MARY T. GRASSETTI

Navigating Academia While Balancing Motherhood

A Reflective Journey of a Circuitous Path

This narrative describes my journey navigating academia while in the midst of mothering three young children. The paper will bring into focus my transition from stay-at-home mom to mother-student and finally to mother-academic. Moreover, it examines how the act of mothering provided me with the space needed to develop the empowered feminist mothering skills of agency, autonomy, authenticity, and authority (Middleton), and how such skills assisted me in navigating the foreign landscape of academia. Mothering became the medium I used to craft and create a mother-self identity different from the one portrayed by institutional motherhood where mother is subservient to a culture of patriarchal dominance (Middleton). I will describe how the act of mothering served as a form of resistance to such dominance while concomitantly serving to empower me in my pursuit of a college education. The work of mothering helped me to unearth the subservient dominant paradigm of motherhood in favor of one in which mothering included the care and nurturing of my motherself. Mothering for me became "an empowered and empowering practice" (O'Reilly 2006: 324). Lastly, I will discuss the support systems that were instrumental in helping me to successfully navigate academia after a twenty-year absence.

> When defined on their own terms, mothering is a dynamic place for creativity where women can become more themselves. (Green 83)

Before the doctorate, master's, bachelor's, and associate's degrees I was a mother. More importantly, after all of the academic milestones that I have strived for and accomplished, I am first and foremost a mother. Being a mother is a constant in my life and has proven to be my "true north." I say this not to discount the academic work that I have engaged in over the last

fifteen years, but to pay tribute to my motherhood, for without it I would not be the academic that I am today. It was in my motherhood that the seeds of empowered feminist mothering skills of agency, autonomy, authenticity, and authority (Middleton) were first sowed and it was the act of mothering that cultivated those seeds and allowed them to grow and flourish. As Fiona Green stated in the quote above, motherhood provides a space "where women can become more themselves" (83). I write this essay as a mother who became an academic, because my academic identity was harvested through the work of motherhood. The words that you read on the following pages are the words of a mother, who through her motherhood developed the feminist mothering skills of agency, authenticity, autonomy, and authority to become an academic.

Before Motherhood

The year is 1973, I am a senior in a Catholic school for girls, and it is the height of the women's movement in the United States. I am being inundated with information from my "lay teachers" (one who has even "burned" her bra) about the possibilities that abound for women. Although at seventeen I don't quite consider myself a woman, I know that womanhood is not a far off reality, and I am enthralled by the endless possibilities that seem available to me. My school is quite progressive, and I can choose courses such as transcendental meditation, which I decide not to take because of my real fear of getting trapped in a transcendental state and never getting out. The administration has even converted an old closet into a meditation room complete with stereo for playing soothing meditation music (and the Beatles whenever we had an opportunity). The philosophy of the school is one in which students are considered competent decision makers and as such can choose their own course of study without restrictions or requirements, which has its merits and pitfalls. Some of the classes such as math and science (the ones taught by nuns) are quite traditional and others such as theology, psychology, sociology, and English (taught by priests and lay teachers) are shockingly thought provoking and require critical engagement. As seniors we even have a "smoking room" where we can go and have a cigarette before classes begin and during our lunch break. Of course, we need to have signed permission slips from our parents indicating their approval of our smoking habits and for many the permission slips are forged.

In English class, I am reading Orwell's *Animal Farm* and reflecting on how the concept of *equality for all* morphs into *but more equality for some* as well as Hesse's *Siddhartha,* which provides an opportunity to look within and discover a sense of self. In theology class, I am confronted with and attempt to decon-

struct the concept of "lace curtain Irish." First appearing in the 1890s the term describes an Irish immigrant's "yearning for respectability and social status" in America (Williams 9). The term also took on another meaning within the Irish community itself—lace curtain Irish describe those who literally put up lace curtains in an effort to hide their lower social status. I find the term quite offensive, as I am a first generation Irish American, yet also alarmingly true because I am the poster child for lace curtain Irish, as lace curtains adorn just about every window in our home as my family tries desperately to pretend we have moved up in the world.

