency in favour of a determining role for the text, Smith (1990) focusses on the way that "people's actual activities as participants give power to the relations that 'overpower' them" (p. 161). "At

the heart of the women's magazine lies the paradox that 'natural' femininity can be achieved only through hard labour" (Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer & Hebron, 1991, p.14). One feature of textually mediated discourse is its public nature and its ability to remain uniform across many different local sites. It is detached from its moment of making, an objectified form of communication originating from outside of the local settings, but which produces simultaneous and identical impersonal relations among those local settings. Readers of these texts can examine their own actions and appearance against this transcendant and impersonal standpoint. It provides a shared practice of reflection on self and others according to a common standpoint (Smith, 1990). As such, it is the production of social relations. These texts do not appear out of nowhere: rather they reflect the evolution of a discourse of femininity which has its roots in history. "Ideologies of women's sexual passivity and subordination to men" (p. 171) are linked with the images of the texts, and enter the social relations of the everyday world through the work that women do to produce on their bodies and in their appearance actual expressions of these texts. I will draw on these ideas further in chapter five to show how the discourse of femininity influences girls' smoking behaviour.

Conclusion

A review of the literature discussed above provided me with the framework of concepts for thinking about and conducting this study. My previous knowledge of substance use issues and my previously constructed feminist view of substance use led me to bypass much of the quantitative literature and conservative addictions theories as they do not seem to adequately address the problem of girls and cigarettes. Instead, in preparing for this study, I searched for literature that pertained directly to women, girls and feminist addictions theory. Much of this literature was qualitative in nature. I also looked at research that was less directly related to the topic in order to develop an understanding of the context

in which to situate the issue of girls and cigarettes. This necessitated the development of a gender analysis.

My search of the literature found that, although the past 15 years have seen a dramatic increase in interest in women's smoking, particularly from feminist researchers, there remain serious gaps in terms of understanding the smoking behaviour of teenage girls. Many existing studies attempt to simplify and quantify the problem. It is my contention that the issue of girls' smoking is a necessarily complex one that must take into account the fact that, as girls, they are involved in the difficult process of growing up within a society based on patriarchal, capitalist ideologies. This study is an attempt to find some clues about what importance smoking has in the context of the everyday lives of teenage girls as they navigate their way towards adulthood.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

> Research approaches inherently reflect our beliefs about the world we live in and want to live in. (Lather, 1991, p. 51)

Emerging Critical/Feminist Methodology

A Methodological Journey

> It is part of Dorothy Smith's political project to insist that now more than ever we need to be working to change our world. And that, while Truth may be an illusion, it is nonetheless possible—and urgent—to investigate and describe the relations that put our lives in place. (Campbell & Manicom, 1995, p.5)

I began this study with the intent to use a critical, feminist ethnography called institutional ethnography as research methodology. Institutional ethnography has been adapted by Dorothy Smith from Marx and Engel's method of political economic analysis (Campbell, 1996; Diamond, 1986; Ng, 1996). This methodology primarily uses documentary analysis to examine the larger institutional and political relations informing and organizing a local setting (Ng, 1996). As Diamond puts it: "it is a method for exploring macropolitical forces in the micropolitical moments of their everyday execution" (p. 1287). For the purposes of this study, I saw it as an approach that could 'unpack' the political implications of market relations and lay bare the ruling relations perpetuated in the everyday lives of girls who smoke.

However, my choice of this methodology was based on my assumption that my interview data would be heavily focussed on the influence of tobacco advertising on girls' smoking behaviour. I had forseen that a large part of my study would thus be devoted to analyzing both cigarette ads (as primary documents perpetuating ruling relations in the everyday lives of girl smokers) and tobacco industry documentation relating to the production of cigarette advertising. But this was not to be. Instead, the girls I talked to saw tobacco advertising as playing a much smaller role in their smoking than I had thought. The issue was still relevant to my thesis, but not in the direct way that I had initially envisioned.

For this reason, as I began to analyse the data in greater depth, I concluded that institutional ethnography, because of its strong focus on documentary analysis, was no longer the best methodology for this study.

Nevertheless, I found myself still attracted to ethnography as a methodology. Although ethnography began as a research methodology for cultural anthropologists interested in describing how people in 'other' cultures lived and interacted among themselves, ethnography is now used in many different academic disciplines as a useful tool for researchers attempting to understand the 'culture' or way of life of any particular interacting group of humans, whether this group lives on the other side of the world or outside our own door. For the purposes of this study, I was interested in understanding what the world of teenage girl smokers is like as much as possible from their own perspective. I agreed with Thomas (1993) that

> of all disciplines, ethnography perhaps is situated best to provide the tools for digging below mundane surface appearances of the cultural basis of...forms of social existence to display a multiplicity of alternate meanings....The core of critical ethnography is the study of the process of domestication and social entrapment by which we are made content with our life conditions. (Thomas, 1993, pp. 6, 7)

Ethnographic research is undertaken within 'the field' (among the people one is attempting to understand) instead of at a distance or within an artificial setting. Ethnographers attempt to immerse themselves in the world of those they seek to understand in order to gain, as much as is possible for an 'outsider,' an accurate sense of the realities of the everyday/everynight lives of 'insiders'. This means gathering multiple kinds of information such as first hand accounts from 'insiders' themselves (interview data) and observational data. Making an ethnographic analysis entails becoming a participant observer in the life worlds of those one is studying, in order to be able to draw on one's own personal experiences in the field as data (Prus, 1994; Shaffir, Dietz & Stebbins, 1994).

This approach fits well with my own materialist view of the world. As Berman (1989) explains it, a

> materialist understanding of nature views all existence as matter in motion (Engels 1940). It is not concerned with the abstract *idea* of nature nor with nature as *being* but with real, specific natural phenomena at a particular place and time, under particular conditions of existence, and in the process of change. Understanding these phenomena requires more than simply detached observation; it demands interaction....Reality is not only perceived by "detached" observation alone in contemplation but also "subjectively" through involvement, conceptualization, and action....This suggests that....in trying to understand the position of women in society, one must involve oneself first with the relations of particular women, at a given time and place, and under particular conditions of exploitation. (pp. 241, 242)

Although, in the case of this study, I did not take up smoking and could not, of course, turn back the hands of time to become once again an adolescent, I attempted to involve myself with the girls I was studying enough to be able to understand something of how and why they behave and interact as they do, and be able to generate an account of their behaviour that they themselves could recognize as 'truthful'.

Despite my commitment to an ethnographic study during the process of collecting data, however, I found myself facing another unexpected twist in the road as I analyzed the data I had collected. Although much of the data was rich and informative, I was nevertheless faced with the truth that I had not been able to collect enough data to complete a well-rounded view of the life-worlds of the girls I had studied. I could not in all honesty claim that I had an accurate sense of the realities of the everyday/everynight lives of these girls. Nevertheless, in employing ethnographic methods and intent, I had been allowed a tantalizing glimpse into many important corners of those lives. I began to see my research project as a methodological journey. Once I'd been on the road for a while I discovered that the map I'd brought with me was for a different place. I then determined that I needed to become a cartographer and make my own map. Unfortunately, the vehicle I was using was only able to access certain parts of the terrain I was attempting to explore. I ended up with a map that was accurate only for those areas that I had been able to visit. In this way, my research methodology was an emerging one.

Although the reasons for the changing of methodologies during the process of the study were sound ones that grew out of the research itself, I found myself wondering at

first if the research results would be compromised by these changes. As I moved through the changes, however, I realized that my uneasiness was due more to my fears that I wouldn't be able to 'control' the study, that I couldn't predict the results, that it was taking on a life of its own, than to legitimate methodological concerns. Eventually I realized that this study was a realistic example of the messiness of research done with real people about real experiences. Research conducted inside a laboratory is easy to control, but research conducted 'in the field' is unpredictable and challenging. The research results, then, far from being compromised, were rendered more trustworthy as I gritted my teeth and, despite my discomfort, followed the convoluted path that this research journey led me on.

A Critical Perspective

As I let go first of institutional ethnography in particular and then of ethnography in general, I embraced a broader meaning of critical research methodology. Critical approaches to research go "beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves" (Neuman, 1994, p. 67). Critical research is done not just to understand and describe social relationships, but to expose the illusions and myths which hide underlying exploitative power structures, and thereby supply people with the tools needed to transform the world (Neuman, 1994). Lather calls research that is explicitly committed to critiquing the status quo and building a more just society "research as praxis" (1991, p. 51)

> Rather than the illusory 'value-free' knowledge of the positivists, praxis-oriented inquirers seek emancipatory knowledge. Emancipatory knowledge increases awareness of the contradictions distorted or hidden by everyday understandings, and in doing so it directs attention to the possibilities for social transformation inherent in the present configuration of social processes. (p. 52)

Although critical research perspectives span many different academic traditions and espouse a variety of theoretical distinctions, what most have in common are their close links to socialist and/or feminist politics and a concern with working towards the transformation of oppressive power relations and bringing about human emancipation. Critical ethnography, specifically, derives from the development of Hegelian and Marxist philosophical ideas by

twentieth-century Marxist and feminist sociologists (Hammersley, 1992). According to

Thomas (1993), critical ethnography is simultaneously hermeneutic and emancipatory.

> It deepens and sharpens ethical commitments by forcing us to develop and act upon value commitments in the context of political agendas. Critical ethnographers describe, analyze, and open to scrutiny otherwise hidden agendas, power centers, and assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain. Critical scholarship requires that commonsense assumptions be questioned. (pp. 2, 3)

Certainly, these were values and goals towards which I was committed. It is important for

me, as a feminist social worker, to work within a research methodology that would allow

me to strip through surface layers of meaning and come to an understanding of the issue of

girls' smoking that reaches beyond conventional ideas about addiction and challenges the

oppressive patriarchal structures that are not only at the heart of such conventional theories

but which also serve to produce a "girl-poisoning culture" (Pipher, 1994, p. 12).

A Feminist Perspective

> Feminist social science, in its commitment to feminism, is imbued with a moral dimension; thus, it runs counter to the relativism and the ethical neutrality held to govern both contemporary philosophy and science. Moreover, feminism as a political movement must try to create the conditions whereby we can intelligently and reasonably agree upon substantive values. Precisely out of what women have experienced—their marginal status, their outcastness, their experience of care and concern—the case is made that women can offer an epistemologically sounder and politically and morally better position. (Farganis, 1989, p. 217)

A critical perspective fits well with my commitment to feminism. As a feminist I am

interested in social change, and the objective of making this critical analysis "is to open up

possibilities for people who live these experiences to have more room to move and act, on

the basis of more knowledge" (Campbell, 1996, p. 2). There are many different ideas

about what a feminist perspective consists of. Reinharz (1992) believes that a feminist

perspective is one that is interested in power relations as they affect those who are less

powerful, and one which considers women's lives as important. One feminist research

principle that arises from this perspective is the attempt to break down traditional divisions

between researchers and those they research.

Beyond a very few generalities, however, there is no single set of claims about

feminism that is accepted by all feminists (Harding, 1991). Feminist views and beliefs are

not monolithic: there are many different feminisms. By its very nature feminism is

anarchistic. It demands an active and unceasing search for better understanding, a project

which involves constant challenging of itself. Unlike other political/theoretical perspectives,

feminism is multi-faceted and constantly shifting: a critical practice rather than a received

theory (de Lauretis, 1986). Although personally I prefer not to classify myself as rigidly

belonging to a particular ideological feminist 'camp', to make it easier for people to

understand the general direction of my political stance, I usually identify myself as a radical

feminist[11].

For most feminists who are working within the 'tobacco control movement,'

research about the links between inequality and smoking and the use of more qualitative

research methods are their goals (Greaves, 1995). Many have rejected the traditional

approach of massive quantitative studies and the adherence to the medical model for

deriving research questions.

> Although ultimately the health effects of smoking are the main concern, economic,
> social, psychological, and cultural aspects of women's smoking are also important.
> The feminist approach to understanding tobacco use is holistic and interdisciplinary,
> developing the links between these aspects and the health effects. (p. 197)

Greaves asserts that, for feminist researchers, the task of understanding the issues

surrounding smoking for women and girls is a political issue.

Sandra Harding (1991) has identified three main tendencies of emerging feminist

thought that inform research: feminist empiricism, feminist postmodernism and feminist

standpoint theory. Feminist empiricism[12] has provided the theories behind many of the

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[11] One of the primary differences between radical feminism and other feminisms is the contention that the male-female relationship is the paradigm for all other power relationships and that the resulting oppression of women is the first and primary oppression from which all other oppressions flow (Rowland & Klein, 1991). Radical feminist Kate Millett (1970) argues that: "Social caste supersedes all other forms of inegalitarianism: racial, political or economic, and unless the clinging to male supremacy as a birthright is finally foregone, all other systems of oppression will continue to function simply by virtue of their logical and emotional mandate in the primary human situation" (p. 25). Radical feminists recognize and embrace the myriad differences between women, yet see the oppression of women as a universal (but not identical) phenomenon crossing race and class boundaries. This leads to the concept of 'sisterhood'. Sexual and reproductive politics are extremely important to radical feminists.

[12] Feminist empiricism is what Harding (1991) labels the feminist research in biology and social sciences that attempts to overcome sexist and androcentric biases and assumptions by more rigorous "adherence to existing methodological norms of scientific inquiry" (p. 111). Essentially, she sees feminist empiricism as

major challenges to traditional positivist research ideologies, assumptions, methods and findings. Feminist postmodernism[13] challenges much taken-for-granted feminist thought as it deconstructs the notion of gender. Ironically, although this stance has enormous potential for beginning to think about a revolutionary new world where the traditional gender dichotomies are no longer relevant, it also means the end of a feminist politics per se. Many feminists see postmodernism as just another recapitulation of Enlightenment theories blind to questions of gender and race (Harding, 1991). According to Harding, feminist standpoint theory can straddle both modern and postmodern worlds.

Standpoint theory has arisen as an attempt to meet the need for establishing trustworthiness of research data that has arisen from the gap left behind by the discredited notion of objectivity. From a feminist perspective (which is not the same thing as a feminist standpoint) there is an acknowledgment that there is no such thing as a neutral or disengaged position from which I, as a researcher, can investigate what I am interested in. I must investigate it from where I stand within its social organization or location (G. Smith, 1995). Therefore I cannot be objective in the traditional meaning of the term. This is where standpoint theory comes in. The feminist standpoint (or standpoint of women), as Dorothy Smith (1987) explains it, is not a viewpoint but a common excluded location that has been accomplished through the organization of social relations. Because it is a place that is inhabited by those who have traditionally been excluded from ruling, it is also a vantage point from which the ruling relations are visible: its location outside of the ruling regime makes this comprehensive viewpoint possible. This does not mean that, as feminists or women, we do not or cannot participate in the conceptual work of ruling practices, but

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an "add women and stir" approach that works from within existing research theories and so does not seriously challenge the status quo.

[13] Feminist postmodernism is based on the deconstruction of gender. Postmodern feminist Kristeva (1974) asserts that: "Woman as such does not exist. She is in the process of becoming" (p. 16). Although postmodernism rejects the notion of gender as well as rationalist notions of historical social progress and traditional assumptions about truth and reality, po-mo feminists believe that post-modernism has the potential to break through dualistic ways of thinking and lead to radically different and improved theories about ourselves and the world around us. They "long for a mode beyond difference" (Miller, 1986, p. 115).

rather that as socially located beings we may experience a "bifurcation of consciousness" (Harding, 1991; Smith, 1987) whereby we are aware simultaneously of being reasoning investigators and occupying a social location: that reasoning is socially located (Harding, 1991). Harding explains that

> our best beliefs as well as our worst ones have social causes, and it is better to begin from some social locations rather than others if one wants to generate less partial and distorted claims about nature and social relations. That is not to say that only persons in female bodies do or can generate such beliefs, let alone that all such persons do or can. But it is to say that one must be engaged in historical struggles — not just a disembodied observer of them — in order to be able to "occupy" such social locations. Those historical struggles make one's arguments "embodied," not transcendental. (pp. 184-5)

Feminist standpoint theory has been criticized as being essentialist (Harding, 1991). Harding counters that the logic of standpoint theory contains both an essentializing tendency as well as the resources to combat such a tendency: it contains contradictions just as feminism itself does. Feminist standpoint theory is fundamentally interested in the differences created by relationships between men's and women's lives. Many feminists who criticize standpoint theory believe that standpoint theorists are assuming a universal feminine condition in order to claim to be producing a distinctively feminist theory of knowledge. Yet standpoint theories have been a useful tool for women of colour, lesbians, and non-European women to learn about dominant social theories (ie. it can be used to investigate differences between women as well as between women and men).

Harding believes that standpoint theory contains within it "tendencies both to ignore and to emphasize differences within the groups on which it focuses—in our case, differences between women or between men" (p. 177). For instance, like postmodernism, standpoint theory insists on "the recognition that not just false claims but also true (or less false) ones are socially situated" (p. 178). It also dismisses the idea that the "agents of reason and knowledge" (p. 185) in standpoint theory are unitary individuals. Because feminist standpoint theory claims that knowledge arises from the bifurcated consciousness, or contradictory loyalties, of women trying to fit the understandings they have about

feminist politics and about their own lives into the dominant culture's ways of thinking about women's lives, these women cannot be unitary individuals.

Dorothy Smith (1987) asserts that the crux of a sociology for women is to preserve "the presence of subjects as knowers and as actors" (p. 105) rather than as objects to be observed, analyzed and interpreted by a researcher. Thus, such a feminist methodology is not meant to universalize a particular experience. Rather, it is used to discover what actually happens in the everyday worlds of the subjects/participants. I must rely on what I am told by my subjects/participants to begin an enquiry that helps me understand what they do and what happens in their everyday worlds. But as a critical researcher, it is then my job to explicate the relations in which these everyday worlds are embedded. In order to do this without objectifying the experience of the subjects I can go back to our common social location or standpoint as females in a patriarchal society. Researching from a feminist standpoint means that I not forsake the 'body' (the social location that I occupy) in order to access the 'mind' (the academic thinking that I do about my research).

In this research project, then, I was aware of my social location as a woman as well as a researcher. Instead of pretending a nonexistent neutral objectivity, I sought an intersection in my location with that of the girls who participated in my study. As an academic I found little common ground with the girls I observed and interviewed. As a middle-aged person interacting with adolescents I found a large experience gap extending in both directions. As a middle class person with a comparatively privileged background and current situation I found very little in common with the troubled and uncertain realities of the working class/welfare class girls I studied. As a female, however, I found a common location or shared plane with these girls. Because I also inhabit a piece of their world I had a vantage point from which I could accurately observe and produce a faithful account of what was going on in their lives. I was able to use that common social location from which to explicate how the everyday lives of my research participants are organized from outside

their experience in ways that account for those actual experiences (M. Campbell, personal communication, 22 January 1997).

