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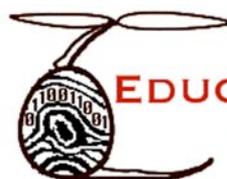Inclusion/exclusion, and the educational and social experiences of at 'risk' young wome

Media Representations of Female Youth Homelessness in Canada: Culture Meets Structure in the Reproduction of Social Inequality

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INTRODUCTION

> *In Canada there have been no acknowledged pioneers of the concept of the 'free lance conscience with a camera' as were Jacob A. Riis and Lewis W. Hine in the United States. However, in Toronto circa 1910, working for the city or the province, sometimes for themselves, a handful of anonymous Canadian photographers did produce a body of work which is astounding in its optic perception of the time in which they lived…Working conditions, health, housing, education, sanitation, children, motherhood, all came under their close scrutiny. Totally unknown, the 1910 address of these photographers can only be described as 'ubiquitous'. Often told where and when to go for the pictures, what to include, the very discipline of what they had to reveal provided them with an 'art of seeing' with which they produced many images of poignant intensity. It was not by accident that many of the photographs show what needed to be corrected or what was being corrected in the lives of immigrants and workers of 1910.[.] (Michel Lambeth, 1967, Made in Canada: Photographs of Toronto Circa from the collection of Michel Lambeth)*

> *The key to a critique of historical knowledge, which was painfully missing in Kantianism, is to be found in the fundamental phenomenon of interconnection, by which the life of others can be discerned and identified in its manifestations. (Ricoeur, 1981)*

In the latter half of the 19th century and the early decades of the twentieth century, divergent representations of economically disadvantaged youth and children in Canada's urban centres were directed towards a growing public audience. The power of such representations drew in part from the availability of relatively new modern technologies such as the camera and the tools of print media. Such photographic and textual renderings of youth economic disadvantage which may have been accessible to the public -- sometimes championed by the police or public health officials -- were often accompanied by the proliferation of public policy and legal discourses[1] designed, in part, to ease public anxiety

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[1] This latter set of discourses were proliferating particularly in the early part of the twentieth century as the rise of a notion of legal regulation of citizens was put in place, particularly as *World War I* was on the horizon. These discourses must not always be seen as straightforwardly progressive (e.g., housing policies that ultimately served to ghettoize the economically disadvantaged, the official formation of 'slums'). However, earlier periods of social welfare must be read against the contemporary tide of neo-liberal policies which have functioned to eliminate the visibility of economically disadvantaged youth and their legitimate place in Canadian society. In 1999, for example, Bill 8 (i.e., anti-squeegeeing and begging legislation) enforced, through law, a 'clean up' of the streets or what might be more appropriately described as a removal of economically disadvantaged youth from the only space where they remain visible to the larger public. A report by an action group CERA (Canadian For Rights Accommodation) exposes this concern in the following quote: "Bill 8, in CERA's view, conforms with the emerging patterns of Canadian legislators

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over the large and accumulating moral controversies centering upon poverty, slum-life, crime and 'precocious' sexual behavior, particularly among young girls (Alexander, 1995; Sangster, 2002). These novel images sought to represent the changing industrial landscape of the period, along with the particular political interests of photographers who may have viewed their work as opening a new window for the public's apprehension of youth poverty. What seems particularly poignant about these representations, however, is neither their 'artistic value' as photographs nor their 'optic perception', but the betraying presence of virtually imperceptible social conflicts – what Bourdieu (1997) refers to as '*epistemic posturing*' – underwriting their form and content. In the context of turn-of-the century urban Canada, such posturing was particularly sustained by middle-class philanthropic concerns in which lurid colonial perceptions of youth and the emerging 'dangerous classes' of urban Canada were highly prominent and, as such, open to appropriation from new media practices and, ultimately, from the state itself.