In psychology class I try my hand at self-analysis as I eagerly consume Harris's *I'm Okay You're Okay* and begin to unravel the Parent-Child-Adult within. Although I am being pushed to think outside of the box, my social box is much stronger than the texts I am reading or the critical consciousness that I am in the process of developing. The progressive ideas that permeate the halls of Blessed Heart High School foster in me the desire to pursue a college education, however, I soon realize that college is meant for some students at Blessed Heart but not for someone like me—the daughter of an Irish immigrant father and first generation Irish-American mother.

Pulling Over the Lace Curtain

I am sitting outside the guidance counselor's office waiting to see Mr. Finland[1] to discuss my future plans to attend college. I feel a bit apprehensive as I wait my turn, because I have never met with a guidance counselor before today.

"What am I going to talk about? " I wonder as I sit and wait for Mr. Finland to call me in. Suddenly, the door swings open and my friend Sally marches out with a stack of college catalogs in her hand.

"Well," I think, "this might not be so bad after all." I go in and sit across from Mr. Finland and wait for him to begin the conversation.

"So Mary, what can I do for you today?" he asks.

"Well," I begin nervously, "I am thinking of going to college next year, and I am wondering how to apply."

"Hmm, college" he says with a condescending tone and then reaches over to his file cabinet and pulls out a manila folder with my name on it. After studying the contents of the file he says, "Mary, I don't think your grades are good enough to get you into college."

My face turns red, and I can feel it beginning to burn. I am not the best student, but my grades are well within average. I manage to say, "I think that this year I can bring my grades up, and that might help right?"

"Yes, that is a possibility" he says, not very convincingly. "But there is another obstacle that might get in your way besides your grades. I don't think that

financially your parents can afford to send you to college."

As I listen to Mr. Finland, I can see the lace curtain being pulled away from the window and suddenly Mr. Finland is uncovering what I have tried so hard to cover up—my lower social status. By now my face is on fire, because I know that he is absolutely right and college is not within my parents' means. What was I thinking making an appointment with a guidance counselor to talk about college? Didn't I just go to the grocery store with my mother yesterday, and didn't I want to crawl under the counter when she pulled out the food stamps? I think about the concept of lace curtain Irish and I want to cry.

Mr. Finland seems to sense my embarrassment and begins to tell me all of the other wonderful options that I have. He says that I have a really nice smile and that I should think about working in the service industry or in retail or maybe as a secretary.

Looking back over my file he says, "Hmm, well, definitely a waitress or retail" leaving out secretary because he must have noticed my D in typing.

I tell him that I agree because, "I am working as a waitress now, and I love it, and I am sure I could get fulltime work there if I asked."

"Yes, yes, that sounds like a very good idea" he agrees. "Oh and don't forget about retail," he adds as he stands and opens the door "because you do have a beautiful smile and that would be an asset in the retail industry."

I smile widely as my face burns with embarrassment, and I walk out the door empty handed. College for me was going to have to wait.

I left Mr. Finland's office that day and realized that the ideas and possibilities that I had thought were available to me were not. College was something for some of the girls at Blessed Heart but not for all. As I look back now, I realize that many of the girls who had come from immigrant families did not go on to college, while many who were from non-immigrant families did. We were living the text of *Animal Farm*, where all animals are equal but some are more equal than others. I was one of the lesser than equal animals that Orwell describes. Mr. Finland's Orwellian practices served to "put me in my place" in that he let me know that I was not college material based my family's lack of financial resources.