Qualitative Paradigm

> Ironically, most qualitative research on subjective interpretations of smoking has been done in secret by tobacco companies in order to improve and focus their brand development. (Greaves, 1995, p. 203)

The emerging critical/feminist research methodology I used is qualitative. As such, it seeks to understand rather than measure a given situation. Feminist and other critiques of the quantitative methods preferred in the traditional or positivist research paradigm have shown that quantitative research produces a limited and distorted version of the world. To correct this, qualitative research takes a more holistic approach to research (Farganis, 1989).

> [S]ocial scientists are also looking either to feminism and/or ethnomethodology and phenomenology for ways of breaking out of the hold that positivism has on social science: (1) they want to understand the daily lives and experiences of the people about whom they have an interest in writing; (2) they want to understand the social world of ordinary consciousness before "scientific theory organizes consciousness" (Smith 1979:156), trying to avoid the obfuscation of theory that comes between them and that world; (3) they do not merely want to observe and describe behavior of individuals as if either the observed or the observers were not real subjects in a concrete world; that is, humans understanding other humans, (4) they want to introduce an emancipatory dimension into their research and writing, understanding and changing the life-worlds that they study while recognizing how those life-worlds change them. (pp. 213, 214)

Research Process

Data Collection

The methods of data collection within a critical/feminist study vary. My analysis was based primarily on one-on-one interviews with five girl smokers along with participant observation at a local Youth Centre. Initially I had hoped to interview girls who had recently started smoking so that they would have clear memories about their beginning smoking experiences. However, I hadn't known how few girls attended the youth centre and soon realized that I would have to be less choosy. I ended up recruiting girl smokers between the ages of twelve and twenty [see Appendix A]. I had also had some ideas initially about talking to both smokers and non-smokers in order to try to find some

differences between the two groups but my final decision was to interview only smokers. I wanted to focus completely on the world of girls smokers in this study and leave the comparisons to other researchers.

The interviews themselves were unstructured in format, loosely following a series of questions and issues. I attempted to focus on the ordinary details of the girls' lives in order to understand the context in which smoking occurred. Girls were given an informed consent form [see Appendix B] to read and sign before the interviews began and questioned to make sure they understood their rights in the interview situation. Parental consent was not sought for these interviews because of the sensitive nature of the topic (parents may not have been aware that their daughters smoked). The consent form and the interview process were designed to take all applicable ethical issues into consideration. These included the right of participants to self-determination, anonymity and confidentiality, and protection from harm or extreme discomfort[14]. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed, and the girls were given the opportunity to review the transcripts and make changes before the data was used. No changes were made on any of the transcripts. Further details both about the study participants and the process of data collection are given in the next chapter.

Data Analysis

Preliminary data analysis began as the first data (observations and personal field notes) were collected. I kept track of emerging trends and relationships, noted unusual or unexpected developments, and developed some initial hunches about was going on in the world of girl smokers. I was fortunate to be enrolled in an experimental data analysis course over the internet which focussed on the research methodology of institutional

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[14] In weighing the potential of both risks and benefits to the participants from this research, I felt that the benefits would outweigh any risks. Obvious benefits were 1) that thinking and talking about the issue of smoking might encourage participants to quit, and 2) that because of the lack of good qualitative research with smoking girls that this kind of research would benefit girls in general. I felt that participants might experience some distress during the interviews because of the nature of the topic and this turned out to be the case for the initial interviews. I believe, however, that this was healthy distress, as it may have provided some of the girls with the impetus for thinking about quitting.

ethnography. Here I found invaluable feedback and support for early drafts of analysis 'chunks' as I completed the first interview transcripts and, after some time, the second interview transcripts. As I noted earlier I began this study with the intention to use institutional ethnography, and the primary method of data analysis in this methodology is that of developing 'stories' from the data. A story includes interesting patterns of related data that illuminate how social relations and/or ruling (power) relations work in the context of the everyday lives of the study participants. An argument is then developed from this story that explicates what is happening in the lives of the people being studied (M. Campbell, personal communication, May 16, 1998). This, then, was the method I used to develop the major ideas of my analysis.

I was aware throughout the data analysis phase of the need to 'see' through the surface appearance of the data in order to uncover the 'truth' of what was going on in the lives of girls who smoke. For this reason, I kept an attitude diary in order to attempt to keep track of biases and false assumptions that I had that might prevent me from clearly seeing what was going on. Towards this end I was conscious continually of the standpoint or social location that I share with the girls that I interviewed. I tried to look at the data from as many different directions and angles as possible so that nothing of importance was missed at this stage. The data analysis developed gradually over time with continued thought and through the process of writing and rewriting an argument until it began to seem cohesive and internally consistent. The process of 'storytelling' became complete when I integrated relevant research literature into the various stories.

Trustworthiness of Research Results

Warrantability instead of Objectivity

Dorothy Smith (1987), among other feminists, critiques the notion of objectivity within the positivist paradigm as one which is tied up with ruling practices - it is a form of knowing used to rule others and, according to George Smith (1995), it is impossible to

extricate from "the standpoint of men" (p. 22). This is because traditional 'objective'

science, including the social sciences, has failed to (and cannot) account accurately for

women and the conditions of our lives. Indeed, its biased lens cannot even accurately

reflect the world of men. Thus, the concept of objectivity as it was theorized to provide for

accurate, bias-free reporting of the world, has been shown to be inadequate (Harding,

1991; Smith, 1987). There is a problem, then, when researchers who are doing research

outside of the positivist paradigm attempt to strengthen their argument by using criteria of

rigour that have been developed for and within a positivistic paradigm.

Nevertheless, because qualitative research is often considered less 'valid' than

positivistic research, "a central task for [post-positivist] oriented researchers becomes the

confrontation of issues of empirical accountability — the need to offer grounds for accepting

a researcher's description and analysis -- and the search for workable ways of establishing

the trustworthiness of data in critical inquiry" (Lather, 1991, p. 52). For this reason,

Dorothy Smith (1987) talks about the kind of 'objectivity' that is produced by

critical/feminist methodology. That is, she shows how others should be able to confirm the

accuracy of the research by returning "to the object of our inquiry and on the basis of their

own work respond: 'No, she is wrong, it does not work like that but like this,' and so

forth" (p.127).

For Dorothy Smith (1987), critical/feminist methodology produces 'objectivity' (or

warrantability) when the standpoints of both researcher and participants are taken into

account. The participants are considered expert agents of their lives and both participants

and researcher share the same plane (they are socially located as females in a patriarchal

culture). Thus it is that the researcher is able to accurately understand and describe the

world of her participants: because she also inhabits a part of this world, which is an actual

world that can be learned about, described and understood. There are at least two

perspectives (the researcher's and the participant's) and the test of accuracy is not whether

they measure up to a theoretical concept but rather whether the account that the researcher

produces is faithful to what is actually there to be investigated (Smith, 1987). Within this study, then, I tested the accuracy of my findings by consulting with the study participants as to the 'truthfulness' of the data I had collected about their life worlds. The girls confirmed that they saw the data as accurately reflecting their realities. I also held the account and analysis up for comparison to what I myself know about the world from the location I hold in common with the girls I talked to. This was particularly useful when thinking about the discourse of femininity and how gender impacts on the lives of females.

Authenticity instead of Generalizability

The findings of this study are not meant to be universally applied or generalized to the entire population of smoking girls. Firstly, I do not believe that this would be a helpful goal, as I and other feminist researchers working in this area see the issue of smoking, as well as the girls who do it, as complex and multi-faceted. Secondly, the nature of this study does not lend itself to the kind of statistical analysis that is based on probability sampling. Therefore, I focussed rather on providing a faithful hearing and telling of the stories of the girls that I talked to. I concentrated on writing accounts of smoking experiences that the girls I talked to would recognize as authentic and that would provide helpful understandings of the issue of smoking among girls to readers who may have had no prior exposure to this issue. Indeed, I was able to confirm with several of the girls I had interviewed that they agreed with my analysis of what they had told me.

Despite the fact that the positivistic concept of generalizability is not applicable here, the findings of this study can still be useful outside of the context of the group of five girls I talked to. Indeed, they must be, as that is the purpose of a critical research methodology: to seek emancipatory knowledge that will direct our attention to "possibilities for social transformation" (Lather, 1991, p. 52). Maxwell (1996) discusses three ways in which qualitative studies can be generalizable. First, he notes that many qualitative studies have "*face generalizability*; there is no obvious reason *not* to believe that the results apply more generally" (p. 97). I believe that this is true of my study: although it would be foolish to

believe that my findings would apply to every girls who smokes, it would be foolish also to assume that they do not apply in a more general way to many other girl smokers.

Secondly, Maxwell believes that the generalizability of many qualitative studies is also based on the development of theories that might be extended to other cases. Again, this is applicable to my study, as I have drawn on theories developed by feminist researchers in the context of other populations and shown how they could be extended to help illuminate the issue of smoking among adolescent girls. These theories, as I have extended them, could be fruitfully applied to understand the issue of smoking among other girls.

Finally, Maxwell draws on work by others to list a number of features of qualitative studies that lend credibility to generalizations. One of these is the similarity of constraints and dynamics to other situations. Thus, it would be fair to say that my findings could be safely generalized to other girls who fit the same general demographic situations as the girls in this study. Another feature is the "universality of the phenomenon studied" (p. 97). The main phenomenon under study in this case is that of smoking among adolescent girls, and this is arguably (in North America at least) an extremely widespread phenomenon. The discourse of femininity is also a universal phenomenon in our society. A final feature is that of corroboration from other studies and, in my study, I have attempted throughout to show how my findings were similar to those of other studies with populations that have characteristics in common with girls who smoke.

Thus, although this study was a qualitative one with a small sample of girls, its value in terms of generalizability to other situations lies predominantly in the universality of the issue of smoking among girls within the constraints of a patriarchal and capitalist society. In listening to what the girls had to tell me and developing these stories into authentic accounts of their experiences, I looked for concrete lessons about the issue of smoking among adolescent girls that could be drawn from my study to be researched further and/or applied in a broader sense. The critical analysis I provide in the following pages is designed to expose the exploitative power structures that underly this issue and to

provide some tools which can help not only support the cessation efforts of girls who smoke but also to begin to change the conditions in our society which encourage girls to take up smoking.

CHAPTER FOUR

MEETING THE GIRLS: ADVENTURES IN THE FIELD[15]

My research had as its starting point and central focus an exploration of the
everyday lives of girls who smoke as they are experienced and articulated by the girls
themselves. I wanted to observe, describe and understand the lives of smoking girls as
much as possible from their own point of view. In order to see the life-worlds of smoking
girls 'through their eyes' I needed to begin by learning about girls in today's world. I had
my work cut out for me in this area since I hadn't worked with girls before. I began my
education from the ground up.

The Youth Centre

I chose to contact smoking girls through a local youth centre because, for several
reasons, I wanted to stay outside of the school system. I felt that if girls met me in the
school context they would be more likely to see me as an authority figure and less likely to
trust me. In addition to this I wanted to avoid having to wade through the paperwork and
bureaucratic restrictions involved in doing research through a school. Primarily, however, I
wanted to be able to observe girls during their leisure hours, and a youth centre was one
place that could offer me this context. I began my observations in September 1997 and
attended the youth centre every Thursday evening and every second Friday evening until
the middle of December 1997 (the youth centre was open for drop-in every Thursday from
6 pm to 9 pm and Friday from 6 pm to 11 pm during this time).

The youth centre I attended is located in a suburban area of Greater Victoria that has
many young and low income families. One of the most pressing issues in this community
has been the lack of services for youth. The youth centre was started in 1993 in response to
complaints from youth in the community that there were no fun places for them to 'hang

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[15] "Field research...refers to research in which the researcher personally observes, discusses, and records the
words and actions of people engaging in social interaction" (Shaffir, Dietz & Stebbins, 1994).

out,' together with complaints from adults in the community that youth crime was rising because there was nowhere for youth to go except the streets. The youth centre is run by a non-profit agency on a shoestring budget and located in a group of buildings close to train tracks that used to be owned by Via Rail. Rent is very low as the buildings are slated for demolition within the next few years to make way for a commuter connector route.

The offices of the agency are in a converted house, which includes a kitchen, living room for group sessions, separate counselling rooms, and an area for a 'coffee house' on selected evenings for older youth. In the basement is an art room and washrooms. The other buildings are activity buildings used for indoor sports, 'jamming sessions' for aspiring musicians, video nights, and other activities. The buildings form a circle around a large paved courtyard with basketball hoops set up that is used for outdoor games, activities and 'hanging out'. The buildings themselves are non-descript and somewhat shabby in appearance and furnishings, with the exception of the interior walls of the activity rooms which are a psychedelic group effort spraypainted by the youth themselves.

My time at the youth centre was spent in a variety of ways, but mainly I 'hung out' wherever the youth happened to be. Because only about 20% of the youth at the centre are girls much of my time was spent hanging around groups of boys. Whenever girls showed up, I would gravitate towards them. It was far easier to get to know the boys as they attended more regularly, so they accepted my presence more readily. Girls, on the other hand, seemed more easily spooked, and I found myself having to work harder to be accepted by them. On rainy evenings I spent much of my time hanging out in the billiard room or the art room. On dry nights I followed the youth outside and occasionally joined various groups in impromptu games of basketball or soccer. When girls where present, however, I was more likely to hang around the periphery of any games, as they mainly did.

My idea was that the youth should get used to seeing me around and begin to accept me as a friendly, non-threatening fixture of the youth centre. I hoped to become a friend to the girls: someone who would be accepted into their circles. Unfortunately, an unforseen

twist was that they saw me, from the beginning, as just one more youth worker. My arrival coincided with that of three practicum students from the local university, and the youth assumed that I was another one. Although I always made a point of introducing myself and my project to girls I hadn't seen before, I blended into the uninteresting world of adults too well, as most of the girls promptly forgot who I was. As well, my age worked against me. In the minds of the youth, any middle-aged woman at the youth centre was a staff person. This meant that I was automatically seen as an authority figure.

Although staff at the youth centre are generally liked or at least tolerated by the youth, they are also seen as authority figures in much the same way as parents are. In fact, in the minds of the permanent staff at the centre, their job is very much that of parenting or re-parenting the youth who attend there. So, since I was automatically placed into that category by the youth, my presence evoked the same kind of caution that was exercised around all other workers, but no curiousity. It was assumed that I would be enforcing rules and, for this reason, youth could never behave in a completely natural way in my presence. My situation was not helped by the fact that the other staff, themselves seeming to forget my purpose there, would often ask me to supervise a room if they had to leave for any reason. This is a dilemna that others researching youth have found themselves in (Griffiths, 1995). I felt unable to easily refuse these requests as I was aware of the fact that I was at the youth centre at the discretion of the staff. Indeed, I was so much considered a part of the staff 'team' that I was given an open invitation to staff meetings and to several staff social events.

This staff reputation worked against me in several ways. The purpose of my research was to observe girls smoking and to interview them about their smoking. I also wanted to observe youth, particularly girls, interacting. Because it was assumed that I would be enforcing rules, however, the youth were never very comfortable smoking around me. It seemed I was forever approaching distant groups of smoking youth, only to see the group disintegrate and scatter as I came closer. There was no actual rule about

smoking at the youth centre, except for inside the buildings, but there seemed to be some unspoken rules at work. The only exception to this rule seemed to be the two younger practicum students who were themselves smokers. They would be accepted into smoking groups, perhaps because they were only a few years older than the youth, but more likely because they often had extra cigarettes with them. At a few points I became so frustrated that I almost considered taking up smoking myself.

The distrust that was attached to my perceived status as youth worker was extended to the interview experience. I had put posters up advertising my project within the second month at the youth centre [see Appendix A]. These posters were fairly attractive and simple. They made it clear that the project was aimed at girls only and offered a small incentive for participation. To my surprise and frustration, they evoked no response from girls but lots of complaints from boys, who demanded to know why they couldn't be part of the study. When this happened, I would always quote the statistic about girls being the only growing group of smokers and explain that I was interested in finding out why this was happening. This usually mollified the boys.

When several weeks had passed without any girls approaching me of their own volition, I began to actively recruit them. This was far more difficult than I had expected. I discovered that the girls were assuming that the purpose of the interviews was to convince them to stop smoking. Even after making it clear that this was not my intention, girls were still extremely suspicious of my motives. One of the first two girls that I recruited was a good example of this distrust. Despite much discussion and agreement about what we would cover in the interview, she sheepishly cancelled out just before our scheduled time: "I've decided to quit smoking", she told me, avoiding my eyes. I assured her that I was still interested in talking to her. She still refused. An hour later I observed her smoking in another group. I was never able to convince her to talk to me, despite the fact that she was friends with several of the girls who eventually did.

Learning about Youth

Let me hasten to add that, however frustrating my early experiences at the youth centre may have been, I was to learn a great deal about youth in general and teenage girls in particular while there. The frustrations I experienced were, I see in retrospect, due mainly to unrealistic expectations and lack of knowledge about girls on my part. My time at the youth centre was extremely important to my project, not least in that it allowed me access to the five girls that finally became the basis of my study. In addition, however, I learned much about the lives of these girls and others like them. To begin with, I noticed that far fewer girls than boys attended the youth centre, that they attended less often and for shorter periods of time when they did attend, and that the average age range of those who attended was more narrow than that of boys: boys begin attending at far younger ages than do girls, and it is rare that girls over the age of 16 spend much time there, whereas boys may continue attending until 17 or 18. Youth centre staff were not sure why girls do not attend at younger ages. I propose that one of the reasons may be that girls are allowed less leisure time than boys, and that the leisure time they do have is more closely supervised and restricted than that of boys. Kostash (1987) points out that "girls are under much greater supervision than their brothers, they are expected to do more housework, they have less disposable cash, and they are all too aware of the physical danger they run in being out at night in 'male' territory" (p. 261).