The photo shown above was taken in Toronto, Canada, in 1911 [2]. One group of economically disadvantaged youth which preyed particularly upon the middle class conscience and which were on public display were girls and young women (sometimes portrayed as early mothers) living in substantially impoverished conditions[3] or, indeed, on the street[4]. In textual accounts which accompanied these images, the living circumstances and associated problems of girls and young women inhabiting urban 'slums' were characteristically portrayed in crude pathological language invoking the starkest of terms

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to show less and less concern about alleviating poverty and much more interest in legislating poverty into invisibility. This hostility toward poor people has manifest itself in unprecedented cuts to social assistance and social programs and now manifests itself in an attempt to criminalize poverty and homelessness. In promoting a society which is marred by depths of poverty that we have not been seen in a generation in Ontario at the same time as criminalizing the poor in an unprecedented manner, this government is taking us back to the outlook of previous centuries" (see website: http//www.equalityrights.org/cera/docs/Bill8Submission.html, November, 1999).

[2] See City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, Item 8028. The photograph shown above reflects similar concern expressed by the City of Toronto Department of Public Works from the early decade of the twentieth century. The archival photographs that follow all form part of a series entitled Public Health, Department of Public Works (RG8-Series 4), Health Sub-series (32) at the City of Toronto Archives. My research group has obtained copyright wavers in order to reproduce these images here.

[3] The caption which accompanies the 1911 Report of the Medical Health Officer reads as follows: "There has been a difference in opinion as to whether or not we have any real slums in Toronto. This is no doubt due to the difference of opinion as to what constitutes slums. Originally, the term was applied to low, boggy back streets inhabited by a poor criminal population. The term as used here, however, applies […] to poor, unsanitary houses, overcrowded, insufficiently lighted, badly ventilated, with unsanitary and in many cases, filthy yards, the very earth of which is reeking with kitchen slops and other refuse that have been thrown out several times daily, for want of a proper place to throw them".

[4] It is important to state here that public housing, however meager, in the early twentieth century came in the form of bedding units or 'slum housing'. Few women were living on the street per se yet they were still living without a permanent home or with no 'fixed address'.

(*'slum-like', 'sexually promiscuous', 'helpless', 'criminal'*). The remedy for this expression of urban crisis was seen to lie, above all else, with the evocation of moral 'correctness' and the promise of 'protection' in conformity with the middle-class, colonial ideal of the 'good mother'[5]. As Sangster (2002:3) has observed: [..] Protection meant the increased moral surveillance of working class and poor girls; protection meant "promiscuous girls who had not broken the law, but were deemed in need of moral re-education protection was always differentially applied according to class".

In light of the effective absence of a *radical historiographical* (see Felman, 2000) account of youth economic disadvantage or any surviving personal account by the young women portrayed in these images of the social formations and 'normative architecture' (Felman, 2000) which shaped their lives, we are ultimately left only with the residue of pathologized – and therefore flawed and partial historical representations. This is by no means only a problem for our understanding of the past itself. It is precisely such distorted pathologized images which, from the time of their creation, have continued to inflect perceptions of female youth economic disadvantage into the present. Upon these flawed foundations, middle-class elites have built what Alexander (1997) has described as: "compelling media images of disorderly and immoral young working [class] girls, arousing public antipathy to social change and regenerating faith in Victorian notions of girlhood purity". [6] In this process, young women were – continue to be – 'robbed of a medium through which to articulate their humanity', plurality and social status as political subjects in the state (see Felman, 2000). At the same time, accounts of female youth economic disadvantage and homelessness as ultimately grounded in demonised conceptions of the deviant working-class female or the impure female identity have attained a contemporary currency which Descombes (2000) describes as a 'common sense collective representation'.

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[5] See the report on the housing needs of delinquent girls in the Ontario Training School.
[6] Bourdieu (2001) argues that contemporary neo-liberal ideas about social welfare and economic disadvantage have shaped media representations of poverty in unprecedented ways. His argument implies that the 'so-called agents and mechanisms that dominate the economic and social world today rests' (Bourdieu, 2001: 39) with *global capitalism* as the basis for the most profound form of symbolic domination of youth themselves, exercised, in large part, through the media -– "themselves manipulated, often unbeknownst to themselves, by the major international communications companies and by the logic of competition that sets them apart from one another". He goes on to write that: "neo-liberalism aims to destroy the social state, the "left hand of the state", which as can easily be shown, safeguards the interests of the dominated, the culturally and economically dispossessed". This practice, in the form of material power, is what we are calling *right arm regulation*.