School was not the only place where support was lacking. Support from my family was in scarce supply as well. After my conversation with Mr. Finland I spoke with my mother about attending college, and her response was, not surprisingly, unsupportive. My own mother had not graduated high school and she did not see the need for me to continue past my senior year. When I asked her why she did not think I needed to go on to college she replied, "Because you're pretty and you'll soon find someone who will want to marry you." My mother considered marriage more important than obtaining a college education, thus our goals were not aligned. In a study examining

the effects of parental support and postsecondary enrollment Doo Hwan Kim and Barbara Schneider found that "alignment of parents' and students' goals increases students' odds of attending a postsecondary institution in the year after high school graduation" (1181). Research has also found that parents' level of educational attainment is a strong predictor of a students' educational success (Hodgkinson). And, in a study examining first generation college students' experiences and outcomes, Debbie Hahs-Vaughn found that first generation students aspired to lower levels of postsecondary education than did their non-first generation peers. Lacking support from school and home I did not apply to college. I graduated from high school in 1974 and upon graduation went to work fulltime as a cashier at a local pharmacy and continued to waitress and of course continued to smile.

A year after graduation my former theology teacher, Father Stearns, stopped into the pharmacy where I was working and as we chatted he asked me what college I was attending. When I said that I had not gone on to college he was surprised and asked me to meet with him when my shift ended. I agreed. By the time Father Stearns and I met that evening he had made an appointment for me to meet with the president of the local community college. The following Monday, I found myself in sitting in the beautiful mahogany office of the president of the college describing for him my hopes and dreams of becoming a teacher. I was accepted for the spring semester, however, after a year and a half of working and going to school it proved too daunting a task for me to continue. Although I had attended fulltime for three semesters, I had earned less than a year's worth of credit because of the remedial mathematics courses that I was required to take. At the time, I did not understand that the remedial courses were not credit bearing, and when I did, I felt overwhelmed and frustrated. I decided that I was just not college material, thus fulfilling Mr. Finland's idea of me, and dropped out of school. What I did not realize was that statistically my chances of continuing with my studies decreased with each required remedial course that I took.

In their analysis of the function of remedial coursework Jamie P. Merisotis and Ronald A. Phipps found an inverse relationship between remedial coursework and retention, in that the more remedial courses a student takes, the less likely they are to earn a college degree. Tamela Hawley and Tracey Harris studied the factors influencing a first year community college student's persistence and found developmental course work to be the strongest indicator that a student would drop out of college after the first year. Although I dropped out of college, Fr. Stern's belief that I was college material stayed with me, and I never lost sight of my desire to earn a college degree. By the time I attempted to navigate academia again, I was the mother of three young children, and had developed powerful skills that served to guide me in my pursuit of a college education.

MARY T. GRASSETTI

Developing Agency, Authenticity, and Authority Through the Act of Mothering

In 1993, I was 37 years old, happily married, and mothering three young children ages twelve, nine, and seven. As a stay-at-home mom, I engaged in what Sharon Hays describes as "intensive mothering." I was the primary caregiver and spent a considerable amount of time and energy seeing to my children's needs. I read widely on the subject of parenting, breastfed all three children well into their second year, and was by all accounts emotionally and physically absorbed by the act of mothering. Andrea O'Reilly (2006) contends that "mothering, freed from motherhood, could be experienced as a site of empowerment, a location of social change" (325). Through the act of intensive mothering, I developed a strong sense of agency for myself. When my pediatrician told me to stop breastfeeding my first child because she was, according to him, "too fat and fat babies become fat adults," I openly disagreed with him and then found another pediatrician, this time a breastfeeding mom. When others hid themselves away in a bedroom to nurse during family gatherings, I nursed out in the open, determined not to succumb to the notion that there was something inherently wrong with using my breasts to feed my child. Soon my nursing sisters-in-law joined me in feeding their babies openly and unapologetically. Robyn Lee describes agency as, "freely choosing one's own actions against the backdrop of various social forces" (94). When social forces pressured me to stop nursing when my children became toddlers, I resisted and only stopped when I decided the time was right. Nursing was my first venture into developing a sense of agency through the work of mothering. I made choices that were the best mothering choices for me and in the process became empowered by my own decisions. "Empowered mothers seek to fashion a mode of mothering that affords and affirms maternal agency, authority, autonomy, and authenticity and which confers and confirms power to and for mothers" (O'Reilly 2008: 20). For me, motherhood became a source of power rather than a source of patriarchal oppression (Green; O'Reilly 2006).