Youth centre staff did have a theory, however, about why girls stop attending the youth centre at younger ages than do boys. The staff had observed that girls who attend the youth centre tend to get romantically/sexually involved at younger ages than do boys and that their boyfriends are almost always a few years older than they are. Such boyfriends tend to have access to cars, and once this is achieved, the youth centre loses its appeal in favour of other less accessible locations. Another factor that staff believed influence girls to leave earlier is the influx, every fall, of numerous pre-pubetal eleven year old boys, most of whom look as though they are closer to eight or nine years old. As girls mature physically

more quickly than boys, it becomes important for them to feel adult earlier than boys. Thus, they seem to seek out the company of those boys who appear to be more mature and shun the company of those who appear much younger.

I learned that sexual harrassment is alive and well for girls these days, and much more virulent than it was in my day. Pipher (1994) is also convinced that this is the case. I was astounded to observe that even the very youngest and childlike of boys felt entitled to pass judgement on the girls who attended the centre in terms of their appearance and behaviour including sexual prowess or lack thereof (imagined or otherwise). These kinds of judgements were made openly in front of staff[16] and especially in front of other boys. Girls were also open to extremely hostile attack if they somehow incurred disfavour - either sexually, morally or in any other way. Other girls would participate in this kind of scapegoating just as avidly as boys. For example, I once entered a room to find a group of girls gathered around a boy on a telephone, through which he was screaming violent threats and obscenities at another girl who had in some way displeased the group. When I put an end to the call, the whole group assured me that the girl on the receiving end "deserved it" and none seemed at all apologetic.

Indeed, intensity - both positive and negative - seemed to be the hallmark of girl relationships. Although close friendships seemed to be cyclical and changing, they were what set the girls apart from the boys. Boys often showed up alone or with siblings and didn't seem to be as particular about who their companions were. Girls, on the other hand, almost always showed up in friendship groups of two or more and rarely went anywhere at the centre alone. A good example of the intensity of these girl friendships was that of Mercedes and Vicky. These two girls were the first ones whom I met at the centre, and I already knew them fairly well by the time I tried to recruit them for interviews. I broached the topic and explained my project, expecting to get a fairly quick decision from the girls. It

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[16] I would hasten to add that Youth Centre staff never condoned such behaviour and always responded quickly to stop it.

wasn't that easy though: they gazed at each other intently, each trying to read the other's decision in her eyes. Finally, Mercedes turned to me and asked some hedging questions: did the interview need to be now? how long would it take? could they do it together? I was unprepared for the last question and so told them no[17]. Mercedes hedged a bit longer and then reluctantly agreed to do the interview. At this point Vicky threw her arms around Mercedes and cried "No, you can't leave me. I don't want you to go!" Persuaded by this show of affection and neediness, Mercedes changed her mind. I then tried negotiating: perhaps a bit later in the evening would work? Or maybe tomorrow night? Vicky insisted that she and Mercedes needed to be together the whole time: "We hardly see each other at school anymore," she explained. Mercedes was kind hearted, though, and could see my disappointment at her change of mind, so she began negotiating with Vicky on my behalf. "Well, maybe tomorrow night, if it's really short?," she prompted. Finally Vicky agreed that this would work. We set a time for the interview. The next evening, when the time came, Vicky began crying. The interview was called off as the two friends went away to deal with this emotional crisis. I eventually interviewed Mercedes several weeks later when Vicky was unable to attend.

This instance was not an unusual one. As I continued my recruiting efforts I was asked at least two more times by different pairs or trios of best-friends if they could do the interview together. I began to see that the primary reason why girls were not responding to my poster was because they were so busy socializing with their friends while at the youth centre. My project was outside of their social agendas. This fits with what other researchers

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[17] I was reluctant to talk to girls in pairs or groups because of the way my study had been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Victoria. It was essential for the purposes of my study that the girls be able to give informed consent themselves without the approval or, if necessary, the knowledge of their parents. Having anticipated some difficulties in gaining approval on this point from the Committee, I had overcompensated in other areas and prepared a very strongly worded consent form [see Appendix B] which promised both confidentiality and anonymity for the girls who chose to participate. Doing interviews with more then one girl would have compromised both. Neither I nor the Committee anticipated how profoundly unimportant this would be to the girls themselves. In hindsight, I recognize that it would have been ethically possible to revise the consent form to allow for interviews of more than one girl at once.

have found (Bibby & Posterski, 1992; Holmes & Silverman, 1992; McRobbie, 1991; Pipher, 1994). Those who eventually agreed to interviews usually did so at times when their best-friends were not able to attend. The only exception was Gabi, who didn't know any of the other girls and talked to me the only time she attended the youth centre that fall. She had been a regular two years earlier and she and her friends hung out elsewhere now. She had only returned because she was bored that evening and wanted to say "hi" to some of the staff.

What struck me most vividly about my observations at the youth centre, however, was how clearly defined gender roles still are. In some ways I think the lines between femininity and masculinity are even more sharply drawn than they were during my teenage years in the 1970s. Despite the intervening years of feminism, or perhaps in response to them[18], the world these girls live in appears to be more dangerous, sexualized and socially complex than the one I grew up in (Bibby & Posterski, 1992; Pipher, 1994).

Interviews

The first interviews were all conducted at the youth centre, in a small office which was part storage room with only a feeble corner lamp for lighting and an old naughahyde sofa for the seating. The room was hardly luxurious, but not terribly different in tone from the rest of the youth centre. Although situated at some distance from the locus of activity, it was nevertheless somewhat noisy at times, especially since a curious group of onlookers would usually tag along and wait directly outside the door for the interview to end. This state of affairs did not help the girls in terms of their ability to focus on the task at hand. The interviews ranged from 15 to 35 minutes in length and were far less informative than I had hoped. I had expected that they would last up to an hour and that the girls would be

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[18] Susan Faludi, in her book *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women* (1991), argues that feminism was so successful in challenging the sexist status quo that it has attracted an enormous political backlash at all levels of society. This backlash includes increased sexual and physical violence against women and girls and an erosion of the social status gains which women had made.

eager to talk about themselves and their lives. These naive expectations were duly dashed. After transcribing the interviews, I confirmed the sinking feeling that I didn't have enough information to be able to proceed with this project. I realized I would have to do follow-up interviews.

The second interviews took place about six months later and, for various reasons, were far more successful than the first ones. Although all five original girls had agreed to second interviews, I was only able to complete four of them. Initially I went back to the youth centre, hoping to find the girls there. But I quickly learned that none of them attended anymore. I found four of them through the telephone directory, and the fifth one through the others. Six months is a long time in the world of teenage girls, and they had created enough distance from our association at the youth centre that the girls no longer related to me as an authoritarian figure. They had also received the copies of their individual transcripts in the mail, and all five girls seemed to be very pleased with these. They were concrete proof that an adult (myself) had taken their words very seriously. Finally, the setting helped make the interviews more successful: instead of a dingy little closet at the youth centre, we met in adult surroundings. Three of the interviews were held in coffee shops or restaurants and the fourth was in a private room of the Graduate Centre at UVic. In all these settings we also had access to coffee and appetizers, and these helped contribute to a more casual sense of having a chat while hanging out. These interviews were one and a half to two hours long and touched on many aspects of the girls' lives. They gave me the opportunity to delve more deeply into the life-worlds of these girls.

The Girls

All five girls in this study are white. They are all heterosexual (as far as they knew at the time of the interviews) although two of them were 'virgins' and two others were leery of sex because of having been raped. At the time of the first interviews they ranged in age from 15 to 18. They had been smokers for anywhere from one to eight years. All of them have grown up with smoking parents, and all of the parents were still smoking at the time of the interviews. One of the really stark things that I have seen about these girls' lives is how difficult they are. These girls embody the lives of the children of the welfare/working poor. Only one of them gets an allowance. One is actually the economic lifeline of her family, as she saves her money and her parents borrow from her when the money runs out. None of them are in the mainstream school system: three are in alternative programs, two have dropped out and are trying to figure out what to do about it - should they do correspondence or an alternative program or just quit? Without exception they are children of divorce, and individually they have had to deal not simply with the changes that divorce brings but also with issues such as poverty, family violence, sexual abuse, mental illness, congenital disability, foster care and parental instability including alcoholism. Between the time of the first and second interviews, three of them had moved: one with her family, another to a foster family, and the third to live with the non-custodial parent.

Diana

Diana comes from a background of family violence, takes antidepressants and sleeping pills and doesn't get her period because of complications from a rape. She also suffers from a progressive congenital hearing disability. Diana's mother has a heavily scarred and disfigured face from the abuse she suffered at the hands of Diana's father. Diana's mother is remarried and her stepfather is the father of her younger three siblings (two brothers and a sister). Diana is very fond of her stepfather and refers to him as 'dad'. Her stepfather works but the family is poor enough to qualify for subsidized housing. Diana is the eldest child currently at home (she has an older, married brother) and has

become the 'responsible' one in the family: she's the one who saves money and lends it to her parents when necessary. She makes her money mainly by babysitting. Diana is a heavy girl who would like to lose weight, is fascinated by tattoos and body piercing, and watches a lot of television. She has a cat that she loves and cares for very responsibly. She has also taken her younger sister under her wing and often buys, or occasionally steals, clothes and shoes for her. Her dream for the future is to become a criminologist. Although she is several grades behind in school she loves her alternative program and completed one and a half grades in the past year. Diana has smoked since she was nine.

Allison

Allison was Diana's best friend before both moved. She is voluntarily living with her old babysitter and her other two siblings (a younger brother and sister) are in different foster homes. She is fighting a legal battle with her mother to be allowed to stay in the home she has chosen for herself. Her mother has been on welfare most of Allison's life and has lived with a succession of abusive men. Her father lives in Quebec with a second wife and family. Allison has been gang raped. She is, like Diana, a heavy girl and would like to lose weight. She does not date boys because she doesn't trust them but has several male friends. Her current best friend is a gay male. She has a black sense of humour and biting sarcastic wit. Despite her cultivated hard exterior, she volunteers at her foster sister's kindergarten and is very good with the children, who adore her. Allison is quite creative and excels in art. Her dream for the future is to become either a hair dresser or a makeup artist. She loves her alternative school program because of the people, both students and teachers, and the flexibility but is not especially motivated to pass her courses. Allison has smoked since the age of fourteen.

Zoë

Zoë has been diagnosed with schizophrenia and has been on medication for this for several years. She is very pragmatic about her illness, with few illusions about the possibility of an early or complete recovery in her case. She has adjusted to the world of

revolving medications and treatments. Zoë was part of Diana's friendship group before it disintegrated. She has a reputation for being violent, which she readily admits to being partially deserved, and some of the kids in town think she is a satanist. She and her older sister have been raised by their father, who runs an informal mechanic shop from their home. Zoë has learned how to fix cars from him. Zoë is extremely articulate and well-read, despite her self-image of someone who is stupid. She loves music and is teaching herself how to play guitar. She has dropped out of school because she finds it much harder to control her schizophrenic impulses when she is around so many people and expectations. Despite her intelligence, she has never received good grades because she can't see the point of most of her assignments. She is currently trying to convince her father to let her finish school by correspondence. Zoë is aware of her reputation around town and, although she finds it hurtful to be shunned by so many people, she also finds it useful in terms of her own safety: even the tough guys are intimidated by her. Underneath, Zoë is just like any other girl: she has a tremendous crush on one of her older sister's friends and just wants him to like her. Her dreams for the future are to finish grade twelve her way and to have a happy and normal life despite her illness. Zoë has been a smoker since the age of twelve.

Mercedes

Mercedes is Zoë's cousin and knows Diana and Allison through her. She lives in posh circumstances compared to the others: her mother is a financial aid worker and she lives with her and her mother's boyfriend and has financial security that the other girls could only dream of. Mercedes is an only child. She is thin, conventionally attractive and dresses in an expensive sporty/preppy style. She receives a regular, generous allowance in addition to a clothing allowance. Nevertheless, she is unhappy. She has dropped out of school because she was rejected by her old group of friends and is on antidepressants to cope. Her mother wants her to continue school (she is in grade 8) but she doesn't want to go anymore. She doesn't want to do much of anything. Her main interests currently are hanging out and drinking Slurpees. She doesn't really have any major dreams for the future

except maybe moving to Vancouver to be closer to her best friend Vicky whom she misses very much. Mercedes began smoking at the age of fourteen.

Gabi

Gabi is the oldest of the girls and does not hang out in their circle. Her image of herself is as a romantic 'loner' and she is presently exploring radical political theories. She considers herself a feminist, although she was quick to assure me that she doesn't "hate men". Gabi is tall and skinny and has adopted a retro 'Twiggy' look. She works part-time at various jobs for spending cash. Although Gabi is still in school, she doesn't attend her alternative program very often, preferring instead to sleep in, read, and socialize. Gabi lives with her mother, older brother, and stepfather, who sounded extremely inebriated the morning I called to set up the second interview. She has experienced her parents as largely uninterested in her and has employed various tactics throughout her life to get their attention, including smoking. Just before our second interview was scheduled to take place, I received word that Gabi had moved to another province to live with her father for an indefinite period of time. Because we were unable to do a second interview together, I did not get to know her as well as the other girls. Gabi began smoking at the age of ten.

CHAPTER FIVE

HANDMAIDENS OF INDUSTRY[19]: HOW MARKET FORCES INFLUENCE THE

GROWING UP PROCESS

Introduction

We have already seen how the issues of women's and girls' smoking overlap in

many areas. This makes intuitive sense, as both are subject to the same kinds of

expectations and limitations by virtue of their gender. Nevertheless, there are important

differences that have to do with the contexts of women's and girls' lives. Unlike adult

women, girls are subject to the complex and urgent forces of the growing up process:

adolescent girls live in that peculiar zone that is no longer child but not yet woman. We

have already seen how, in our society, this zone is shaped by gender relations including the

discourse of femininity. Adolescent girls become "female impersonators" (Pipher, 1994, p.

22) in order to fit into the mold that their girl selves are being squeezed into. Once the

molding process is complete, they will crawl out as the reverse of butterflies, no longer

encouraged or expected to fly.

Smoking, for girls, can be part of this 'female-impersonation' act. In this chapter I

will show how smoking fits into the context of the growing up process for adolescent girls.

The growing up process, for both boys and girls in this society, is influenced by market

forces through the media. In the absence of clearly defined and culturally approved rites of

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[19] The term 'Handmaidens of Industry' is a play on words: *Handmaiden* here stands in for the smoking girls, while *Industry* refers to the tobacco industry. The term *handmaiden* is most famously used throughout the Bible, where it signifies either a maidservant (usually a slave) or a concubine or both. These two meanings are both significant when applied in this analogy. The smoking girls might be seen as servants of the tobacco industry as they become addicted to its product and add to its profits. They are also 'indentured' very young, as maidservants used to be, so that they will become more malleable and obedient adult servants. Often they are 'born into' a family that is already 'serving' the industry. In biblical days, masters had the right over life and death of their servants, and today's tobacco industry is certainly taking liberties with the lives of its 'servants'. These handmaidens 'serve' the purposes of the tobacco industry, in that they supply a new market in place of the dwindling male, middle- and upper-class market. Finally, the smoking girls might also be seen as concubines of the tobacco industry, as they may take up smoking in the context of the discourse of femininity, as a way to adorn themselves for the eyes of males.

passage, youth today look to media messages for clues to help them span the gap between childhood and adulthood. These messages are pervasive in our society, reaching into every corner of our lives and colonizing our attitudes and ideologies. The tobacco industry is part of these attitude-shaping forces, using various marketing strategies to create a climate which allows them to sell a carcinogenic, mood-altering drug disguised as a benign and powerful symbol of femininity, maturity, independence and rebellion.

Smoking a Symbol of Maturity

> Allison: [Smoking is] something that is grown up....Yeah. Cause I can sit with my mum and, like, my cousin and stuff, at the table, and we're smoking. So I kind of feel like I'm part of everything.

Despite the fact that most adults (and particularly those with the most power) in our society are no longer smoking, youth continue to see smoking as a potent sign of adulthood (Frost & Baxter, 1996). The legal construction of cigarettes as an adult-only drug may contribute to this. Ironically, as public concern with youth smoking has become more prevalent in the last ten years and has resulted in higher age limits and stricter enforcement for the sale of tobacco products, the legal construction of smoking as an adult activity has been reinforced. Vancouver pediatrician Roger Tonkin, head of the division of adolescent health at the University of British Columbia's department of pediatrics, asserts that: "In the absence of clear social customs, young people in Western society use alcohol and cigarettes as a sign of growing up" (pp. 31, 33). Indeed, as girls mature physically more quickly than boys, it becomes important to them to feel adult earlier than boys and smoking may help them do so. In the case of girls, Robb (1986) sees this as part of a larger tendency among young females in many countries "to take over some of the patterns of demonstrating adulthood traditionally used by males. The most obviously visible and measurable case, and the one that has attracted the most published comment is smoking" (p. 621).

Robb (1986) refers to smoking and other such behaviours among youth as 'anticipatory rites of passage,' in that they

> are not full and formal rites of passage, they are behaviours which anticipate such a passage, and they are undertaken unilaterally by the dominated group in advance of any legitimating move or permission by the dominant group...Unlike fully established rites of passage these behaviours would seem to be directed not towards superordinate groups but to peers or to even more subordinate groups. (p. 622)

Thus, smoking among the young can be seen, in part, as a kind of anticipatory celebration of maturity. This theory is borne out by Diana and Gabi. Diana felt that, although smoking made her feel more adult ("Probably tough and adult"), most adults themselves no longer associate smoking with adulthood. Gabi, the eldest of the girls, when asked if she thought smoking confers a feeling of adulthood, explained:

> Oh I definitely used to think so. But I don't anymore. I feel kind of childish smoking. Cause nobody who's an adult smokes anymore. Like, in the eighties, people smoked all the time, but, now the big thing for the nineties is: 'yeah, I'm an adult, I'm healthy, right on!' [laughs].

Robb notes that his theory of anticipatory rites of passage can in no way be seen as a complete explanation for adolescent smoking, but believes it to be an important piece of the explanation for why youth *begin* to smoke. When this theory is linked to the fact that children and youth "overestimate the prevalence of cigarette smoking among both peers and adults, and the degree of this overestimation is among the strongest predictors of smoking initiation" (Pollay, 1997, p. 59) it becomes easier to understand why youth continue to see smoking as a sign of maturity.

Rebel Yell

Diana: Mainly I like to be seen as I'm tough....Yeah, think I'm a *bad* ass [laughs].