It is with these ethical concerns in mind that it has become increasingly difficult to draw straightforwardly upon such representational forms as a 'hermeneutic imperative'[7] for understanding the symbolic order within which young homeless women are positioned as political subjects *in the present*. Indeed, such archival forms of public memory can only shed partial light on the historical specificity of female youth poverty as part of the process of widening class-stratification and social regulation in the contemporary social order. We must grapple, therefore, with a range of *theoretical and ethical* dilemmas as one seeks to reveal the 'normative architecture' (Felman, 2000) generated about female homelessness through an analysis of representational forms in the present. On this view, I wish to argue here that the interpretive project must reflect on the problems we encounter in the present when the historical language of representation has been shaped by the 'banality of *history*' (see Felman, 2000, *our addition*) or 'truth cults' (Arendt, 1968a) which circulate over time about young women who live in profoundly difficult economic circumstances.

In this paper, I follow the work of Joan Sangster (2002), Hannah Arendt (1958), Felman (2000) and others (e.g., Bourdieu, Massey, 1995, 1999) in seeking to assess the social construction and symbolic representation of female teenage homelessness and youth poverty as it relates to the cultural field of the *street* in the present. Guided by this body of work, I examine contemporary representations of female youth poverty and homelessness as they have been represented by Canadian journalistic accounts as part of urban street life in the present (1997-2004). For this task, I draw principally upon the work of Bourdieu, together with Massey's materialist notion of a cultural field and space as organized forms of social relations. And in order to conceptualize how representations of female youth 'poverty' signify a symbolic site of social control and regulation over the formation of female identity in the state, I turn to the epistemological and ontological concerns raised by Hannah Arendt, Shoshana Felman and others (see Steedman, 2000, 2002). My focus throughout is principally directed toward the urban *space* of the street as a geographically organized site, as well as one of gendered containment, where the social formation of ideas about female youth economic

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[7] See Philip Gardner (2003).

disadvantage take shape and become active in public memory. I am therefore interested in examining representations of women in particular urban spaces, as one way to understand the ideological investments and class wars which are taken up through the urban metaphor of 'the street'.

I seek to address four aims in this paper. First (Section I), I explore the limits of a discourse model of representational analysis. I begin with an overview of the theoretical difficulties which arise when discourse/Foucauldian models of representational analyses of female youth poverty dominate the field of youth studies or representational theory more generally. In broad terms, therefore, the first section is designed critically to examine the tradition of discourse analysis in the study of representations, and seeks to put forward a more complex and comprehensive argument for renewing an approach informed by socio-cultural, geographical, philosophical and critical legal studies perspectives[8].

Secondly, drawing upon a sample of journalistic representations of two Canadian daily broadsheet newspapers, I approach an alternative way of theorising power, presenting my argument through an exploratory interdisciplinary framework which seeks to advance both theoretical and methodological discussions in relation to representations of female youth economic disadvantage and homelessness in the present (Section II).

Thirdly, in Section III, I outline the exploratory, theoretical parameters of our methodological approach and search for ethical questions which might be raised about representations of female homelessness that take us beyond a social analysis, for this too is necessary if we are to expand theoretical and political debate within representational theory. Here, I follow the importance attached by Fraser and Gordon (1995: 34) to "contrasting present meanings of [*teenage homelessness*] with past meanings, to defamiliarize taken-for-granted beliefs in order to render them susceptible to critique and to illuminate present day conflicts" (*italics*, our addition). It is important to clarify here that I am not conducting a straightforward historical analysis of representations in the normative sense. Rather, I draw

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[8] I wish to acknowledge here that I view the insight offered through Foucauldian discourse models and I draw upon such insights to a limited degree in this work. However, I am hoping to push the boundaries of current debates over the significance of a discourse model on ethical, material and cultural grounds. I hope therefore to widen current debates and challenge those interested in such positions to extend their analysis to broader interdisciplinary questions.

upon the historical representations as a way of entering into the present, as a way of engaging in a *radical historiographical* practice which illuminates the past and allows us to critique the present against references to a public history (Felman, 2000). The fourth and final objective is to apply this theoretical framework to an analysis of journalistic representations of female homelessness/economic disadvantage extracted from two Canadian daily broadsheets (1997-2003) in contemporary urban Canada (Section IV).