I continued to travel the road to empowerment when my children entered grade school and this new venue outside of the home provided a wealth of opportunities to cultivate an authentic self. Authenticity refers to "mothers asserting and meeting their own needs and interests outside of mothering" (Middleton 75). I volunteered in my children's classrooms, one year being recognized as the "volunteer of the year," served as president of the local arts lottery council, held board positions on the PTO, volunteered for the local chapter of Easter Seals, and served on several search committees to hire teachers, principals, and school superintendents. Each experience was intrinsically linked to my work as a mother and concomitantly each was used to develop

an empowered sense of authenticity. Serving on school and town committees and volunteer work provided me with opportunities to develop an authentic identity outside of mothering. I was respected for the contributions I made to the committees on which I served, and that respect was gained through work apart yet linked to act of mothering.

I also developed an authoritative voice while mothering. According to Amy Middleton empowered mothers are confident that their voice will be listened to within the family as well as outside of the family. Within the family I held an authoritative position, along with my spouse, which we used with great care to guide our children through their developing years. We parented differently from our own parents in that we encouraged our children to make their own reasoned decision, while simultaneously providing the guidance and support they needed to make such decisions. When two of our children decided not to be confirmed as Catholics we enthusiastically supported their decisions, and when our middle daughter decided that she would be confirmed, she was wholeheartedly supported and celebrated.

I would consider the way I mothered "intensive" in that I read widely on the topic of parenting and the development of self-esteem. I recall my own mother telling me that I read too many books about raising children and I considered her remark a compliment, because she had not read anything about parenting. I was distinguishing myself from my mother through the act of intensive mothering.

My work with schools and outside organizations also provided me with opportunities to develop an authoritative voice outside of the home. As president of the arts lottery council I was responsible for administering funds to local organizations seeking to bring the arts to the community. In administering the funds, I needed to defend the reasons why some organizations were funded and others were not, which helped me to develop an authoritative voice outside of the home. Additionally, work on volunteer and school committees became spaces where I had opportunities to develop an authoritative voice and in doing so I developed the confidence that my voice outside of the home was respected and sought after. Each of these activities stemmed from my work as a mother, and I used each experience to develop skills that I could draw upon when I returned to college.

Navigating Academia While Mothering with Mutuality

In the fall of 1994, I returned to the same community college that I had started 20 years previous, only this time I was empowered through the act of mothering and through developing a strong sense of mutuality with my husband. Although my husband had shared in some of the responsibilities associated with parenting and managing a household, I managed the bulk of the work. However, when

I returned to school he took on significantly more responsibility at home thus providing me with the time I needed to pursue a college degree. We decided that for me to be a fulltime student he would need to be more responsible for the day-to-day care of our children. To accomplish this he relocated his small business to the town where we lived so that he would be closer to home while I was at school. In relocating his business he also needed to make a conscious decision to keep it "small" so that the demands on his time were not monopolized by the work involved in growing a business. He took up most of the responsibilities that had previously been mine, such as being the parent at school functions, chauffeuring kids to and from events, making breakfast and dinner, and monitoring homework. He saw this as a way to support me in my aspirations to obtain a college education just as I had supported him years earlier when he left his job to start a business. I was empowered by the sense of mutuality that had developed through the course of our lives together. As Carolyn Shrewsbury so eloquently stated, "Empowerment is only possible when there is a sense of mutuality" (10).

Mothers often receive little social support when caring for children (Arendell) and face a myriad of challenges and constraints when attempting to return to the world of academia (Home; Murphy and Cloutier-Fisher). The easing of such constraints has been found to be one of the most critical factors influencing a women's decision to return to school. In their study examining work to school transitions, Andrew Hostetler, Stephen Sweet and Phyllis Moen found that childcare assistance is significantly associated with a women's successful reentry into academia and that women receiving childcare assistance were four times more likely to return to school than those not receiving assistance with childcare. In her study of 443 women returning to school, Alice Home found that mothers with young children under the age of thirteen experienced more feelings of overload and conflict when returning to school because younger children are not as self-sufficient as older children, thus younger children place more demands on a mother's time and energy. Through personal narrative Brenda Murphy and Denise Cloutier-Fisher reflected that engaging in academic work while mothering "required an expansion of our husbands' roles, for example, they used up holidays in order to provide child care when we needed to complete our field work or finish writing up a chapter of the dissertation" (45). The mutuality that my husband and I had developed served as an empowering supportive structure in that I did not have to worry about finding care for my children, thus returning to school was a more manageable undertaking.