Perhaps it is the persistent link that continues to be made between smoking and adulthood in the minds of adolescents that also makes it a powerful sign of rebellion: "a symbol of liberation from childhood and parental controls" (Jacobson, 1981, p. 41). For girls, however, smoking can be a further sign of liberation from traditional stereotypes of demure femininity. Jacobson notes that smoking among boys has long symbolised entry into the adult male world of "power and sexual adventure. Boys who smoke tend to be more rebellious, impulsive and anti-authority than their non-smoking classmates" (p. 41).

Longitudinal research published in the 1960s confirmed that smokers of both sexes showed

greater rebelliousness than non-smokers on several measures of rebelliousness from

kindergarten all the way into adulthood (Stewart & Livson, 1966) .

But until the late 1960s, for all but a very small percentage of girls, smoking was

not a widely accepted habit, perhaps because rebellion is not considered a feminine virtue.

Research at the time "showed that girls took a highly moralistic attitude to smoking: they

strongly disapproved of other girls (but not boys) smoking" (Jacobson, 1981, p. 41). By

the end of the 1970s, however, girls had discovered smoking as a symbol of rebellion

against traditional femininity (Jacobson, 1981). For girls, then, smoking may not only

symbolise entry into the world of adults, as it does for boys, but also a symbolic reaching

for the traditional power of adult males.

> Within marketing there is the knowledge that teenagers want rebellious identities,
> and instead of fighting that impulse it has been harnessed, so that rebellion now
> takes place on the terms of the market with the help of its products....In this way,
> resistance, difference and rebellion can be recouped within dominant relations.
> (Pleasance, 1991, p. 74)

Tobacco marketing strategies have appealed to the rebellious nature of youths by

subtly relating tobacco use to the use of other drugs such as alcohol and so portraying

cigarettes as "part of the illicit pleasure category of products and activities" (Jacobson,

1986, p. 70). But it is not just the themes of femininity and rebellion that signify an entry

into adulthood for girls.

> The theme of independence, in particular, so well captured by the Marlboro Man,
> strikes a responsive chord with the dominant psychological need of adolescents for
> autonomy and freedom from authority. Adolescent girls feel the same needs for
> autonomy as do boys, accounting for the otherwise surprising popularity of the
> Marlboro brand among girls. Motivation research confirms the insights of previous
> advertisers and public relations professionals in seeing smoking as an expression of
> freedom and worldliness for women. (Pollay, 1997, p. 60)

Ironically, the tobacco and alcohol industries have insidiously positioned themselves on the

side of 'autonomy and freedom'. Public health advocates are portrayed as anti-smoking

fanatics who want to tell everybody else what to do, and set up against the courageous,

independent, free-thinking smokers (Kilbourne, 1991). Thus, cigarette ads actually equate

liberation with addiction and freedom with enslavement to tobacco. "This equation is particularly ironic, given that nicotine is the most addictive drug of all, and that at least 85 percent of all smokers wish they could quit" (p.16).

Media Influence

Mercedes: I see, like, all the famous people on TV, smoking.

Led by television, the media today shape reality for all Canadians. Today's adolescents are the best-informed young generation in history, but they may also be the most trusting of the information they receive through the media (Bibby & Posterski, 1992). "The average teen watches twenty-one hours of TV each week, compared to 5.8 hours spent on homework and 1.8 hours reading. The adolescent community is an electronic community of rock music, television, videos and movies." (Pipher, 1994, p. 82). Diana, for instance, watches approximately six to seven hours of television every day. She can quote the TV Guide from 3 o'clock to 10 o'clock for every weekday from memory. All five girls have their own stereo systems in their rooms and own large collections of music CDs. Talk about music groups peppers their conversations. Kostash (1987) confirms that the images and messages in the media are

> taken very much to heart by millions of girls who dare not trust the authority of their own brief experience (childhood) of being at home in their own bodies, but look instead to the arbiters and monitors of femininity in the media, in the shops, in the eyes of men, to be confirmed there as 'sufficiently' feminine. (p. 177)

Girls today constantly reference media of all kinds in their lives: television shows, movies and actors; popular music and musicians; popular magazines and the famous people profiled in them. These media rarely contradict traditional readings of femininity and gender relations.

Adopting Market Desires

> For girls who have entered the patriarchal institution of "good girlness" (which is policed by women and girls), they lose integrity by splitting real desire from internalized patriarchal ideas about their selves and, so, pull the plug on their power. Girls who split this way are no longer tapped into their desires, the deep and expressive source of their wanting. They hook into what is desirable in the

market and begin to create new images for themselves from the outside in so that they can be chosen—and can be safe from the violence and uncertainty surrounding them. (Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993, p. 176)

By late adolescence, girls often appear less conflicted and more certain of themselves again. The crisis of 'self-loss' has been 'forgotten' and a new self approved by society is emerging. They have lost touch with their 'authentic' self which has gone underground and now look to the media and the culture to define them (Debold, Wilson & Malave, 1993; Pipher, 1994).

> And, unfortunately, this enables them to fit well into middle-class culture. Girls' malleability leads advertisers and marketers to target them as a blossoming market. Desire is subverted into a consuming passion—for clothes, shoes, cosmetics, hair-care products, CDs, jewelry, electronic gadgets, and more. Girls adopt desires from the outside rather than from the well of desire within them, and they gain an air of certainty by resorting to cultural scripts for desire and success that have been shaped by men's experiences. (Debold, Wilson & Malave, p. 177).

Contrary to the popular saying about women that we are "born to shop," the desire to consume is actually part of the social relations that accomplish femininity. Girls are encouraged to consume products that will shape their new self as well as chemicals that sedate the pain of compromising their own desires and agency (Pipher, 1994). We have already seen the process by which market forces and the ideology of femininity are linked. Indeed, "commercialized gender and gendered commerce are phenomena that are pervasive, mutually reinforcing, thoroughly embedded in capitalist culture, and appealing to many consumers as well as useful to producers of commercial goods" (Damon-Moore, 1994, p. 2).

The importance of image creation for girls is linked with their need to belong and to find their own unique identity. This, combined with a lot of uncertainty about the self drives them to "actively search for cues from their peers and from advertising for the right way to look and behave...(becoming) interested in many different products [that can help express their needs for] experimentation, belonging, independence, responsibility, and approval from others" (Solomon, 1994 as cited in Pollay, 1997, p. 62). According to Stacey (1982 as cited in Pollay, 1997) possessions and 'badge products' such as cigarettes

are used by youth during the high school years as tools for controlling and defining relations between peers. Tobacco companies have understood these powerful relationships between youth and brand products for decades. A 1974 RJR memo states that: "To some extent young smokers 'wear' their cigarette and it becomes an important part of the 'I' they wish to be, along with their clothing and the way they style their hair" (Schwartz, 1996 as cited in Pollay, p. 62). Recent research confirms that smoking helps girls "develop an identity and create a mature self-image" (Frost & Baxter, 1996, p. 31).

Marketing Cigarettes to Girls

> Zöe: Cause the kinda crap that they say, like: 'oh, it's the best kind of smoke' and 'it won't kill you' and all this stuff and it's trying to make it sound so good. It's like, when you get hooked on it it's not so great....They're trying to make it look like everything's just great and dandy and you'll be so popular and pretty and it makes you better and stuff. And it doesn't.

Although cigarette manufacturers have, until very recently, maintained a united front in terms of denying their intent or ability to recruit new smokers among children and youth, it is clear that they do so (Botvin, Goldberg, Botvin & Dusenbury, 1993; Cunningham, 1996; Pollay, 1997). Indeed, it has been estimated that more than 5,000 new smokers would have to begin every day to maintain the current size of the smoking population in the USA alone (Botvin, Goldberg, Botvin & Dusenbury, 1993). The tobacco industry has become so concerned about the decline in smoking among upper and middle-class males, that it has invested billions in media campaigns targetting children, women and people of colour (Kaplan & Weiler, 1997). Since tobacco companies are not permitted to market their wares to children directly, they do so indirectly by sponsoring sporting and fashion events, selling souvenirs, and showing cigarette smoking in movies directed to the youth market. A longitudinal study in the USA recently concluded that it had found clear evidence that such tobacco marketing activities are causally related to the onset of smoking among adolescents (Pierce, Choi, Gilpin, Farkas & Berry, 1998).

Cigarettes have a long history in Hollywood, where tobacco companies have often paid large sums for their brands to be given starring roles.

> The powerful impact of Hollywood's heroines was not lost on the tobacco companies...and many, like Jean Harlow, appeared in their ads testifying to the virtues of cigarettes. At the same time the new mass medium of cinema immortalised the bodies, faces and cigarettes they smoked. (Jacobson, 1986, pp. 42-3)

More recently, "smoking was featured in [the movies] *The Client*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and *The Mask*—which wowed kids with its famous heart-shaped smoke rings. Women smokers on the big screen seem powerful: Sharon Stone in *Basic Instinct*, computer whiz Sandra Bullock in *The Net*"(Frost & Baxter, 1996, p. 33). Cigarettes also frequently star in music videos.

Research has shown that youth are particularly vulnerable to advertising both because they have less experience in identifying and resisting persuasive selling tactics and because they tend to be more brand-conscious than adults. Adolescents pay a great deal of attention to designer brands as expressive of their lifestyle, whereas at the same time they pay very little attention to health warnings because of their sense of invulnerability. This means that they are extremely susceptible to the positive messages that tobacco advertising gives about smoking (Pollay, 1997).

> Public health advocates suggest that youths have a heightened sensitivity to image advertising and promotion themes at a time in their lives when they are struggling to define their own identities. Adolescence is characterized by three major types of developmental challenges: (a) physical maturation, (b) cultural pressures to begin the transition to adult roles and emotional independence from parents, and (c) establishment of a coherent self-concept and values. Cigarette advertisements are often evocative and play off these challenges in addition to being positioned to appeal to specific groups defined by social class and ethnic identity. Early adolescence (ages 11-14) in particular may be a time of increased susceptibility to the appeal of image advertising and promotions. (Lynch & Bonnie, 1994, p. 106)

The tobacco industry is well aware of the vulnerabilities of youth and takes advantage of them. Cigarettes are the most heavily promoted product in the USA. In 1988, over $352 million was spent just on cigarette advertising in periodicals. That year, "more than $119 million was spent....to advertise one brand of cigarettes, Marlboro." (Botvin, Goldberg, Botvin & Dusenbury, 1993, p. 218). In Canada, because of the 1988 total ban

on tobacco advertising in Canadian electronic and print media, periodical advertising came to a halt. But the industry didn't skip a beat. Because the magazine racks in Canadian stores have always held overwhelmingly more American magazines than Canadian ones, the ban would hardly have been registered by Canadian magazine readers. This largely negated any effectiveness that a Canadian ban on advertising might have had (Frost & Baxter, 1996). Instead, Canadian tobacco manufacturers diverted their advertising dollars into sponsorship, and when the ban was declared unconstitutional in 1995 they didn't bother reinvesting in Canadian magazine advertising. Sponsorship evidently gives lucrative returns, as a recent study showed that the Canadian tobacco industry spent $16.1 million on advertising for the first half of 1998, more than four times what it spent five years before ("Tobacco ads soar", 1998).

Girls and Magazine Advertising

Diana: I don't know, it [the messages about smoking] just comes from my head.

Like Diana, most of the girls in this study said they had not seen or paid much attention to cigarette advertising and didn't associate the images they related to smoking as coming from any kind of advertising at all. This is the beauty of tobacco advertising: as cigarette ads are part of the discourse of femininity, which we explored in greater detail earlier, teenage girls do not have to see or notice that they see the ads in order to be influenced by them. For girls who are beginning to negotiate the complex and confusing journey to womanhood, the social texts which are cigarette advertisements do not determine their practices (ie. they do not *cause* the girls to become smokers) but rather present a certain meaning of femininity which may or may not be rejected by them. Thus, girls who take up smoking in this context are not just becoming smokers but accomplishing gender. Smoking becomes part of the 'work' that girls do to produce themselves as feminine. "The texts of the discourse of femininity index a work process performed by women. Its character as work is not highly visible because it is not paid work nor is it recognizably a

hobby. None the less it is consciously planned, takes time, and involves the use of tools and materials and the acquired skills of its practitioners" (Smith, 1990, p. 197).

It is here that the notion of femininity as discourse is linked up politically with the production of commercial texts: although the girls who smoke may not (indeed they rarely do) consciously draw connections between their everyday practices (smoking) and those of the tobacco industry, in our society the "coordination of cultural knowledge surrounding femininity...occurs through discourses that join women's individual practices to multinational interests in the consumption of...products" (Currie, 1997, p. 461). Thus, it is through the notion of femininity as discourse that we can clearly see how smoking is work for adolescent girls, something they are actively involved in doing to accomplish gender. At the same time we are able to trace how this activity in the lives of girls is connected to forces outside of their everyday/everynight lives: to aspects of male domination and to capitalism in the form of the tobacco industry.

Smoking advertisements have been an integral part of women's magazines since the 1920s, when they became a symbol of liberation and independence for women (Kilbourne, 1991).

> [T]he 1920s brought women new freedoms, and American tobacco companies quickly recognised the potential of the female market. American Tobacco was the first company to cash in on it. By using the slogan, 'Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet', it was able to sell cigarettes to women as an alleged means of losing weight. In a series of massive advertising campaigns, the company appealed directly to women, using testimonials from well-known women such as Amelia Earhart, the famous flyer, and actress Jean Harlow. Within two years of the 1925 launch, women had helped make 'Lucky Strike' America's best-selling brand. (Jacobson, 1981, p. 57)

Cigarette ads in women's magazines are part of the discourse of femininity and they are seen by millions of teenage girls.

> But what better *direct* route to a girl's or woman's heart and lungs than through her favourite magazine? At least half of teenage girls and women read magazines regularly, and many rely heavily on them for information and advice about health, jobs, lovers and fashion - which explains why expenditure on cigarette advertising rose by nearly 50 per cent in women's magazines between 1977 and 1982. (1986, p. 76)

Indeed, early cigarettes developed specifically to target women showed their dependence on the discourse of femininity through features such as plastic 'ivory' tips - Marlboro - or red fashion tips to blend in with lipstick - Guinea Gold (Cunningham, 1996; Habib, 1998; Kluger, 1996). The societal obsession with weight and appearances of women was also a boon to cigarette advertisers: ads targetted to women and girls have played upon these themes since the 1920s (Cunningham, 1996; Kilbourne, 1991; Kluger, 1996).

Girls - Critical or Passive Readers of Cigarette Ads?

Although only two of the girls I talked to said that they had noticed and thought about cigarette ads, they had some fairly sophisticated and scathing analyses of them. Zoë, who is very interested in music told me:

> Well, the music ones [magazines] don't really have smoke ads. But, like, sometimes I read like - check out all those crappy ones like 'Teen' and 'Cosmopolitan' and it's like, every fourth or fifth page is another smoke ad. And I don't know, there's just too many of them....I think they're retarded! Cause the kinda crap that they say, like: 'oh, it's the best kind of smoke' and 'it won't kill you' and all this stuff and it's trying to make it sound so good. It's like, when you get hooked on it it's not so great. It's not all it's cracked up to be....It's like saying, 'if you smoke you'll be cool and everyone'll like you and stuff'. But, it's just like, kinda lame. Cause if you really do it, that's not exactly what happens. They're trying to make it look like everything's just great and dandy and you'll be so popular and pretty and it makes you better and stuff. And it doesn't.

Zoë articulated what Kilbourne (1991) points out: that advertising is essentially myth-making. The point is not to give information about a product but to establish an image for it. In the case of tobacco advertising, cigarettes are spuriously linked "with precisely those attributes and qualities - happiness, wealth, prestige, sophistication, success, maturity, athletic ability, virility, creativity, sexual satisfaction and others - that addiction usually diminishes and destroys" (p. 12). Zoë recognized that the messages in the smoking ads she has seen are false. Her own experience taught her that those messages do not reflect reality.

> Gabi agrees:

> Like, 'you've come a long way?' A long way from what? I'm not old enough and I haven't smoked long enough to know exactly what they're talking about. And I know they're trying to direct it at people my age cause we're the most vulnerable to this kind of crap. But the message they're sending out is, like, directed at 80 year old women who've been, like, smoking for 50 years....I think they're [cigarette ads] ridiculous, they're absolutely stupid. There's this one with this woman and her

> boyfriend is painting her toenails. And she's holding a Marlboro, and I'm like, okay, this is gonna make me want to smoke? Come on. Like, the last thing I need is some guy painting my toenails....And you know damn well that none of these people smoke, cause their teeth are too white and their hands aren't all cigarette stained. They're not wrinkly at all....And I hate society and the way society portrays women. And usually it's some stupid 'dumb blonde' looking woman, and - it just makes me mad.

Both Gabi and Zoë, then, not only understand what the tobacco corporations are trying to accomplish with their advertising, but they also reject these messages as false and deceptive. It makes them angry to think the tobacco industry considers them so easily manipulated. Nevertheless, both smoke and both associate smoking with exactly those images that the tobacco industry is presenting in its advertising. What's going on here?

In order to understand how the behaviour of girls can be influenced by tobacco advertising despite their critical rejection of such ads, it might be useful to examine the findings of a recent study looking at how girls read magazines. Currie (1997), in a study of 48 teenage girls in Vancouver discovered that, although the girls said they read magazines primarily for entertainment, they also saw their magazines as useful sources of knowledge. Currie was interested in understanding how girls negotiate reality during the everyday reading of adolescent magazines. She asked girls to analyze ads in various magazines and found that they were quick to assign truth status to ads based either on their perception of internal consistency or their own life experience. Not only were girls extremely critical of ads that they did not find to be 'truthful' but they also freely acknowledged the fact that magazines are texts motivated by economic interests and that they set unrealistic beauty standards. We have already seen that this was the case for both Zoë and Gabi. Nevertheless,

> girls in this study engaged in a manner of reading that brought their construction of self, rather than magazine discourse, into question. One unanticipated finding is the way in which many young readers compared themselves to constructed texts....In the final analysis, although readers often criticized their magazine's use of beautiful models with 'perfect' bodies, they seldom challenged the cultural mandate for women to look good. (pp. 471-2)

In addition, Currie (1997) found that, when presented with ads that portrayed images of adult femininity that were beyond the limits of their own lived experiences of womanhood, the girls

> uncritically drew on ideological knowledge....to arrive at unambiguous meanings....In many cases readers did not feel it necessary to discuss the ads in length, because the ads were claimed to simply 'say what they mean.' In these readings it appears that the girls did not negotiate at all....[I]deology as common sense does not require thought because it is spontaneously available, thoroughly recognizable, widely shared: It feels as if it has always been there....Overall, the ideological appeals of romantic love and motherhood were so strong that they overrode the criterion of logic. (pp. 467-468)

Currie concluded that girls derive pleasure from reading magazines that present "affective, romanticized expressions of heterosexual womanhood" (p. 474). In her view, acceptance of ideology does not rule out agency. Thus, although she does not see girls who read magazines as merely passive receptacles of 'cultural scripts' she disagrees "that these readers have the 'power' to subvert patriarchy or capitalism simply through alternative readings of fashion magazines" (p. 474).