In addressing these aims, I hope to contribute to current theoretical debates about female homelessness and youth economic disadvantage on two substantive levels. The first of these operates at the level of representational theory, where the predominant model of analysis is typically one which attempts to assess the surveillance element of the representational form; in this case, the claim would be that gendered discourse serves as a discursive form of power and regulation over the lives of economically disadvantaged young women. Against this, I put forward a case for a feminist analysis derived from the fields of *socio-cultural analysis, cultural geography and critical legal studies*. Such an approach can be seen as establishing a dynamic interconnection between feminist materialist/spatial analyses deriving largely from a socio-cultural feminist sociology, the tradition of critical legal studies, and the inflections of Arendtian political philosophy. I argue that each of the elements in such a combination assists in exposing the materiality and symbolic power of the representation as a dialectical, historical and contemporary social form. The second level at which I hope my comments may make a contribution is related to novel theoretical developments in socio-cultural and cultural/human geographical theories. Here, I endeavour to expose the ways in which the social relations of *production and regulation* constitute the nature of spatial sites (e.g., space of *the street*) and the particular configurations of 'truth content' (Katz, 1998; Steinberg, 1996; Wright, 1997) embedded in diverse, urban representations of young women whose bodies have been marked as '*homeless*'.

Given these overarching goals, the overarching and substantive research questions become: what are the limits of a discourse model of representational analysis; how, in relation to the representation of young women who are homeless or live in poverty, might power be

theorized differently; what kind of questions might we raise about cultural representations of

female homelessness that take us beyond social analysis and towards ethics.

SECTION I.
DISCOURSE READINGS OF FEMALE YOUTH POVERTY: A CRITICAL INTERROGATION

> *The struggle over the definitions of and use of urban space may be clearly viewed in city policies that actively disperse homeless street populations for being 'out of place' and simultaneously attempt to contain them in institutional settings (shelters, rehabilitation clinics, armories, prisons) (Wright, 1997: 8).*

Over the last 20 years, there has been a theoretical movement away from examining representational forms of female homelessness and youth economic disadvantage in urban space as elements of material culture or as the bearers of ideological sub-texts. More recent approaches have emphasized feminist discourse or surveillance analysis of representations as linguistic or cultural signs which shape and reconstitute the conditions of power. Here, female youth economic disadvantage or homelessness might be viewed as an element of culture and therefore as central to the *linguistic universe* of a particular 'public community' and its power formations (see Hall, 1997). This kind of theoretical perspective allows us to move beyond a notion of a representation as an object which possesses 'truth content' to be simply consumed as an 'instance of truth' and allows us instead to view the representational form as socially constructed through linguistic power formations which are hidden, discursive and ultimately circular rather than uniformly state-directed.

While a discourse form of representational analysis has undoubtedly assisted feminists in identifying how the language of the gender order is manifest discursively in representational forms, I argue here that it has done little to expose the ontological elements of representation or the re-assertion of middle class values which are grounded in a historical and metaphysical notion of selfhood in the larger social order. While I do not wish to reject a discourse model in its entirety, the omission of ontological and material concerns in any representational analysis constitutes a serious absence given the deprived social conditions of economically disadvantaged women's lives in the present. Such omissions, moreover, diminish our capacity to account for the

social reproduction of youth economic disadvantage, together with re-circulated ideas about female incompetence and the sexually deviant body which have been generated through the social processes of state formation. It seems unlikely, then, that a representation, when simply exposed through elements of discourse inherited from genealogical legacies of the past, can provide a comprehensive 'critique of ideology in the form of critical political semantics' (Fraser and Gordon, 1995: 35)[9] of female youth economic disadvantage in the present. Nor can it necessarily expose the aims of a corrosive neo-liberal ideology in the present as it seeks to undermine the safeguards and interests of young women who live in profoundly difficult economic circumstances.[10] This difficulty comes more clearly into view when the urban street is viewed as a symbolic, spatial site of regulation and division which shapes the conditions of mobility of disenfranchised youth, or as the site where working-class female identifications are exposed to substantial legal and political surveillance.[11] This vision of regulation over female bodies occupying the 'street' stands in ironic contrast to those fluid, highly mobile forces of globalization "as forces with no fixed addresses, extraterritorial unlike the eminently territorial powers of the state that for better or worse, but once and for all, stay fixed on the ground. Shifty and slippery forces, elusive and evasive, difficult to pinpoint and impossible to catch" (Bauman, 2001: 70)