Institutional Support and Developing Autonomy

A successful return to school later in life requires support from within the

family but also support and encouragement from the academic institution one attends. Community colleges are formative settings for the nontraditional student. The community college I attended housed a "Women's Center" especially designed for women, like me, who were returning to school after a significant amount of time away from the classroom. We were called "women in transition" and that is exactly how I felt at that point in my life. I was transitioning from being a fulltime mother to being a fulltime college student who was also a mother. Centers for women, established on many college campuses in the early 1970s, provide invaluable support services such as, academic, financial, referral counseling, child care services, and informational materials and seminars addressing issues related to women and mothers in academia (Chamberlain). Institutional support structure was instrumental in helping me to navigate academia and in the process helped me to develop a sense of autonomy. According to Middleton, autonomy refers to "self-sufficiency" (74). My husband's salary from his small business could not support our family and my fulltime return to school. I needed to seek out other financial resources to fund my education. The institutional support I received in the process of applying for state, federal, and private financial aid and scholarship helped me to develop a sense of self-sufficiency in that I was completely and fully responsible for my educational expenses.

Support from college professors was also instrumental in helping me to make my way successfully through academia. A history professor, Dr. Michaels, was the first professor to encourage me to continue my studies beyond the community college experience. I remember she had written across the top of my first "blue book" exam, "See me after class." I immediately imagined I had done something terribly wrong and I was too nervous to open up the booklet and look at my grade. When I approached her after class she applauded the work I had done on the exam and suggested that I consider applying to two prominent northeast women's colleges—Mount Holyoke and Smith—because both had excellent programs for non-traditional women like me. She took it upon herself to care for me beyond the subject of history. Professor Michaels engaged in the work of "othermothering in the academy" (Bernard, Issari, Moriah, Njiwaja, Obgan, and Tolliver 103). According to Wanda Bernard and her colleagues othermothering involves more than being a role model; rather it also involves caring for students educationally as well as psychologically. Othermothers in the academy take time to help students imagine the possibilities beyond their current setting. In essence, othermothers help their students to imagine their potential (Bernard et al.). Dr. Michaels helped me to believe in myself and she took care in cultivating my academic aspirations and helped me to imagine a future beyond the community college. I am grateful that Professor Michaels was willing to care for me during this time, and the experience has helped me

to understand and appreciate the positive influence a teacher can have on the lives of her students.

My time at the community college instilled in me the desire to continue my education beyond an associate degree, and as such I applied to the Frances Perkins Scholars Program at Mount Holyoke College. In order to be accepted into the program I needed to make sure that I maintained a strong GPA and this proved to be a challenging endeavor for me as well as for my children. I studied endlessly preparing for biology, history, and Spanish exams and spent most evenings either reading literature or writing about it. My children tried to be supportive, but there were times when they expressed their frustration. I remember one night I was sitting at the kitchen table with my work spread out when my oldest daughter walked in and said "Mom, why didn't you do this when you were supposed—all you ever do is homework!" I sat her down and explained that when I was younger I was unprepared for college and as a result was unable to finish when I was "supposed to, however, being a mother gave me the confidence I needed to figure out how to succeed in college." As importantly, I explained that when it was her turn to go to college, I would be prepared to lend her the support and guidance she would need. Although she was still outwardly angry by my studying, she seemed on some level to understand the significance of the work I was engaged in.