> This study is a stark illustration of how ideology works through text as knowledge. Ideology becomes everyday practice because of its ability to dominate the discursive space through which we make sense of the world and our place in it....[T]he ideological dimension of women's magazines implicates them in the everyday reconstitution of the ruling apparatus.(p. 474)

What can we learn from this study to explain why Zoë and Gabi may be influenced by the very cigarette advertising that they are so critical of? Clearly, although both girls have criticisms about the portrayal of women in the media as well as how gender impacts negatively on them as girls, neither have rejected the imperatives of femininity in their own lives. Zoë would *like* to be "more popular and pretty" even as she dismisses the cigarette ad's claim that smoking will make her so. Gabi, as we will see below, imagines herself as Audrey Hepburn when she smokes, a fantasy that draws on one of the most recognizable icons of femininity in Hollywood history. Thus, it seems that both girls accept the background ideology presented in the cigarette ads even while exercising their agency by intellectually rejecting the connections made between this ideology and cigarettes. In other words, they are accepting without question the latent ideological premise of the ads (it is

important for women to be feminine, to be heterosexual, to have male admirers, to be beautiful) while rejecting the manifest message (cigarettes will make you more beautiful, will get you a boyfriend, will make you glamorous and popular). They are both critical *and* passive readers of cigarette advertising.

Zoë's and Gabi's resistance to patriarchal reality in the form of tobacco advertising is, evidently, largely ineffectual. This supports Currie's contention that simply engaging in alternative readings of magazine advertising does not give girls the power to subvert patriarchal ideology or capitalism. Yet, perhaps this is a necessary beginning. Although, at present, both girls still smoke and have to some extent internalized the images about smoking that the tobacco industry has promulgated, perhaps their anger at the tobacco industry and their dawning realization of the negative impact of smoking in their lives will help turn the tide.

Image Related Motivations

Looking Good

Gabi: I guess it's kinda like a whole Audrey Hepburn kinda thing....She didn't do anything without having a cigarette.

Despite their shared insistence that tobacco marketing is not a factor in their smoking behaviour, all five of the girls associated smoking with images identical to those that are marketed by the tobacco industry. These were images that they wanted to claim for themselves in order to seem more mature and be more acceptable to their peers. A 1996 study of American fifth to eighth graders concluded that "image factors play a larger role in adolescent smoking. Findings suggested that females were more vulnerable than males to image-related smoking motivations" (Aloise-Young & Hennigan, 1996). Not surprisingly, tobacco industry research supports these findings. In a 1973 R.J. Reynolds document recommending the creation of a milder cigarette for the beginning youth market, Claude E. Teague, Jr, then the company's Assistant Director of Research and Development, stated

that it is imagery that starts young people smoking, and physical effects that keep them

smoking (Cunningham, 1996).

Several of the girls saw smoking associated with seemingly conflicting but equally

attractive images simultaneously. Diana, who earlier talked about how she sees herself as

'tough' and 'a bad ass' when smoking, also sees herself as: "Someone skinny, blonde, and

beautiful when I'm smoking, you know [laughs]." Gabi, who sees herself as an 'Audrey

Hepburn' when she smokes, also thinks that, because she was a tomboy when she began

to smoke, she was equally attracted to some of the "macho" images of smoking: "Because,

I don't know, when I started I was a tomboy. But all the guys were like: yeah, I'm cool,

I'm macho, I'm a man! You know? [laughs] But with women, it's like: yeah, I'm so

glamourous. I don't know, it's weird." Gabi feels empowered to claim both the tough and

glamourous images associated with smoking:

> Exactly. Cause if I'm glaring at someone, I'll have a cigarette and glare at them
> through the smoke. But if I'm feeling all, like, glamourous and I'm all dolled up for
> something I'm gonna smoke because it just looks good.

Being Good

> Zoë: Like if a guy's mad he can, like, knock a building down. But if a girl's mad
> they just got to close it off, and - that's not right. They shouldn't have to do that, or
> nothing, cause like then - one day - if they keep bottling it they'll just, like,
> eventually go nuts and end up in a mental institution or something. Nervous
> breakdown.

All of the girls in this study saw smoking to be an important mood-control tool,

particularly for managing stress and anger[20]. When girls are taught that physical appearance

and attitude (looking good and being good) are more important than their health, an

opening is provided for smoking. Lorraine Greaves (1996) has explored this issue in

relation to adult women smokers:

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[20] All of the girls in this study talked about anger. Although they sometimes expressed these thoughts in
terms of feeling like hurting others, only two of the girls talked about actually engaging in physical
violence when angry. Zoë has been physically violent as a result of her mental illness: she occasionally
hears voices telling her to engage in violent acts. Allison has also admitted to having been involved in
fights when she was younger. She no longer fights.

> When smoking reduces or erases women's demands, emotions or challenges, women can be seen as compliant and less troublesome. The scope of women's feelings, particularly anger, remains invisible. Women smokers describe 'sucking back anger' with each drag on a cigarette. If women smokers continue to internalize the tensions of interpersonal and social relations, the responsibility of others in their lives to deal with legitimate emotions is lifted. (p. 109)

Reitsma-Street (1991) shows that "the standards of self-care for...girls emphasize physical appearance and attitude, according to the tastes of males, and are accorded more importance than health and psychological, material, and social needs" (p. 118). Smoking, then, is an effective method of self-medication that can be used by girls as a way to control negative emotions that are not part of the feminine persona that they are creating.

All of the girls considered smoking as relaxing or calming. Diana said: "The positive thing would be that it calms me down. If there was a different method I'd use it, but - haven't found one." Mercedes agrees that smoking is calming:

> Well [I do it] really to relax me. And calm me down at times....How do I feel? Relaxed. A little bit, yeah....I just start thinking about other things that calm me down when I'm smoking....Just think good thoughts and sit down and relax.

And Zoë sees it as a way to get her thoughts organized:

> Well, it's more relaxing cause if, like - if I'm all worked up and stuff it just untwists my nerves so they're not all knotted and stuff no more. And, it's like, I can actually think straight. So, it's kind of a chiller. Y'know, just helps me to think and get back on track and stuff.

Gabi also sees nicotine as a mood controller, but one that goes both ways: "Usually it relaxes me. Sometimes it pisses me off. I guess it depends." Allison's take is more general: "I think it's because of the nicotine - and it gives you a kind of 'out-there' feeling. It's kind of 'up' and stuff."

All the girls in this study spoke spontaneously about the stress in their lives: they saw this stress stemming from various different areas including school, relations with family and relations with friends. Diana believes that she may not be smoking if it weren't for this stress:

> I think they [the schools] encourage it [smoking]. Because they add so much stress. They cause a lot of stress. Always pushing tests and stuff....I had to [keep smoking], because of - stress, and stuff, of school.

Allison sees the ritual of smoking as creating a symbolic breathing space: "Well when I'm

stressed out it calms me down....Cause it's sort of your own little world." Mercedes, in

talking about why she can't quit, notes that: "Well I've been really stressed lately, so."

Gabi, once again, has a different take on the subject:

> I never actually believed anybody who told me it was good for stress, until like about a year ago. But it's not, it doesn't do anything for you at all. Never believe anybody who tells you it's good for stress, because, it's - I don't know. [pauses] Like if you're really really pissed off at someone and all a cigarette's gonna do is make me more mad. It just heightens whatever you happen to be feeling at the moment.

Thus, although she agrees that smoking is mood-altering, Gabi feels that the nicotine

intensifies mood instead of dampening it.

> Cause it doesn't matter what kind of mood I'm in. I used to tell people when I was pissed off I really needed a smoke. But then I realized that: if I'm happy I need a smoke, if I'm bored I need a smoke. Doesn't matter what I feel, I need a cigarette.

Nevertheless, most of the girls in this study believe that smoking helps them cope

with both stress and anger. Zoë insists that smoking:

> Helps me with my blow-ups too, cause I've got a real bad temper and I have a cigarette and it helps it, like, a lot!....Cause I don't know - I heard somewhere, that it does actually relax your nerves and stuff, and loosens your muscles up. And then I just started actually paying attention to that and, I mean, it does that.

Diana agrees: "Yeah, when I'm really mad it helps me from hurting someone really bad.

[laughs]." Zoë elaborated on the anger issue by talking about why she thinks girls might

feel they have to smoke more than boys (see the quote at the beginning of this section). She

doesn't necessarily think that girls are angrier than boys, just that they have fewer

acceptable avenues for expressing their anger: "Everyone has a lot of crap to deal with, so,

I think that everyone has about the same amount of anger and stuff. Some people just let it

out a lot easier and in better ways than others." Her conclusion is that girls may smoke

more than boys to relieve the anger they aren't allowed to express directly.

Acceptance by Peers

> Diana: When I'm [smoking] at school, I feel popular. But when I'm at home it's - nothing.

For Mercedes, smoking was all about being accepted by her peers, although it made her sick at first and took her a month to get used to: "But, after I started, I thought of how all those girls I knew smoke and I just didn't care anymore." Becoming a smoker was part of creating a persona that the girls she wanted to hang out with would accept. This was similar for Diana, who was very clear that the image that smoking creates depends on being seen by others: "It's just cool to be seen with a cigarette in your mouth [laughs] you know." Research bears out the fact that, although younger children are most strongly influenced by their parents and family members, as children get older the perceived approval of peers and others outside the home becomes more important (Thrush, Fife-Shaw & Breakwell, 1997). Several studies have found peer influence to be an important factor in encouraging children to experiment with smoking (Jacobson, 1981; Thrush, Fife-Shaw & Breakwell, 1997).

> Almost three-quarters of young people ages 10 to 19 stated that people their age started smoking because their friends smoked....The YSS [Youth Smoking Survey] bears out the link between peer example and smoking: the more smoking friends teenagers had, the greater the liklihood that they smoked as well....In contrast, youths with no close friends who smoked were not likely to smoke either. (Clark, 1996, p. 4)

Two other studies, one in Britain (Lloyd, Lucas & Fernbach, 1997) and one in America (Sussman, Dent, Stacy, Burciaga, Raynor, Turner, Charlin, Craig, Hansen, Burton & Flay, 1990), found that membership in peer groups significantly affected adolescent smoking behaviour and identity.

Smoking Despite Knowledge of Health Risks

> Zoë: [Now that I'm cutting down] I can actually get things that - are nice, instead of a pack of smokes. Which I'll eventually die from. So, I paid for my dying!

A "1995 survey on smoking shows that 97 percent of Canadians aged 15 and over realize smoking is addictive and 91 percent know it's unhealthy....The number of girl smokers has in fact risen since Health Canada's educational push began in 1993. Girls puff away—despite being aware of the risks" (Frost & Baxter, 1996, p. 80). Indeed, it was

evident that all the girls in this study knew about most of the health risks associated with smoking. They were also aware of its concrete health effects on themselves. All of them had already experienced tangible negative health effects from smoking.

Mercedes said: "This weekend I'm like 'I've got to stop this' cause it makes me – my stomach like turn?....Cause all the chemicals in it. My stomach just – and just stuff I hear from tv that – what it does to you and all that? Makes me sick." Diana's experience was: "I have asthma. So, it'd help me a lot more if I didn't smoke [laughed]." Both Allison and Zoë reported chronic bronchitis. Allison noted: "Well, it's given me, chronic bronchitis.... Well, I had bronchitis before. It just made it chronic....It's made my asthma work up a bit better, of course. Nothing really positive about it." Zoë reported: "Chronic bronchitis. I've got that – like, a couple of months ago I just kinda picked up on it [coughs]....Cause I've never had, like, other than – before I started smoking I've only ever had bronchitis once and that was only for a couple of days and then gone." And Gabi admitted: "Yeah, actually, I've got psoriasis, which is caused by a combination of stress and smoking."

In addition, all the girls knew about other health effects associated with smoking that they weren't currently experiencing. Gabi, in talking about the models in cigarette ads, indignantly pointed out that: "you know damn well that none of these people smoke, cause their teeth are too white and their hands aren't all cigarette stained. They're not wrinkly at all." And Zoë agreed: "It makes you age quicker too, like, it makes you look older. When you're thirty you'll look like you're sixty....I don't want to look like I'm eighty when I'm not that old." Diana stated: "I don't like it. It is a bad habit, like biting your nails. Eventually you're going to get – pain – and stuff, you know. – Bad habit. I wish I didn't have to, but – Just, it's my last resort sometimes."

All of them also knew that smoking while pregnant was not good for the developing foetus, and all stated that they would never smoke while pregnant. As Zoë put it: "they [the cigarettes] can really damage the child, and it can, like, it can have extra

fingers or less toes. Or disorders and stuff and it can just come out screwed up." It is not

surprising that this was the only female-specific smoking risk that the girls knew about,

given the fact that public health warnings tend to treat both genders the same. In fact,

however, girl smokers face additional health risks that boys do not share. For instance, a

study of American schoolgirls between the ages of 13 and 18 found that smoking one or

more packs of cigarettes per day can cause cessation of menstruation for prolonged periods

of time (3 months or more) (Johnson & Whitaker, 1992).

The girls also speculated on what might be going on inside their bodies that they

couldn't yet feel or see. Allison said: "I kinda think it's gross. Your lungs being black with

tar and everything. And the smell." And Zoë explained:

> I didn't start thinking about what's happening to my health until I went to
> Vancouver a couple weeks ago and then I got to see the smoker's lung behind glass
> which is DISGUSTING. A little pack of brown slime. And it's just: 'Oh, can't
> believe that's in me!'....Cause I seen it in Science World - and I had the big image
> of it. And I'm thinking 'Oh my god - that's what's in me!'. I just got mortified.

Although the girls I talked to readily discussed health risks they were exposing

themselves to, they were more concerned with the current health effects they were

experiencing than with the possibility of more serious future risks such as cancer or heart

disease. This tendency to believe themselves personally invulnerable to the risks to which

smoking exposes them is typical of their developmental stage (Pollay, 1997). Botvin,

Botvin, Michela, Baker & Filazzola (1991) identified several psychological origins of these

tendencies in adolescents:

> They include (a) cognitive development, which allows abstract thinking necessary
> to anticipate future consequences in only about half of mid-adolescents; (b)
> conceptions of disease which, in theory, must become sufficiently elaborate
> through learning to connect cigarette smoking with cancer and heart disease in an
> understandable causal process; and (c) the especially salient influence of peer
> pressure in adolescence. (p. 929)

This may be one of the reasons why the tobacco industry is so successful in targetting this

age range.

In the States, cigarettes are the single most advertised product on billboards, with

alcohol a close second (Kilbourne, 1991).

> Cigarette advertising is so pervasive and ubiquitous that cigarettes are a cultural commonplace, taken for granted by the public, and treated as less risky than appropriate. We are all aware of the reverse of this, when we feel suspicion of the unfamiliar. This positive effect is called "friendly familiarity" by advertising professionals....Repetition, oft referred to as the soul of persuasion, likely biases both risk and social perceptions, such as assessments of smoking prevalence, and/or the social acceptance experienced by smokers, according to both consumer behavior and psychology experts. (Pollay, 1997, p. 59)

Kilbourne sees advertising as a powerful educational force in American society and one of the major health educators. Advertising creates a climate "in which dangerous attitudes toward alcohol and cigarettes are presented as normal, appropriate and innocuous. One of the chief symptoms of addiction is denial....Advertising can encourage this denial" (p. 11). Thus, whether or not such ads increase consumption is a moot point: they create a climate in which "an addictive, carcinogenic, and lethal product [is portrayed] as innocuous and even desirable" (Cunningham, 1996. p. 66).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how smoking fits into the context of girls' lives as they navigate the perilous path from childhood to adulthood. It is this context that makes the issue of adolescent girls' smoking such a complex one. In the absence of clearly defined and culturally approved rites of passage, the growing up process for today's girls is informed by market forces through the messages of the media. These messages are pervasive in our society, reaching into every corner of our lives and colonizing our attitudes and ideologies. Media messages of the tobacco industry present cigarettes as symbols of femininity, maturity, independence and rebellion that will help girls striving towards womanhood create an acceptable persona within the discourse of femininity. Because smoking ads are part of the larger discourse of femininity, girls do not actually have to see or be conscious of seeing such ads to be affected by the messages they transmit. Indeed, even the behaviour of girls who explicitly reject such messages can be affected by them.

CHAPTER SIX

SMOKING ROOM: BUILDING COMMUNITY AROUND SMOKING

Introduction

This is a story about young women's social lives. We have seen that the family backgrounds of these girls are bleak yet each of them, with the possible exception of Mercedes, has dreams and desires for a better future. The affective relationships that they create outside of their families are central to their efforts to build a life that satisfies them. Here it is that they are busy making something for themselves in their lives: something that they choose; something that they care about. Although smoking is not a part of all of these important social relationships it is and has been central to most of them. In their peer groups, in courtship rituals, and in their relations with the adults in their lives, cigarettes often play an important part in terms of signalling acceptance or disapproval, inclusion or exclusion. Smoking serves as a facilitator of these relationships and of community in the lives of these girls who smoke.

Sociability of Smoking

> Diana: It's funny because, after we're on lunch we'll go inside and we'll hug each other goodbye and people think we're a group of lesbians. It's not like that - just, we're going to miss each other....So - I don't care, they can call me what they want.

For all the girls in this study, the sociability of smoking is extremely important. In fact, I'd like to argue that, for these girls, it is the most important factor in their smoking. Allison, in response to being asked what her best smoking experience has been, says simply: "With my friends - talking." Mercedes, although she is currently without a regular smoking group, still estimates that most of her smoking is done with friends. Her best memory of smoking is of a barbeque with many friends and family around, where music and friends and inclusion in the group were part of the smoking experience.

> We were sitting where we could see each other and listening to music by the car. And everybody was, I don't know, just getting stuff ready and we were just smoking and talking about stuff. I guess that would be the best one I could think of.