Let us look more closely at some of the very particular problems raised by a discourse model of representation as it may relate to economically disadvantaged young women or female youth homelessness. Firstly, while a cultural analysis of regulatory forms inside a particular space (such as the street) might be uncovered through a discourse analysis, this, on its own, cannot account for the specificity of the material, spatial and temporal effects of such forms. Nor can such

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[9] See also Felman (2000) on the role/ethical power of 'semantic authority' in expanding the course of justice in public space. I use this term differently herein – to capture the role of authority and ideology more generally in shaping the epistemological premises of representation.

[10] Bauman (2001) also takes issue with the state's role in the diminishment of community: "the state (is) only too glad to cede as many of its past responsibilities as possible to private concerns and worries…on the other hand, there is a growing impotence of the state to impose standards of protection, of collective insurance, ethical principles and models of justice that would mitigate the insecurity" (p. 71).

[11] I am reminded here of Bauman's (2001) reference to the issue of mobility as it relates to cosmopolitan forms of globalization: "the globalized world is a hospitable and friendly place for tourists, but inhospitable and hostile to vagabonds. The latter are barred from following the pattern that the first have set. But that pattern was not meant for them in the first place" (p.79).

an analysis account for the part that the representation may be playing in the formation of both micro and macro social processes, such as neo-liberal globalizing reform policies. These, ironically, may influence the very reproductive processes the representation may, on the surface, be seeking to eradicate. For example, it may be the case that we could scrutinize a representation of young teenage women who are living without a home and determine its linguistic power functions, as well as its circular forms of organization and control, but we would still know little about how the representation operates as a form of cultural reproduction in the larger social order. We would, in other words, be severely limited in our understanding of how the representation plays a part in class, race and gender formations, larger questions of accommodation and resistance, and the reproduction of particular kinds of dialectically shaped social structures in time and space.

I am contending, therefore, that gendered representations of female homelessness take on particular forms in specific geographical and urban spaces and play a part, as social process, in the temporal formation of society. Young (1995: 54) writes: "feminine spatial existence is positioned by a system of coordinates which does not have its origins in her own intentional capacities". Clearly, the question of how young women are positioned in any given representational space must, therefore, ultimately speak to the socially and historically constructed differences in women and men's relationship to the public and private sphere as constructed *citizen/non-citizen*, as well as to the *colonialist prototypes* (Mills, 1996) which have been drawn upon to shape the power relations and forms of nation-building that underlie representations of gender. In common with Fraser and Gordon (1995), my primary objection, then, to the *principal* reliance on Foucauldian analysis as the central theoretical tool for examining representations is that the specificity of material relations as they pertain to larger questions of culture and society are lost. We lose the *material, cultural* and *experiential* circumstances of living as a particular female on the street with 'no fixed address' in times of retrenchment and neo-liberal reform; of being judged on those terms; and of the practical discrimination which accompanies such judgments. Moreover,

we relinquish those historical and philosophical elements of class conflict and colonial domination which forcefully underpin the construction of economically disadvantaged female youth in the present. Sangster (2002: 3), for example, indicates that: "the displacement of a 'politics of redistribution' and the sidelining of political economy in academic discourse have encouraged interpretations of crime [*and we would argue here, female homelessness*] that downplay class conflict". A discourse model cannot, therefore, easily or respectfully address the notion that cultural representations relate to, and interact with, past and present forms of social classification, just as it is ill-equipped to respond to moral convictions which are generated over time about the philosophy of the gendered subject. Consequently, it becomes more difficult to apprehend how the representation might serve as a reproductive process that shapes the organization of both knowledge and social space in society, and young women's position in the symbolic economy of cultural life.