It was at this point in my studies that I remember actively resisting the temptation to feel guilty for the work I was doing for and by myself. The patriarchal idea of a good mother is one who puts her children first above all else, especially her own wants and needs (Green). I was putting my needs above the needs of my children, and I needed to continually "negotiate and renegotiate" my role within the family (Murphy and Cloutier-Fisher 46). Returning to school while in the mist of mothering provided me with an opportunity to "break free from the rules of patriarchal motherhood" (Green 86) and craft an image that reflected "a more mother-centered mode of feminist mothering" (O'Reilly 2006: 325) that was different from the patriarchal ideal.

I was accepted into the Frances Perkins program at Mount Holyoke College for the fall of 1995. I majored in psychology and education graduating magna cum laude in 1998. As an undergraduate I had the opportunity to intern at the college's art museum, completed an independent research study examining sixth grade students' memories of their favorite teachers, and was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa honor society. I remember after the induction ceremony my mother said to me, with tears in her eyes, "Mary, we never knew you were so smart" and I replied, "Neither did I mom, neither did I." Mount Holyoke College provided the support and guidance I needed to find an academic self I had not known existed.

According to Carlette Jackson Hardin there are many institutional and situational barriers that can impede an older adult's successful return to college such as being aware of and understanding university policies and procedures, and managing academic work and home responsibilities. Moreover, psychological barriers such as lack of confidence in one's academic abilities also challenge mothers returning to the college classroom and, if not addressed, can impede their college success (Hardin). The Frances Perkins Scholars program was committed to addressing such barriers so that those accepted into the program would find success in their academic pursuits. As a Frances Perkins Scholar, I was not obligated to carry a full course load, as were traditional students. Rather, I had the option of taking a lighter course load yet still receive financial assistance. I was assigned a financial aid counselor who was instrumental in helping me to navigate all of the paperwork involved in applying for scholarships as well as federal and state aid. Institutions of higher education often present nontraditional students with a multitude of institutional barriers, making success an untenable prospect. However, programs such as the Frances Perkins Scholars Program at Mount Holyoke remove such institutional barriers so that mothers returning to school can successfully balance school and family.

Final Reflections

After graduating in 1998, my career possibilities seemed endless. Since that beautiful day in May when I walked across the stage and received my diploma, I have taught elementary and middle school math and science, worked as a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, and have also chaired the Education Department at Holyoke Community College. I enrolled in graduate school in 1999 and earned a M.Ed. in science education and most recently was awarded the degree of Doctor of Education from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I am currently an assistant professor of education at Framingham State University. My oldest daughter, the one who was angry about my nightly homework assignments, graduated from Amherst College, and my other two children, both graduated from Wheaton College in Massachusetts, both highly selective liberal arts schools. Research indicates that when the college ambitions of parents and children align, ambition proves to be a positive and significant predictor of college selectivity (Kim and Schneider). In an extensive review of the literature on the social effects of education Barbara Wolfe and Robert Haveman found "a positive link between one's own schooling and the schooling received by one's children" (221). My children's college aspirations were a direct result of my own college endeavors. I learned how to navigate academia while attending a highly selective liberal arts school

and as such, was better equipped to guide and encourage them with their own academic pursuits.

Returning to academia after a twenty-year absence while being in the midst of mothering requires much work on the part of the mother but also on the part of other members of the family. Having emotional, financial, institutional and childcare support is crucial to the success of a mother returning to school. Such support provides mothers with the necessary foundation to pursue a college education while engaged in the work of mothering. Moreover, support from institutions of higher education, in the form of guidance, is also a critical factor in a mother's successful return to the college classroom. Institutions of higher education can offer mothers guidance on such matters as selecting courses, choosing a major, applying for financial aid, and understanding how to advocate for oneself in academia. Returning to the college classroom after a long absence can be an intimidating and overwhelming experience for anyone. Coupling a return to college with the obligations and responsibilities that come with mothering requires a community effort on the part of mothers, families, and institutions of higher education, if mothers are to successfully navigate academia.

Being a mother provided me with opportunities to develop the empowered feminist skills of agency, authenticity, autonomy, and authority, and I used those skills to successfully navigate academia as well as mother my children. Motherhood will always be my inspiration and my true north.