Even Diana's worst smoking experience is a fond memory because of the social aspect:

> The worst experience was when we were so addicted that when we ran out of cigarettes we had to smoke tea! - Red Rose!....you buy the empty tubes. And we'd pour it into it, roll it up, and just smoke through a filter [laughs]....Me and Allison. My friend M [female], not the one I go to school with - a different one. My friend A [female]. We used to sit around smoking tea....It tastes okay, but the smell - you kinda get in trouble for the smell. We were smoking once, in my bedroom, and my dad comes in: 'What're you smoking?' 'Tea.' 'Don't lie to me - I can smell weed!' [laughs].

The other side of sociability, however, is exclusion. Mercedes' experience in her smoking group[21] was one of gradual exclusion instead of inclusion and this was so painful that it led her finally to drop out of school. In describing how this happened she says:

> Cause of, like, some of my friends that are there [at school], they don't want to - they kinda ignore me sometimes....They just changed. Other people that ended up going into our group and then people would all of a sudden act all different. They wouldn't be the same person. Like they were trying to prove something to the other person.

Mercedes looked for other friends but this was not successful:

> I have some friends that do hang out with me, but I don't really, like, feel like hanging out with them. I don't know. Kinda weird - Or it's just something they're into - I just don't really like - going out and smoking up [marijuana] and all that.

Mercedes became depressed and started sleeping in and skipping classes. She got behind and could no longer catch up, and this made her feel stupid: "just thinking I can't do anything. Like, a failure in school." Finally, she dropped out of school and is considering attending a different one in the fall. She will have to repeat all of grade nine.

Relationship and independence

> Theorists of adolescence have emphasized the need to develop independence during adolescence while female-developmental theorists have described the unwavering importance of relationships in the female cycle. These two contradictory lines of thought place adolescent females at a peculiar crossroad. The implication has been that they must choose to follow the route either of separation or of connection,

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[21] For all of these girls, their main friendship group was also their 'smoking group.' For this reason I have referred to them interchangeably throughout this paper.

where separation leads to maturity and connection leads to femininity. (Stern, 1990, pp. 84, 85)

The world of adolescent girls "consists of intense but conflicted relationships" (Holmes & Silverman, 1992, p. 31). This intense sociability begins before puberty as girls form very close relationships with family and friends. Yet even before adolescence the strong need for autonomy is also evident. "One aspect of this can be seen in the extremely tight-knit friendship groups formed by girls. A function of the social exclusiveness of such groupings is to gain private inaccessible space. This in turn allows pre-pubetal girls to remain seemingly inscrutable to the outside world of parents, teachers, youth workers and boys as well" (McRobbie, 1991, p.14). The fact that girls, but not boys, form such groups may be in response to their status as females and their resultant anxieties about moving toward adolescent sexuality.

The importance of relationship and autonomy continues strongly as girls move into adolescence. Young women long both for closer ties with others and for greater independence. They see their relationship to themselves as important as well, expressing desires for self-love and self-respect (Holmes & Silverman, 1992). Perhaps this is why adolescent girls themselves do not see these twin needs for separation and connection as oppositional, as do some theorists. A recent study found that girls do not feel that they must choose either one or the other. Rather, the girls see them as compatible aspects of themselves.

> These aspects not only coexist, but each can also function in the service of the other. Developing independence is seen as improving the capacity to meet one's own needs, so that others can be appreciated as people rather than instrumental providers. In reducing the preoccupation with receiving care, these women report a heightened capacity to look outside themselves and attend to others. At the same time, relationships provide the support one needs to push one's own development further. (Stern, 1990, pp. 84, 85)

In study after study, adolescent girls show a yearning for a sense of community. For them, sociability is essential. They cherish intimacy with friends, long for harmony in their families, and link sexual involvement to significant ties (Bibby & Posterski, 1992; Holmes & Silverman, 1992).

> Other research indicates that they spend a great deal of time in social interaction. They spend more time talking than boys do; their conversation is often about interpersonal relations. Their television-watching consists of the social dramas of soap operas and game shows; they spend twice the amount of time interacting with their friends as boys do. (Holmes & Silverman, p. 47)

Young women consistently place a higher value on relationship than do young men, and this may reflect the fact that their attitudes towards others are also consistently more positive. "Regardless of whether we are talking about interpersonal values, social concerns, or resolving problems, the findings remain the same. Young females are far more caring, sympathetic, and responsive toward people in general and the disprivileged in particular" (Bibby & Posterski, p. 141).

Creation of Community

Diana, Allison, Mercedes and, to some extent, Zoë have created supportive communities for themselves outside of their family homes[22]. For most this has happened at school, but it does not stop there. These girls are remarkably resourceful in terms of finding people in their lives that will support them. Allison, for instance, has chosen her own foster home against her mother's wishes. Because she and her mother have had a historically volatile relationship, and her mother's various live-in boyfriends have tended to be abusive, Allison has chosen no longer to live with her mother. Despite the fact that her mother is trying to use social services to pull her from this home, Allison has spent months filling out forms, talking to social workers, and better educating herself about the social services system in order to be allowed to remain in the home she feels is best for her. Diana has also shown herself to be tenacious in looking for effective supports for herself, forming strong relationships with female counsellors from various agencies she has been involved with that can serve as role models for her.

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[22] Although it is probable, from hints she dropped, that Gabi also had a supportive friendship community, I was not able to ask her about this in detail.

Perhaps because smoking was a large part of their early social relationships in their families, smoking has also become a part of most of the chosen social relationships that these girls have created outside of the family. All of these girls have built social groups at school that met largely for the purpose of smoke breaks. Two of these groups have since disintegrated or dispersed but two of them were active at the time that I interviewed the girls. Because I was not able to interview Gabi a second time, I was not able to explore the community she had created for herself in greater detail. Nevertheless, it was evident from the brief conversations we did have, that she places enormous importance on sociability in her life, despite her crafted persona as a 'romantic loner'. She often chooses to socialize with friends rather than attend school, and she describes cigarettes as ever present in her life.

Cigarette Communities

Allison's group is based at a large urban community school and all of its members, like her, are part of the larger alternative program there. Allison feels that there is a mood of acceptance and a tolerance of diversity in her school as well as in her smoking group. She says of the program: "Nobody makes fun of anybody there. Everybody's like: 'Oh, hi, how are you today?' and it's like, all these compliments and stuff....We're like a family. That's what everybody says." She estimates that the vast majority of the 150 students in the program smoke. She talks about her own group of friends that she smokes with:

> I have, like, a main group I hang out with....I knew H [female] from elementary school - and B [male] was like the first person I met there. And then C [female] was H's friend, and then S [male] - just is like, my best friend right now at school.... He's always there and he's always chipper and stuff....Very positive. You can always tell when he's having a bad day - which isn't very often.

Allison feels very accepted by her friends in the smoking group:

> I think it's because we always talked about our personal lives and stuff. It's funny - we have this one person, B? We know everything about him. He tells us everything he does every day [laughs]. We learn a lot about each other....We always make each other laugh.

As Allison speaks about her smoking group, her characteristic reserve lifts and she becomes animated. She feels that these are her very best friends and that, on a daily basis, they converse at a deep and meaningful level about what is important to them.

In terms of the mechanics of how her group meets, Allison says:

> I get to school about 8 o'clock and - around 8:30 my friends come and I have a smoke with them - and then at breaks and after school....We always grab each other out of classes and stuff - it's like 'Hey get out here - I'm going to grab a smoke'....It's like 'Come on, come on' and we always know what it is [for].

Thus, although the group is formed through friendship and not solely based on smoking, in practical terms it is a group that revolves around the activity of smoking: all are smokers and, whenever they meet together, they smoke together. Diana's group is very similar in this respect. The group meets only at lunch, since the members are in different grades and don't have classes together. Diana describes what happens next:

> Well - we have this spot we go sit up at. And - I sit down. And then my friend L [female] sits down. And then S [female] sits in front of us [laughs]. My other friend stands on the road....And then the guys sit down. And then we - someone lights up a cigarette and you pass that around - then another person - then another person. So eventually after, like, [laughs] seven cigarettes have been lit, everybody's had a cigarette....It's a whole community thing.

Thus, Diana's group also revolves around the activity of smoking. More than that, smoking in her group is an important friendship building ritual.

Like Allison, Diana also feels very accepted by and close to her group: "It's funny because, after we're on lunch we'll go inside and we'll hug each other goodbye and people think we're a group of lesbians. It's not like that - just, we're going to miss each other....So - I don't care, they can call me what they want." In speaking about the group, she notes that she met them through a mutual friend who has since moved away: "Well, I met them through Vicky....And - we have a lot in common actually. We're all interested in tattoos - and body piercing and stuff like that....And, like, just other things."

Despite their similarities, however, Diana too feels that her group is tolerant of diversity. To illustrate this she gives the following example:

> Yeah, we have - actually there's one more person I forgot to mention: there's M [female]. She's fairly, fairly obese....No-one likes her too much, but - we don't want to hurt her feelings?....So we just let her - hang out.

She also notes that there is a huge diversity in cigarette brands smoked by the people in her group, and agrees that most of her friends consider their brand a part of their personality:

> Okay. L [female] smokes duMaurier, K [male] smokes Player's Light, N [male] smokes - Benson & Hedges, M [female] smokes Player's Lights - Regular, and S [female] smokes whatever anyone else has. I prefer duMaurier.

Diana's group is based at a local junior high school and, although Diana herself is in the alternative program there, all but one other person in her group belong to the mainstream population of the school.

Both groups comprise females and males. Mercedes' former group also included some males and Zoë's former circle used to include many more males than females, perhaps because most girls were afraid of her reputation as a 'satanist,' or perhaps because, having been brought up by her dad, she relates better to boys. Despite the mixed genders in these groups, everyone is 'friends only' and, although members of the group may be interested in each other in a romantic way and flirting may happen, serious courtship happens outside of the groups. Diana illustrates how cigarettes can become part of a courtship ritual: "My best [smoking] experience would have to be - when a guy I liked asked me if I wanted a drag - off of his cigarette! I was, like, 'Oh *yeah*, I like that!' That'd be my best one."

Research shows that friendships are seen as the greatest source of enjoyment in their lives for both girls and boys. "Adolescent women turn to friends for the same kind of support they say they need from their families. They want to speak out, to be heard, to counter what one 14-year-old described as 'the fear that nobody is going to be around when you really need someone to talk to and confide in'" (Holmes & Silverman, 1992, p. 35). In spite of the conflicts inherent in friendship and the difficulties of peer pressure, friendships provide adolescent girls with "opportunities for growth, contributing to the creation of order at the personal and social levels and helping a person find a meaningful

place in the world" (p. 36). The friendship communities that these girls have created, then, composed of mixed genders and supportive of each member, are focussed around and facilitated by the act and ritual of smoking.

Underground Economy

> Allison: Usually my friends - we always share our smokes with each other, so - nobody's ever out of any.

An interesting feature of these groups, which we have already seen in Diana's case, is the sharing of cigarettes. Diana notes that instead of buying cigarettes from her friends she 'bums' them: "They prefer it that way." In fact, in an environment where very few kids can afford to buy whole packs, and the practice of buying and selling single cigarettes is widespread, it is possible to tell how close friends are by whether or not cigarettes are shared or sold. Mercedes puts it succinctly: "Well if I want to give one away to like a friend then I'll just give it away. But - if it's somebody that I don't really like or I don't really know, I'd say 'You can buy it off me' [laughs]." Thus the exchange of cigarettes can signal inclusion in a friendship group (in terms of sharing) or exclusion from a friendship group (in terms of buying/selling).

> Zoë: And then, it's like, it hits your budget too! Cause, like, I don't get very much every week and, like, half of it I spend on smokes. That kinda cuts me down, on like, the junk I can buy.

For girls of this age group and socio-economic level a steady supply of disposable income is rare. Thus, very few of them can afford to buy whole packs on a regular basis. Because of this, a whole culture of buying, selling, trading and sharing single cigarettes (and, more rarely, half-packs or packs) has sprung up in order to satisfy the demand for cigarettes among these youth. Because I was not able to interview Gabi a second time, I did not get information about the economics of her cigarette smoking. For Zoë, Allison, Diana and Mercedes, however, smoking was something they found very hard to afford. At the time of the second interviews, a package of 20 cigarettes varied in price from about $5.25 to $6.00 depending on the vendor. Mercedes talked about this: "But normally I get the ones

that are $5.25 - somewhere around there. It goes up to about $5.50....It depends on the store. Like, at 7eleven it's like $5.75 or something - Really expensive." Although all of the girls had occasionally bought packs, most of their cigarette purchases were in the form of half packs ("halfers") or single cigarettes from acquaintances at school or various adults they knew.

At one time, Allison had been an active 'vendor' of cigarettes at her school: "People'd ask you if you had a smoke to buy and you'd just say 'Yeah.' Everybody knew who you were. For the amount you get for selling a pack, you'd have enough to buy two packs." Diana used to buy packs from stores when she first started smoking at the age of nine as the price of cigarettes was cheaper then and the laws regarding sales to minors were not yet being actively enforced. She remembered having once sold a package of cigarettes:

> My brother found a pack of cigarettes and he gave them to me. So, I went and sold those....They're 50 cents [each] unless - unless they're the tiny ones. Those are 25 ....But I had Number Sevens and those are pretty tall. Actually some people, when they're really 'niccing', you can get a dollar.

She felt that selling cigarettes could be a lucrative business if you could come up with the money in the first place: "Some of them do sell packs. They buy them and then they can sell them for, like 6 bucks, when they're like, 5 something." Mercedes' sense was that the business of selling cigarettes among youth is fairly casual. She felt that most kids who sell them do so: "Just once in a while, when they have a pack. They don't always have money to get some, so." As far as exchange prices went, there was no clear consensus. In Mercedes' experience, the 'going price' for getting someone else to buy you a pack of cigarettes was that "you have to give up 2 smokes." Diana, on the other hand, paid 5 cigarettes for the same service. For most of the girls, a more common practice was to buy or sell individual smokes, usually for 50 cents (Allison, Diana) or to 'go halfers' with someone else on a pack. Allison explained: "Well, I'll just have a buck on me, or something, and I'll buy a couple a smokes off my friends - or me and my friends'll go halfers on a pack." Mercedes agreed: "Well if I really need one and I don't want to buy a

pack I'll buy a couple off somebody....Sometimes I go halfers with some people - like $2.50."

All four of the girls talked about the practice of sharing or 'bumming' smokes off of other people (often parents) when they couldn't afford to buy them themselves. Zoë noted that: "I usually either roll them or bum them off my dad. And then it just adds up, so. I rarely got my own pack - but when I did it was gone in a day." Mercedes too 'bummed' smokes from her mother: "But lately I haven't been buying any packs. I've been just bumming them off some people....Sometimes my mum has some....Well, now she'll just give me them." And Diana, when she wasn't bumming cigarettes from her smoking group, used to bum them from her mother as well. In Allison's group the practice was to share smokes with those who couldn't afford them (see quote at top of this section). In her experience, this tended to be a reciprocal practice, so that the burden of cost was shared fairly evenly by all members of the group over time.

Smoking with Adults

> Mercedes: Well, when [my mum's] friends are over, if they're all smoking I'll smoke with them - I just feel a part of the gathering [laughs]. And, a couple of times I've had a smoke with my mum - we were just talking.

We have seen that all of these girls come from family backgrounds where smoking was an early part of their lives: the custodial parents of all of these girls smoked as they grew up, and although most parents are currently trying to quit, all still smoke. Zoë, who has been brought up by her dad, says of him: "Like, he's been smoking since I was born, so I've kinda grown up watchin' him with pack after pack." As children, most of these girls saw smoking as a negative thing in their lives: they had learned about the health effects of smoking in school and resented that fact that their parents smoked. Mercedes recalls: "Well, before - I thought it was gross because of the smell and all that and I just didn't want to be around it."

Inhaling second hand smoke was a fact of life for all of these girls and they are well aware of how this affected them. Mercedes remembers: "Just being around – like when my mum used to smoke a lot and then her friends? And I'd just, like, inhale it." Diana seconds this: "Yeah, and plus my parents have always been smokers so – guess all my life I've been smoking." But Zoë is the most direct:

> If you're, like, growing up and you're inhaling second hand smoke all the time, and you go out into, like, fresh air and stuff where there is no smoke, it's kinda weird. You're not used to it, so you kinda want the smoke back. So I'm like, whatever, when I was twelve I did that once for a week. I went off and there was, like, a smoke free environment and I'm: 'Oh god, I want a cigarette.' So I just ripped one off from my dad and, 'Whoa – that's good!'. And then ever since then, that's it.

For all of these girls, smoking has been in some way associated with adults. Allison explains: "Well, all my life I've always seen adults smoking. Except maybe one or two, adults were smoking....I just remember when I was little my mum said: 'Only adults smoke.' That stuck in my head." Although none of their parents want to be seen as endorsing their children's smoking, they have given their daughters mixed messages about smoking all their lives. All of the girls have suffered disapproval from their parents over their smoking. Allison recalls her worst smoking experience as being the first time her mum caught her smoking at the age of fifteen: "I just got a big long lecture and stuff. And 'You see me smoke all the time and you know what I go through – why'd you do it?' And stuff like that." She concedes that this made her feel "kinda crummy." Mercedes also remembers lectures from her mother:

> Before she didn't like it and now and then she'll tell me – just warn me about stuff, and tell me like, 'You'll get sick' and stuff like that. But now she thinks, well she can't do a lot about it.

Zoë also notes that her smoking causes her dad to nag her a bit more "and it just gives him one more reason to yell at me. But, that was just for a little while and that passed."

All of their parents have made rules around smoking to make it more difficult for the girls to smoke at home. Although Allison used to smoke with her mum when she lived at home, her mum didn't allow her to smoke in her room. Now, in the foster home she

lives in, she must smoke outside. Gabi's mother doesn't allow smoking in the house and Zoë's dad will occasionally forbid smoking in the house, usually when he is trying to cut down or quit. Diana notes that she smokes in her room with the door closed, although: "My dad doesn't [let me smoke in the house], he doesn't want me smoking. But, my mum - hmm, it just depends. I bug her though [laughs]. I go, 'Can I have a drag?'" Mercedes admits to occasionally smoking in her room: "but my mum doesn't want me to, she wants me to smoke outside."

Diana wryly points out that, despite the attempts at rule-making in her house, her parents are really telling her that smoking is "okay" because they have been role modelling smoking for her all her life. What she sees is that, despite their disapproval, her parents (and those of the other girls) have also enforced her smoking by example, through second hand smoke, and by occasionally providing cigarettes and smoking with her. As Zoë says: "I usually either roll them or bum them off my dad." Mercedes agrees:

> Sometimes my mum has some....Well, now she'll just give me them. Because like, I used to ask her - now she'll just give me them and I'm like 'Well, they're there so I'll just smoke them'. [laughs] When I'm kinda bored and - I don't know ....But she won't buy me any packs, but when she has packs she'll give me one.