A further difficulty for discourse models is that they lead towards the forfeiture of analytic purchase upon the tensions which exist between culture and structure in representations of female youth economic disadvantage. In other words, a discourse analysis of representational forms does not necessarily tell us enough about the historical provenance of a particular idea, as does a dialectical study of historical, cultural and material legacies. Rather than simply engaging in a genealogical tracing of discourses of 'female youth poverty', we need to pose questions about the normative constitution of female identity and what Bourdieu has named the 'constancy of structure' – the layers of power that are reproduced about gender, culture and class over time. It is this concern with structure, identity and culture that points us towards Massey's position, which asserts that issues of gender, culture and representation cannot be addressed without recognizing the significance of materiality and social phenomena in its local, macro and temporal forms:

"what is at issue is … space as constituted out of social relations, [as] social relations stretched out' over time " (Massey, 1994: 2). [12]

A final difficulty encountered by some discourse analyses of female youth representations is their inability to address questions of young women's agential capacity to act in the social world, their forms of identification, and/or their social location and ontological status in the state. This loss of interest in how young women are positioned ontologically in the content of a representation seems particularly problematic given that young women are trapped in historical knowledge legacies of gender subordination and therefore 'bear the burden of a history' (see Arendt, 1968a) of deviant social constructions of female identity. It is, for example, one thing to suggest that a powerful discourse operates in the form of a representation (text, image, etc) and that this discourse ought to be interrogated for its genealogical origins but quite another to expose how the discourse (as a differentiated legacy from the past) ultimately serves to re-assert ingrained social beliefs about 'girlhood purity' or essential female identities that bear no reality to the lives of economically disadvantaged female youth in the present. It seems important, therefore, to account for the ways in which the representation – as form and content – *regulates* and *reproduce*s a particular gendered ontological status. Otherwise, both the street and its embedded representation ultimately denotes an empty space which is simply occupied by what McNay (2000) identifies as 'narrowly defined linguistic discourses' or that which Felman (2000) sites as 'liberal trauma narratives' of immorality/criminality, which possess no material affiliation. Consequently, the presupposition that female youth are simply passive victims of a narrowly defined discourse dominates public consciousness.

In light of the shortcomings I have noted in discourse approaches then, the theoretical project I have argued for seeks to combine critical contemporary sociological concerns about the

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[12] As I argue later, acknowledgement of women's material representation in time and space is crucial for rethinking the dominant trends in representational theory. This is largely because such a recognition moves the theoretical debate away from singular concerns with either the discourse elements of women's representation or with the equally damaging prospect of reductionist material analysis, towards a more integrated and interdisciplinary theoretical analysis of the operational role of representation in the formation of identity, culture and society. As Mill (1996) has suggested, different groups of women have different kinds of hierarchical/power relationships to the cultural and material elements of the social order, and are therefore subject to different forms of *confinement* and *containment*.

materiality of female youth economic disadvantage with larger philosophical concerns about the role of representations in reproducing 'extremist assertions of modernity' (see Arendt, 1968a). In so doing, I attempt to extract the symbolic codes embedded in contemporary representations of female homelessness which form part of the material order yet which remain tied, as a form of symbolic domination, to the historical construction of female citizenship in the state. At the same time, I also move beyond this position to demonstrate how the constitution of a particular female subject in the philosophical sense (alias Hannah Arendt) can be linked to the interconnected concepts of class conflict, culture and materiality. The *'hermeneutic imperative'* must therefore be concerned with the epistemic posturing of the representational form and the recognition that, over time, as Shoshana Felman argues, it has robbed economically disadvantaged female youth of a 'language in which to articulate their injuries' (Felman, 2000: 8).

The argument which follows in the next section rests upon the assertion that an interdisciplinary analysis of representational forms (embracing concepts which concern the spatiality of urban life, symbolic power, and metaphysical questions about selfhood) should lead to the revisiting of the relationship between culture, structure, space, and action. I argue that this position will not reproduce rational visions of deviant female identity or undermine the power of understanding discourse but will instead place culture, discourse and materiality in tension in a critical/ethical reading of contemporary representations of female youth poverty.