[1]Pseudonyms are used for all but the author's name.

References

Arendell, Terry. "Conceiving and Investigating Motherhood: The Decade's Scholarship." *Journal of Marriage & Family 62*.4 (2000): Web.

Bernard, Wanda. Thomas, Sasan Issari, Jemell Moriah, Marok Njiwaja, Princewill Obgan and Althea Tolliver. "Othermothering in the Academy: Using Maternal Advocacy for Institutional Change." *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement* 3.2 (2012): 103-120. Print.

Chamberlain, Marian, ed. *Women in Academia: Progress and Prospects*. New York: Sage, 1988. Print.

Green, Fiona. "Feminist Mothering: Challenging Gender Inequality by Resisting the Institution of Motherhood and Raising Children to be Critical Agents of Social Change." *Socialist Studies/Études socialistes* 1.1 (2009). Web.

Hahs-Vaughn, Debbie. "The Impact of Parents' Education Level on College Students: An Analysis Using the Beginning Postsecondary Students

Longitudinal Study." *Journal of College Student Development* 45.5 (2004): 483-500. Web.

Hardin Carlette Jackson. "Adult Students in Higher Education: A Portrait of Transition." *New Directions for Higher Education* 144 (2008) Web.

Hawley, Tamela and Tracey Harris. "Student Characteristics Related to Persistence for First Year Community College Students." *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice* 7.1 (2005): 117-142. Web.

Hays, Sharon. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven: Yale University Press 1996. Print.

Hodgkinson, H. "American Education: The Good, the Bad, and the Task." *Phi Delta Kappan* 74.8 (1993): 619-624. Web.

Hostetler, Andrew, Stephen Sweet and Phyllis Moen. "Gendered Career Paths: A Life Course Perspective on Returning to School." *Sex Roles* 56 (2007): 85-103. Web.

Home, Alice. "Predicting Role Conflict, Overload, and Contagion in Adult Women University Students with Families and Jobs." *Adult Education Quarterly* 48.2 (1998) 85–97. Web.

Kim, Doo Hwan and Barbara Schneider. "Social Capital in Action: Alignment of Parental Support in Adolescents' Transition to Postsecondary Education." *Social Forces* 84.2 (2005): 1181-1206. Web.

Lee, Robyn. "Breastfeeding and Constraints on Mother's Agency." *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement* 3.2 (2012): 93-102. Print.

Merisotis, Jamie, P. and Ronald A. Phipps. "Remedial Education in Colleges and Universities: What's Really Going On?" *The Review of Higher Education* 2.1 (2000): 67–85. Web.

Middleton, Amy. "Mothering Under Duress: Examining the Inclusiveness of Feminist Mothering Theory." *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement,* 8.1,2 (2006): 72-82. Web.

Murphy, Brenda and Denise Cloutier-Fisher. "Balancing Act: Motherhood and Graduate School." *The Great Lakes Geographer* 9.1 (2002): 37-47. Web.

O'Reilly, Andrea. "Introduction." *Feminist Mothering.* A. O'Reilly, ed. New York: State University of New York Press, 2008. 1-20. Print.

O'Reilly, Andrea. "Between the Baby and the Bathwater: Some Thoughts on a Mother-Centered Theory and Practice of Feminist Mothering." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 8.1 (2006): 323-330. Web.

Shrewsbury, Carolyn. "What Is Feminist Pedagogy?" *Women's Studies Quarterly* 15.3 (1987): 6-14. Web.

Williams, W. H. A. "Green Again: Irish-American Lace Curtain Satire." *New Hibernia Review* 6.2 (2002): 9-24. Web.

Wolfe, Barbara, and Robert Haveman. "Accounting for the Social and Non-mar-

ket Benefits of Education." *The Contribution of Human and Social Capital to Sustained Economic Growth and Well Being.* J. Helliwell, ed. OECD/Human Resources Development Canada. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2001. 221-250. Print.