Many studies have demonstrated the strong relationship between parental and sibling smoking behaviour and the liklihood of young adolescent smoking (Jacobson, 1981; Thrush, Fife-Shaw & Breakwell, 1997). Not only are children strongly influenced by the modelling of smoking parents and other family members, research has suggested that "children usually accept their first cigarette from a member of the family—a sister, brother, or even a parent" (Jacobson, p. 23). As smoking among adults tends to follow socioeconomic lines, it is easy to see how generational smoking patterns can be established: "the poorer the parents, and the less well-educated they are, the more likely they—and therefore their children—are to smoke" (p. 23). Among adolescent girls, however, we have already seen how factors besides class also impact on their smoking behaviour, leading to a steady increase in smoking across class and race lines for North American girls over the past ten years (Kaplan & Weiler, 1997).

According to Thrush, Fife-Shaw & Breakwell (1997), while the importance of the family may decrease for boys as they get older, it remains constant for girls. This importance can have both positive and negative effects, as families are not always happy, and girls may blame themselves for the unhappiness. The prevalence of divorce can be difficult for children and adolescents. Indeed, a recent study has found that parental divorce greatly increases the likelihood of becoming a smoker (by about a third) for both males and females when other factors are equal (Wolfinger, 1998). Wurtzel (1994) believes that the dysfunctional family is a generational phenomenon that is largely to blame for the widespread diagnosis of depression among 'generation X' teens:

> To ask anyone how he happened to fall into a state of despair always involves new variations on the same myriad mix of family history. There is always divorce, death, drunkenness, drug abuse and what-not in any of several permutations. I mean, is there anybody out there who doesn't think her family is dysfunctional? (p. 30).

Despite such widespread difficulties, adolescent girls often find a great deal of satisfaction in their family relationships.

In this study I found that, despite their disapproval of their daughters' smoking, most of these parents will occasionally smoke with them. This is a consistent highlight for the girls. When they smoke with their parents or their parents' friends or other adults whom they look up to, these girls have a feeling of acceptance and inclusion in the world of adults (see Mercedes' quote at the beginning of this section). Allison admits that smoking with adults makes her feel more grownup: "Yeah. Cause I can sit with my mum and, like, my cousin and stuff, at the table, and we're smoking. So I kind of feel like I'm part of everything." Diana feels that she is accepted as an equal when she smokes with some adults:

> Well, some do. My parents don't because - they're my parents. But I can sit down and have a conversation with my neighbour which is 37. She says it's just like talking to one of her friends!

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how smoking is central to the social lives of the girls I interviewed. These girls are actively building community as a way to find acceptance and support outside of their families of origin. Smoking facilitates the creation and ongoing life of these communities. In their peer groups as well as in their relationships with the adults in their lives, cigarettes often play an important part in terms of signalling inclusion or exclusion for these girls.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE: GETTING GIRLS TO BUTT OUT

Introduction

> The use of smoking to mediate the 'paradox' of being female in a misogynist world is legal, logical, and beneficial to the social order and the status quo. To counter this powerful encouragement for women to smoke and/or continue to smoke, we need to define alternative program responses. (Greaves, 1995, p. 212)

Many feminist researchers have pointed out how smoking and other addictions among women and girls actually serve to sustain the status quo within our patriarchal society. In previous chapters I have shown how girls' smoking is mediated by the discourse of femininity within what Pipher (1994) calls a "girl-poisoning culture" (p. 12). I have also indicated that mainstream conceptions about addiction as well as research and policy responses refuse to acknowledge the political and structural factors that lead to and support smoking among women and girls. Such political biases serve to maintain the existing power relations in society. Feminist researchers such as Greaves (1996) have urged the need to develop alternate understandings of the issue of women's and girls' smoking that would inform more effective responses to the prevention and cessation of their smoking. This is what I have attempted to do with this study.

We have seen, in the previous chapter, how smoking is central to the social lives of these girls. The sharing and smoking of cigarettes becomes a friendship ritual that facilitates the formation and ongoing life of the social groups that these girls create. Because of the importance of the groups in the social lives of these girls, it is difficult for them to quit while part of such a group. The case of Diana was a seeming exception to this that we will explore in greater detail. The disintegration of these friendship groups opens a window of opportunity for these girls to think about and attempt to quit smoking. In this chapter I will show how these girls came to recognize tobacco as an addiction and how they talked about quitting. I will present their quitting strategies and some literature on tobacco cessation. I'll draw on the findings of this study to suggest some ideas about how girl smokers can be

supported or facilitated to quit smoking. Finally, I will discuss why adolescent girls'

smoking must become an important issue for feminists and social workers.

Wanting to Quit

Recognizing Addiction

> Gabi: I hate it. Like I - okay, I really love the feeling of a cigarette, but I really hate the fact that I'm addicted to something? Like, I'm a serious control freak, and if I can't be in control it drives me insane. The fact that I can't control my own body? I don't know, I hate it....'Cause I'm just a slave to another big corporation. It makes me mad.

A 1982 marketing research study conducted on behalf of Imperial Tobacco held focus

groups with male and female smokers between the ages of 16 and 24 and former smokers

between the ages of 19 and 24. One of the objectives was to "probe the area of quitting

among both smokers and former smokers" (as cited in Cunningham, 1996, p. 167). Some

of the findings were as follows.

> Starters no longer disbelieve the dangers of smoking, but they almost universally assume these risks will not apply to themselves because they will not become addicted. Once addiction does take place, it becomes necessary for the smoker to make peace with the accepted hazards. This is done by a wide range of rationalizations....The desire to quit seems to come earlier now than before, even prior to the end of high school....However, the desire to quit, and actually carrying it out, are two quite different things, as the would-be quitter soon learns. (p. 167)

Indeed, the process of quitting smoking is a very difficult one and adolescents, because of

their reasoning levels at this developmental stage, may not understand this until it is too

late. In a study of high school senior smokers in the USA, Pierce & Gilpin (1996) found

that the percentage of those who believed that "they probably or definitely will not be

smoking in 5 years" (p. 253) decreased greatly according to the addiction level, from

84.8% for nondaily smokers to 31.6% for those who smoked a pack or more a day. Thus,

it seems to be mainly for those youth with more smoking experience that the knowledge

begins to sink in "that cigarettes are an addiction...they will not easily escape" (p. 253).

Of the five girls I interviewed, only Gabi, Allison and Zoë felt that they were truly

chemically addicted to nicotine. Gabi noted:

> I smoke 'cause, [pause] 'cause I'm addicted, I guess. I've tried to quit a few times, but I really - I don't know. I know I can, but I like it too much....I don't know. Like, you kinda relate everything to smoking. You have a cup of coffee: you smoke. Have a cup of tea: smoke. After a meal: you smoke. When you get up, you smoke. Before you go to bed, you smoke. It's like, I don't know, I've been told to cut out the things that I relate to smoking, but I'd die. Pretty much, because, couldn't eat, couldn't breathe.

Zoë discussed her reasons for continuing to smoke:

> Well, now my reasons: one, 'cause it's, like, I'm hooked on them. Gotta have nicotine and stuff. And 'cause, it's still kinda weird if I go into an entirely smoke free environment, it's like, it's not that easy to handle.

And Allison, in talking about what it was she hated about being a smoker, said: "how you, like you need - want to have a smoke or something like that? And before I didn't really want to at all really....Yeah, 'cause you kinda get hooked."

Diana and Mercedes, on the other hand, saw their addictions to smoking as less chemical and more situational. Diana felt that, for her: "the worst addiction is, like, your hands. Like, you're used to, like... [here she gestured with her hands to indicate holding a cigarette]." Mercedes could go a whole week sometimes without a cigarette and enjoy the feeling of not smoking: "Well, it just makes me feel - well I don't have that feeling in my stomach when like when I smoke or that taste in my mouth." But she felt that her addiction was caused more by stress and life events than by nicotine:

> After a while, if I'm doing a lot of stuff - like out and about, then all of a sudden I'll be like 'Well, I need a smoke'....Like I'm gonna freak out or something [laughs]. Then, I just keep on thinking about smokes.

Those girls who considered themselves addicted to the nicotine tended to prefer brands that they perceived as stronger. Gabi, for instance, preferred Camels: "Cause they taste good. They're like smooth, and....generally cigarettes taste like crap." And she admitted that she got more of a chemical kick from them: "they're actually stronger than normal cigarettes. But they're just, I don't know, for some reason they're smoother." Zoë smoked:

> Player's Premier Kingsize....I don't know - it's yummy. I like it better than the other brands but if I can't get that one I go with Player's Medium. It's the second best one....Yeah, kinda yummy. Makes my lungs feel good - Hmm. It's not really very describable, cause it doesn't really have a taste. But it - I don't know. Just

cause it - sucks in your mouth and fills your lungs and makes you die quicker but [laughs] I don't know. It's good on the lungs.

It was interesting to find that, at the same time that the girls were beginning to cut down and try to quit, some of them had switched to stronger cigarettes. Allison had switched from no preference to: "JPS or duMaurier....They're stronger I guess." Diana, at the first interview had preferred: "Players Light. And if I have to, duMaurier - duMaurier's really harsh? Bitter. I find it really bitter - And Players Light is kinda smoother." Yet at the second interview her preference had changed to duMaurier. This is consistent with research that has documented that many smokers will adjust their smoking to continue to ingest the dose of nicotine they are habituated to, even when cutting down or switching to a 'lighter' brand (Cunningham, 1996, p. 162).

Incentives for Quitting

Diana: I'm quitting. I'm gonna really try - because I can't really kiss my cat or anything, because he doesn't like the smell - like he even backs up. Even after I've brushed my teeth he won't let me come near him.

Approximately 6 months had elapsed from the time I first interviewed the girls for the study until the second interviews. In that short time, almost all the girls had drastically cut down on their smoking and were in the process of trying to quit. Diana went from a pack a week or more (one pack contains 20 cigarettes) to a cigarette a day:

I cut down to - a cigarette a day.....Just sick of it - because it's not helping me with what I want to do. Like I'm trying to lose weight and, y'know, smoking's not helping.[23]

Mercedes cut down from about seven a day to one or two a day. Zoë's cut was even more drastic, from sixteen a day to an average of two: "Like one day I'll have one and then the next I'll have like three and - But it's still been keeping low."

Although I was not able to interview Gabi a second time, when I talked to her on the telephone six months later, she had gone from a pack a day to none. She had not had a

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[23] This comment of Diana's is an important reminder that the issue of adolescent girls' smoking is more complex than many believe. Most reports and studies of the issue emphasize that wanting to lose weight is a large factor in starting and keeping girls smoking. None of the girls I interviewed believed this to be the case, and Diana, as we see here, actually believes that smoking contributes to her weight gain. This highlights the need for more qualitative studies about this issue.

cigarette for over a week and was hoping she could quit for good. Only Allison was still

smoking at the same level: "Oh, in a week about a pack, sometimes two." And although

she was not actively in the process of quitting, she was considering trying it again. She

recalled the last time she had tried to quit:

> It was hard because I was always being bitchy and everybody noticed it but I never did. They were, like, 'Oh, Allison, you're so bitchy', and I'm like 'what are you talking about?'. And I just kept wanting one, wanting one....It's kinda scary. I try not to think about it.

Along with their knowledge of health concerns and their fears around this, some of

the girls acknowledged other incentives in their lives for quitting. Diana, for example, had

just moved into a beautiful new subsidized apartment with her family and her goal, together

with her parents, was to keep the new home smoke-free: "I've been trying to do it [laughs]

....A month. Since we've moved into our new place." And the fact that her cat didn't like

her smoking was an important incentive (see quote at beginning of this section). Allison

had a similar observation about her new horse: "Oh, I know she doesn't like it [when I

smoke around her]. She gets mad. She does the little - she blows out her nose [laughs]."

Indeed, it has been suggested that because of the developmental stage that adolescent girls

are at, knowledge of current instead of future effects from smoking may have more impact

in terms of their decision-making (Frost & Baxter, 1996).

Cessation of Smoking

Disintegration of Smoking Groups facilitates Quitting

> Zoë: Well, [quitting] it's really hard. I've tried many times before. And I might actually accomplish it this time! The last, like, 4 or 5 times I've failed miserably but, I don't know, I hope I can accomplish it. I can die from it, so - I don't want to smoke anymore!

Roth (1991) notes that the experiences of six women's centres that integrated a

drug and alcohol focus into their existing programs "clearly indicated that it is both helpful

and necessary to place alcohol and drug problems within the context of other women's

issues" (p. vii). For the girls in this study smoking is, as we have already seen, an integral

part of their social networks. An understanding of how smoking fits into the context of girls' social lives, then, may be the most important place to start looking at how girls' efforts to quit smoking can be successfully supported and facilitated. In this study I found that when the social smoking networks begin to disintegrate, the practice of smoking also may start to lose its hold on girls who smoke and they can consider trying to quit. This presents a window of opportunity for helping girls quit.

Mercedes, for instance, since she had dropped out of school and her best friend had moved to Vancouver, no longer had a smoking group. Now, when she smoked it was either with single friends (both of whom lived some distance away from her), with her mother's friends (which wasn't very often since her mother was trying to quit and disapproved of Mercedes' smoking) or by herself. All of a sudden it was easier for her to cut down and contemplate quitting. Zoë was clear how these same circumstances were helping her cut down:

> Well, now that the whole group of people we used to hang out with has like gone and moved - now the group of people that smoke is usually when I'm hanging out with [sister] L's friends....Yeah. Not many people that I hang around with smoke now. Except for - 'cause like L doesn't and [my boyfriend] D doesn't and I'm around them constantly. And then they're just trying to get me to quit. And I'm going 'well there's nothing, you know, except dad that makes me want one, when he's having one.' Other than that I'm not around people when they have them lit. Makes it easier to quit.

Diana's circumstances were slightly different. Although her old smoking group (the same one as Zoë's) had disintegrated and she herself had moved away, she had eventually become part of another group of friends at her new school, all of whom smoke. In between groups, however, she had cut down significantly. When she came into the new group it was with a determination to quit, and her group was helping her do it. "They know I'm trying to quit, so they're not gonna - they don't want to push it upon me." We can see that the disintegration of Diana's first group had provided an opportunity for her to cut down and the time lapse between the disintegration of one group and her joining with another had been enough to cement her resolve to quit.

As the eldest person in her group, Diana was the first to quit and was being supported by her group as a pioneer of sorts. They had helped her cut down to one cigarette a day, but it was still hard for her to quit completely while with the group. This is not surprising as the sharing of cigarettes was the central friendship ritual of this group. Diana acknowledged that, when she finally quit, she would miss this ritual of sharing cigarettes with her friends. It is significant that Diana was not able to quit completely until the day after school ended for the summer (and the group disintegrated). Although the second group helped her significantly by providing support and encouragement for quitting, then, we see that the centrality of smoking as a friendship ritual of the group worked against this support.

Allison, as the only person not actively trying to quit, had also seen her old social smoking network disintegrate in the past year. She had moved up island away from all her old friends and no longer attended the same school or youth centre. But, significantly, her old smoking group had quickly been replaced by another one at her new school. There was no time in between the disintegration of the old group and the formation of the new one for her to contemplate quitting or cutting down. We have already seen the meaningful relationships that Allison had established with this new group and how it had become an important part of her support network as well as her new focus for smoking. The new group, then, continued to enforce smoking as an integral part of her social life, so that Allison did not have the same kind of motivation as the other girls to quit.

What lessons can we draw from these findings that might help us facilitate or support the efforts of girls who are trying to quit? Because smoking is so central to the friendship rituals of the kinds of smoking groups that these girls were part of, it is difficult if not impossible for them to quit smoking while they are actively involved in such a group. Obviously, however, we wouldn't get very far if we went around trying to encourage girl smokers to ditch all their friends. How, then, can we use this information effectively to help girls quit? My suggestion is that we look for times and circumstances when teenage

friendship groups are likely to naturally disintegrate and work to use these times to the best advantage. For example, the end of a school year or a transition from elementary school to high school are such times. These natural breaks in social friendship structure occur at fixed times and would be easy to plan around.

Schools could organize consciousness-raising sessions about smoking and smoking-related issues to coincide with the weeks before the school year ends in order to facilitate quitting at this time. They might then offer free daily support groups and/or weekly workshops during the summer break to further support those who are trying to or have quit. Such social activities organized around quitting might take the place of the friendship groups that had been organized around smoking. Of course, regular consciousness-raising activities about smoking should also happen throughout the school year to take advantage of irregular breaks in friendship structure such as moving or relationship rifts.

Further Quitting Strategies

> Zoë: I've decided that, instead of thinking about smoking, I'm going to pick flowers or something like that. I've managed to fill a cup right up with them, and - I'll probably be filling a second one today. [laughs]....Only when I'm thinking about smokes, though, so - There's going to be tons of them in the house!

To formulate some ideas about how we can better help support the efforts of girls who are attempting to stop smoking, it might be instructive to take a closer look at the quitting strategies that some of the girls I talked to had developed on their own. Unfortunately, because I was not able to interview her a second time, I was not able to discuss strategy with Gabi. Allison, as the one person not actively trying to quit, did not have a strategy developed. And Mercedes, although she was actively cutting down, was doing so in a rather unfocused way. Although her smoking had diminished because her smoking group had disappeared, she would always give in to the urge to smoke whenever she found herself with a friend who smoked. Zoë and Diana, however, were the most determined to quit and both had developed unique strategies to help them be successful.

Diana's strategy harnessed the power of her social group: "Because they don't want to - they encourage me to quit. So - that's what they want me to do, and I'm okay with that: like, they can't wait for me to quit [laughs]. They're all for it." As discussed before, Diana's only cigarette of the day was smoked in the presence of her group at lunchtime. This was a highly ritualized and satisfying event that helped strengthen her resolve no longer to smoke at other traditional times. Another part of her strategy rested on Diana's amazing ability to save money and her abhorrence of wasting this money on needless things. This helped her to stop buying her own cigarettes and to stick to her pact with her group to only 'bum' them from her friends. The last part of her strategy depended on her sense of aesthetics and pride around wanting to keep her new home and her new room smoke-free, along with her knowledge of her cat's distaste for her smoking. These two things helped her not to smoke her traditional morning and after school cigarettes in her home.