SECTION II.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:
FEMINIST SOCIOLOGY'S ENCOUNTER WITH A PHILOSOPHY OF THE SUBJECT

This scene portraying the social foundation of social relations has a legendary flavour
(Descombes, 2000: 46).

Since the ultimate objective is to move beyond a discourse analysis of representational forms toward a more intricate interdisciplinary framework, I outline here what we believe to be some novel theoretical contributions to a representation analysis of female youth economic

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disadvantage and homelessness. I argue primarily for a critical reading of representations that is grounded in what Felman (2000) and Arendt have referred to as a *critical consciousness*[13] about the event or issue under scrutiny. I put the question as follows: 'what are the *truth cults* which shape representations of female youth economic disadvantage and for whom are they constructed?' If, as Felman (2000) suggests, there is a reading without *critical consciousness*, there is only a representation which emerges as object, or appears static, hegemonic and *banal*. I seek therefore, through the refinement of theoretical concepts, to reveal the 'normative architecture' (see Felman, 2000) of the representation, as well as what this representational form might mean on sociological grounds for young women who live in profoundly difficult economic circumstances. In so doing, I attempt to shift the discussion beyond an account of female youth poverty as *monumental victimization* or as exemplar criminogenic space.[14] I seek instead to expose how such representations can be seen as processes at work in shaping the cultural field/space of female youth homelessness as a *magnified hegemonic image* (Bourdieu, 2001) from the past, which has developed over time as a category of understanding in public consciousness.

Two levels of analysis are involved here. On the one hand, there is the level of ideology and power where we critique representational forms in relation to issues of space and spatiality, and forms of regulation and reproduction. On the other hand, there is the level of epistemology and ontology where I draw upon concerns about the role of the representation in the reconstitution of the political subject -- what Hannah Arendt identifies as the 'metaphysics of the subject problem' -- to expose the configuration of *truth content* manifested in contemporary journalistic representations that serve as a public record of urban female youth homelessness and economic disadvantage. The key theoretical questions I address here are:

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[13] Felman draws upon Pierre Nora's, Le retour de le'envenement, in 1 Faire de l'histoire, in Jaques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (eds.), 1974.

[14] I have adapted Felman's use of Neitzsche's term *monumental* history to extend its meaning to *the problem of victimization*. I call this new term *monumental victimization* because the vast majority of contemporary journalistic representations we have examined place women at the centre of the 'poverty' narrative giving them and their bodies more significance as victims in the explanation of youth poverty than class stratification, colonization or women's social history in the state. Consequently, a form of victimization arises which identifies young women as the social problem rather than, for example, the role of social policy in creating the conditions of economic disadvantage. I wish, however, to distance myself from the work of Nietzche's main superman thesis in drawing upon this term, largely due to my own desire to maintain our ethical commitments to a framework which views victimization as a socio-cultural and ethical phenomenon.

(i) what might a cultural sociology/geography of female youth economic disadvantage and teenage homelessness look like?;

(ii) how might an account of social space, premised on a particular set of social, cultural, globalizing, racialized and economic relations, assist in the advancement of this theoretical framework?;

(iii) how do we pose questions about the materiality of any given representation as it relates to the symbolic promotion of the 'middle class' against which all other positions are read?; and,

(iv) how might an Arendtian critique of the political subject help us to address the philosophical questions at stake in an ethical reading of female youth poverty and homelessness?

SPATIAL CODES AND THE SOCIAL FORMATION OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GENDER IN REPRESENTATIONAL FORMS

Drawing upon the work of Doreen Massey (1994, 1999) and Pierre Bourdieu (1997, 2001), one may assert that representations of female homelessness contain, within themselves, multiple layers of power relations, which operate as part of an unequal distribution of *social space* in the state. At the level of materiality and following Doreen Massey (1994), I take *space* to mean an aspect of, or a social field within, the social order which is substantively shaped by socio-cultural relations and materiality. Space is also organized in ways which highlight what Massey (1999) has referred to as the 'geographies of class' (e.g, spatial differentiation of rich and poor) or spaces which are 'emblematic class-related places' (p. 336). In this way, space (e.g., street homelessness) cannot be collapsed solely into culture or discourse nor can it be described as a fluid non-entity which bears no significance to the social structures which have played some part in the formation of society over time. Rather, it emerges as an inherited yet still shifting dimension of social life, which is underpinned by historical and contemporary social conditions and material realities that transform dialectically. In this way, spatial organizations of urban life are strongly bound to structures and historical forms of subordination. This understanding of space might, for example, be assessed in relation to larger questions about working-class women's symbolic