We can learn some important lessons from Diana's quitting strategies. First, her approach was multi-pronged. She needed different strategies for the two important social areas of her life: friendship group and family. Secondly, she took advantage of one of her strongest personality characteristics, her thriftiness, to help her stick to her resolve. Since she wanted to stop spending money on cigarettes she only smoked those that she 'bummed' from friends. Although her group had encouraged her to bum cigarettes from them, unspoken friendship reciprocity rules meant that she really couldn't bum more than one cigarette a day without straining the bonds of friendship. Thirdly, she took pride in being seen as a pioneer in the area of quitting among her friends. This sense allowed her feel that the struggle of quitting was not just a personal one that benefited only herself but also a group effort that benefited her friends as well. It also helped her to feel more mature (she was the eldest and the role model) and so it harnessed her deep wish to be seen as an adult. Finally, a new beginning in terms of a new, smoke-free home and room provided an extra incentive for her not to give in to smoking in her home environment.

Zoë's strategy was also multipronged. When hanging out with a group of smoking friends, she had developed the ability to say no: "Yeah, I'm now starting to actually go: 'No, I don't want a drag and you can finish that' and it's really hard to actually say that but I just spit it out anyway, just choke the words out." Since the few times she now found herself in a smoking group was while hanging out with her sister's friends, Zoë had enlisted the help of her sister for those times when her will power failed her:

> Sometimes she takes my smoke and puts the filter for it in her mouth and it looks like she's actually going to take a puff but instead she blows into it and makes it burn faster. So [laughs]. She's trying to help me quit too....when she has smokes she won't give me any and she won't let other people give me one. She'll blow into my smoke to make it burn faster or just grab it and chuck it.

But her most unique tactic was one that took the negative power of smoking and turned it into something positive (see the quote at beginning of this section): Zoë had resolved that every time she yearned for a cigarette she would instead pick a flower from the meadow behind her house.

We can also learn some lessons from Zoë's quitting strategies. Again, a multipronged strategy was important for her. Like Diana, she had developed different strategies for times when she was with friends and times when she was at home (where her dad still smoked). Secondly, she also harnessed one of her strongest personality characteristics: her strong will. As with Diana, she had social support to back her up with this strategy: her sister kept an eye on her and helped her out when her will power wasn't enough. This strategy may also have helped make her feel more mature, as she was able to refrain from smoking among her sister's older friends and so serve as a sort of role model for those who were older than her. Finally, like Diana's wish to keep her new home smoke-free, Zoë's strategy of picking flowers for her home whenever she thought of smoking appealed to her aesthetic sense and her pride about her room: her own unique space. At the same time it provided her with an alternate activity to keep her hands busy whenever they felt like pulling out a cigarette.

Flying Lessons - New Ideas about Helping Girls Quit

The issues involved in cessation of tobacco use were, until fairly recently, assumed to be identical for all smokers. For this reason, there have been few studies conducted to date about adolescent cessation of tobacco use. According to Lynch and Bonnie (1994), those that have "vary considerably in scientific quality; many are anecdotal. Therefore, at this time, no effective means are known for helping youths to quit using tobacco or to remain abstinent once they have attempted to quit" (p. 159). Some strategies for reducing smoking among youth *as a group* have been found to be more effective than others, however. For instance, high cigarette prices have been shown to dramatically reduce smoking among teens, as have strongly enforced bylaws which make access to tobacco more difficult for children and adolescents (Frost & Baxter, 1996). These two strategies are the foundation of the new youth tobacco reduction strategy in British Columbia.

They don't take into account the unique issues facing adolescent girl smokers that we have explored in previous chapters, however. It is important for policy makers and funders to value teenage girl smokers enough to fund separate programs for them. Unlike boys,

> girls need help dealing with body image and negative emotion. Addressing that difference seems to work. Indeed, the country's first girl-directed smoking-cessation program, Project Vogue, proved very effective. Developed in eastern Ontario, where 38 percent of the women smoke, the Vogue program decreased the percentage of girls who smoke from 17 per cent to 10 percent by dealing with such issues as self-esteem, body image and diet fallacies—and paired girls with buddies for support. It's no longer used in eastern Ontario because the boys felt left out! (Frost & Baxter, 1996, p. 84)

Greaves (1996) has noted that we live in a "patriarchy fundamentally unconcerned with women's health....Only after repeated feminist critique, exposing the sexism, ageism and objectification of women, were there any serious efforts to make the value of women and women's health, *for its own sake* [italics in original], central to women's smoke cessation and prevention" (p. 123).

Feminist research looking at cessation of tobacco use among adult women can be useful to help us understand some of the barriers facing adolescent girl smokers. For

instance, studies have indicated "that it is far more difficult for women than men to quit

smoking because women are more likely to use cigarettes to cope with negative feelings

such as anger, stress and depression" (Kilbourne, 1991, p.18). Support and empowerment

of women is key to the successful treatment of women who have problems with addictive

substances (Greaves, 1995; Roth, 1991). We have seen, in the previous chapters, that girls

also use smoking as a tool to cope with anger and stress. How then can we support and

empower girls to find other ways to cope with these feelings?

Pipher (1994) suggests that consciousness-raising is an important strategy that can

help empower girls to quit smoking:

> Alice Miller said, 'It is what we cannot see that makes us sick.' It's important for
> girls to explore the impact the culture has on their growth and development....Once
> girls understand the effects of the culture on their lives, they can fight back. They
> learn that they have conscious choices to make and ultimate responsibility for those
> choices. Intelligent resistance keeps the true self alive. (p. 44)

Indeed, encouraging girls to become independent thinkers by showing them how media

and advertising can influence their decisions has been found to help girls deflect their

rebelliousness away from smoking and onto the media and tobacco industry. Girls become

angry when they see how they are being manipulated by a very powerful industry (Frost &

Baxter, 1996; Kilbourne, 1991).

It is my belief that my conversations with the girls in this study about their smoking

behaviours were an active influence on helping them cut down and think about quitting in

the six months between the first and second interviews. These conversations were a form

of consciousness-raising, as we explored how/why girls began to smoke and touched on

issues such as cigarette advertising. One of the reasons girls gave me to account for the

difficulties they had in articulating what was going on with their smoking behaviour, was

that *they had never thought about it*. My contention is that the first interviews, as difficult

and sparse as they were, served to get the girls thinking about and conscious of their

smoking. The transcripts of the first interviews may have helped to encourage this process,

as they were a written witness and reminder of our conversations. Six months later, at the

second interviews, not only had all of them cut back the amount that they smoked, but they were also able to be much more thoughtful and articulate about their smoking experience.

Finally, in light of the findings of this study, I believe that it is essential to explore other ways in which the importance of sociability in the lives of girls who smoke can be drawn on to facilitate and support them in their cessation efforts. For instance, although at the time I obviously didn't realize the full significance of the fact that potential participants in my study would rather have engaged with me as pairs or groups of friends than as individuals, it seems to me that this desire on their part might be a valuable clue as to how to structure workshops or consciousness-raising sessions about smoking in a way that would be palatable for girls. And, the importance that smoking with adults seems to hold for the girls in this study should also serve as a signpost for developing more effective quitting strategies for girls who smoke. We have seen that the pleasure which girls derive from smoking with adults is closely related to their need, in the absence of culturally approved rites of passage, to be accepted and acknowledged as equals with and by adults. This speaks to the need for the development of healthy and meaningful maturity rituals in our culture for girls who are making the transition from childhood to womanhood. It also speaks to the deep need that girls have for expressions of respect from significant adults in their lives.

A Feminist and Social Work Issue

Considering the increasingly high numbers of women and girls that smoke, the persistent tobacco industry targetting of women and girls worldwide, and the rapidly expanding body of knowledge about the effects of tobacco on women and children (Kaplan & Weiler, 1997; Kilbourne, 1991), it is hard to understand why smoking has not become more of a feminist issue. Indeed, although feminist health activism has quickly embraced addictions of all kinds as women's issues, there still continues to be a lack of feminist

research, debate and lobbying around cigarette smoking (Cunningham, 1996; Ettore, 1994; Graham, 1994).

This is ironic given the fact that, historically, Canadian women were in the forefront of the fight against tobacco. Although cigarettes were slow to catch on in Canada, by the late 1800s the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was already mounting a persistent and well-coordinated antismoking lobby. Of course this fight was against men's smoking as very few women, except perhaps in the lowest classes, smoked at this time (Cunningham, 1996). As far as an issue that has serious implications for women themselves, however, cigarette smoking has only recently been seen as problematic.

In 1979, Jacobson (1986) found that of the over 50 women's organizations she contacted, asking whether they saw smoking as an issue for women, the few that bothered to reply were hostile. The same year she interviewed an editor of *Ms.* magazine about their advertising policy and was told that they did not accept either sexist advertising or that for products which could be harmful. Yet, at the time, the magazine gladly accepted all cigarette ads except for Virginia Slims, which were considered too sexist. "Ms Finkelstein explained that had Philip Morris (the manufacturer) been prepared to remove 'baby' from its advertisements, then *Ms* would have happily accepted them—and the $80,000 they would have brought in." (1981, p. 59).

Jacobson believes that this seeming disregard for women's health among feminist organizations was "not just because women believe[d] that they [were] largely male problems, but also because women [were] reacting against society and the medical profession which exhorts us not to smoke—for children's sake. The long-standing libertarian tradition of feminism tend[ed] to view anti-smoking campaigns as yet another manifestation of male 'experts' telling women what they can or can't do with their bodies" (Jacobson, 1981, p. 80). More than that, however, it may have been due to the evolution of the women's movement, as early campaigns about women's health such as the fight for

abortion and contraception were based more on economic consequences rather than health

considerations.

> It was not until the growth of feminism in the sixties that a woman's health
> movement developed in its own right. The relative affluence of the period allowed
> women, for the first time, to approach the question of health from a very different
> standpoint. Thus women were able to pay much more attention to the basic quality
> of their lives, and to explore the broader meaning of health and the ways in which a
> sexist society generates ill-health among women. (p. 80)

By 1986, though, Jacobson began to see a shift in attitudes and a growing

acceptance among many women's organisations that smoking was politically important

"within the context of women's health and women's lives in general" (p.130).

Thus, it is really only since the mid-1980s that a handful of feminists have started to turn

their attention to the issue of women and tobacco use. British and European feminists such

as Graham seem to be breaking ground in this area, along with the International Network

of Women Against Tobacco (INWAT). In Canada, the Women and Tobacco Working

Group and feminist activists in the women's health movement are beginning to slowly

mobilize around this issue.

Social workers have also turned a blind eye to the issues of smoking. When Kaplan

and Weiler (1997) did a literature search of the *Social Work Research & Abstracts* from

1984 to 1994, they turned up only two articles on smoking and its consequences. This

glaring omission puzzled the researchers, who note that:

> The social work profession has a rich history of commitment to addressing the
> needs of women, people of color, children and adolescents, and other oppressed
> groups who are increasingly vulnerable to the harmful effects of tobacco
> use....Ironically, the profession continues to ignore a product that kills more people
> than any other addictive substance. (p. 47)

Perhaps this is partly because smoking has historically been seen as a public health issue

rather than an addiction. Thus, in most research and theory about addictions in general,

nicotine addiction is ignored. Perhaps there is also some significance in the fact that so

many feminists and social workers (the majority of whom are female) still smoke. Most of

us have come to terms with our other addictions, but the addiction to nicotine is one that is

still conveniently overlooked by many.

Areas for Further Research

In this study I have come to some conclusions that I believe can be fruitfully applied in general terms to the under-researched and alarming problem of adolescent girls' smoking. Yet it must be acknowledged that the girls who participated in this study are located very specifically in terms of socioeconomic status: they are working/welfare class girls. How does this impact on my findings? Can my conclusions be rightfully said to apply only to smoking girls of that particular social location? I think not. Certainly class has been found to be an important factor in smoking behaviour, as we have seen again and again throughout this paper. Yet, clearly, gender and age are strongly implicated as well when it comes to the issue of teenage girls' smoking. Class issues alone cannot explain why adolescent girls are currently the *only* growing segment of the smoking population. Smoking among girls extends across class and race lines. Surely, however, class and race differences in smoking behaviour and motivations must exist among teenage girls. What my study cannot identify is whether such differences exist and what they may be.

Alternatively, it is possible that the conclusions I have reached had nothing to do with gender or class and more to do with the dysfunctional families that these girls live in. Dysfunctional families also exist across class and race lines. Perhaps, by a fluke, I struck a sample of girls among whom this was the most salient factor in their smoking behaviour. Yet, again, I think not. Certainly, widespread dysfunction in families alone cannot explain the puzzling fact that teenage girls are the only growing group of smokers in North America. The conclusions I have drawn are twofold: that smoking among adolescent girls must be considered in the context of the growing up process and that smoking is central to the social lives of girls. Is this true across race and class boundaries? Is it true across family types? Although I believe it is, only further research can answer these questions.

Conclusion

This study of five smoking adolescent girls has found that the issues of women's and girls' smoking overlap in many areas. But there are important differences. Adolescent girls' smoking must be seen in the context of the growing up process. It is this context that makes the issue of adolescent girls' smoking such a complex one. Cigarettes can become a symbol of femininity and maturity for girls navigating the perilous path from childhood to adulthood. At the same time, smoking becomes central to the social lives of these girls. In their peer groups and in their relations with the adults in their lives, cigarettes often play an important part in terms of signalling inclusion or exclusion. Smoking serves as a facilitator of these relationships and of community in the lives of these girls who smoke. The disintegration of their friendship groups opens a window of opportunity for these girls to think about and attempt to quit smoking.

To date, the alcohol and drug field has not met the range of women or girl smoker's needs in either prevention or treatment programming. Compared to alcohol and other addictions, both legal and illegal, smoking is still relatively socially acceptable and untreated throughout the world. The fact that fewer women manage to quit than men, especially among the lower socioeconomic classes, doesn't concern many. Few addiction treatment centres will treat smokers, and those that do are generally accessible only to the very privileged. If adult women smoker's needs have been largely ignored, the needs of adolescent girl smokers have been more so. Despite increasing knowledge of the lethality of nicotine, little attention is paid to the fact that more girls take to smoking on a daily basis than boys.

It is clear that the issue of women's smoking and, in particular, adolescent girls' smoking must be addressed by both feminists and social workers. As a member of both these groups, and as someone who has long been interested in smoking and in women's stories, I believe it is crucial to give the issue of adolescent girls' smoking the

understanding it deserves. What Alexander (1997) says about women must also be applied

to girls:

> Listening to women's own interpretations is crucial in understanding the
> contradictions and ambiguities involved in living with addiction in an era of
> increased awareness and regulation; they inform us as to how and why addictions
> take root, persist and sustain themselves. The knowledge and theory gained by
> attention to cultural context and by listening to differences in women's voices and
> testimony may offer new direction for treating questions of women's dependency
> on patterns of addiction. (p. 29)

By listening to girls' own interpretations of their smoking behaviour, I have sought in this

study to understand some of the complexities, contradictions and ambiguities involved in

the issue of smoking among teenage girls. I have drawn on my own understanding of our

common social location as females in a patriarchal culture to explicate how the tobacco

industry benefits from pervasive ideological understandings about femininity. I have

elicited clues from my findings to suggest new directions for looking at this issue in a

broader sense and supporting cessation efforts among girls who smoke. In the final

analysis, however, I agree with Kilbourne (1991) and Greaves (1996) that the only route to

effectively combating the lies of the tobacco industry is by working to change the

conditions for women in our society which lead to despair and addiction.

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Looking for female smokers between the ages of 12 and 20

$10 BODY SHOP GIFT CERTIFICATE AVAILABLE

If you fit this description and would like talk about your experience as a smoker, I would like to interview you for my research.

For more information, talk to Heidi or Shae.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY ENTITLED, "SMOKE GETS IN THEIR EYES: GIRLS AND CIGARETTES"

Hi, my name is Heidi Tonn and I am a graduate student at the University of Victoria, doing this research as part of my Masters of Social Work degree. My telephone number is 474-7256. My supervisor at the University is Leslie Brown. If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research that you do not feel comfortable telling me, you should call Leslie and let her know. Her telephone number is 721-6275.

This research project is studying the reasons why teenage girls smoke (apart from addiction) and what the practice of smoking accomplishes in the lives of teenage girls. It will attempt to understand the conscious reasons for smoking that teenage girls have as well as the factors which influence the decision to begin and continue to smoke. The study will also explore how the smoking behaviour of teenage girls may be influenced by factors that are not always clearly known about or understood, such as tobacco laws, cigarette advertising by tobacco companies, and the role of women in today's society.

You will be asked a series of questions about your reasons for smoking, how you feel about smoking, and what your opinions are about what smoking does for you. There are no wrong answers. You will also be asked for some demographic information such as what your age is, how long you've smoked, how much, what brand, etc. The interview should take about an hour. If you have more to tell me and the time is up, we can schedule another interview at your discretion. The results of this interview will be used as part of my thesis document and may also be published in a scholarly journal.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study anytime you want, without explanation. You also have the right to refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. (If you do decide to withdraw from the study then anything you have told me will be destroyed immediately and will not be used in the research.)

Any data (what you tell me) collected in the study will remain confidential and secure. Only I will have access to this data. Leslie Brown, my supervisor, and the two other members of my committee, Kathy Teghtsoonian and Sibylle Artz, may also have limited access to your interview, but your name will not be attached to it. Your name will not be attached to any published results, and your anonymity will be protected by using a code name to identify results obtained from you. At some point in the study, you may have the choice to participate in a group session along with some of the other girls who have participated in this study. If you choose to participate in such a group, then you should know that your anonymity within the group cannot be guaranteed. Your parent(s) or guardian(s) will not be told about your participation in this study. It is your own decision whether you want to tell them or not.

Your interview will be audiotaped and the tape will be erased after a written transcript has been made. You will get a copy of the transcript to read and approve, and you can make any changes to it at that time. You are asked to give your consent to have the transcript, with no identifying information, stored in a secure archive for possible use by myself in other research projects.

APPENDIX B (continued)

Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your attendance at the Youth Centre. The Youth Centre is not responsible for this study and so any questions, concerns or complaints should be told to me or Leslie Brown. No one at the Youth Centre will have access to any of this information. If you choose to participate in this study, you will receive a $10.00 gift certificate for the Body Shop as a small thank you from me.

I, _____ clearly understand the above and agree to it.
       [Please print your name here]

_____   _____

[Please sign your name here]   [Date]