containment in the private sphere as non-citizens and the construction of gendered subjects in the state over time. This seems a particularly salient issue to tackle in relation to female youth economic disadvantage since it has become increasingly clear in recent years that the conditions of street life for women are shaped by forms of capital accumulation and dispersion tactics which implicate and effect female bodies in 'highly urbanizing and globalizing spaces' (see Wright, 1997) that are 'very unevenly distributed' (Massey, 1995: 337). What makes the theoretical links between Massey and Bourdieu relevant and powerful is that each views space/field in relation to the gendered construction of urban life (e.g., street) – 'city culture as one pertaining to men' (Massey, 1995). From this view, space can be linked to the study of representation and, as such, both can emerge as instrumental in the maintenance of social inequality and as an exercise in cultural reproduction.

I draw, in particular, upon Bourdieu's (2001) most recent work on masculine domination in which he argues that representations function as a form of *masculine inheritance in specific fields or spaecs*. He also reasserts the centrality of social class and class conflict, as gendered and racialized, in the formation of an epistemic posture on the gendered subject through representational practice. He also, like Massey, views space as a site/field that is heavily regulated by the social relations of production in capitalist arenas; in this way, it is easy to see how knowledge circulating about young women who are homeless is intimately tied to historical understandings of women's position in the political economy. Class assertions are therefore built into and structure the representation, often serving as a consumptive form of *gendered doxa* (that is, as a representation which is difficult to escape). This kind of doxa, as a 'deeply sedimented' social relation (see McNay, 2000), resides beyond the boundaries of a more fluid and contested notion of space.

Accordingly, then, we argue that representations of youth economic disadvantage reflect the cultural and material conditions of a particular temporal space (e.g., street, law). Yet such processes may be connected to a larger macro-narrative of change on institutional and ideological levels. Such presuppositions imply that we interrogate the assumptions which underlie a

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representation of female youth homelessness in a given time and space to expose its forms of symbolic domination and its 'modern geographies of power' (see Massey, 1999). A clearer articulation of the relationship between young women's social status and location in the state and 'space and social division' (Massey, 1995: 5) can therefore be established. These relationships ultimately form part of 'a circuit of representations' where particular social conflicts are played out. As Fraser and Gordon (1996: 34) write:

> The terms that are used to describe social life are also active forces shaping it. […] Particular words and expressions often become focal in such struggles, functioning as keywords, sites at which the meaning of social experience is negotiated and contested. Keywords typically carry unspoken assumptions [] that can powerfully influences the discourses they permeate -- in part by constituting a body of doxa, or a taken-for-granted commonsense belief that escapes critical scrutiny.

In short, I argue that the assessment of the symbolic organization of knowledge in a given representation concerned with female youth economic disadvantage is a crucial step in moving beyond a straightforward cultural or discourse analysis of representation. The importance of this constellation of arguments for the concerns of our substantive study is that any representational analysis of disenfranchised youth must account, in part, for the workings of the social order and ultimately, therefore, the cultural, spatial and material effects of its operation at the level of conflict, culture and structure. This seems a particularly urgent task if we are to understand how social processes accrue over time to inform representations of marginalized female youth.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF HANNAH ARENDT: FEMINIST SOCIOLOGY'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SUBJECT

At the same time as I raise questions about the materiality of a representational form, I also wish to join these concerns with larger ethical and philosophical questions about the constitution of the female subject who is constructed through the media as economically disadvantaged or homeless. What this implies is the necessity for posing metaphysical questions about the ways in which the female subject has been represented as an expression of that problem

which Hannah Arendt (1958, 1968a) identifies as the 'metaphysics of the subject'. Though she is not, herself, a representational theorist, Arendt's work on the problematic of the rational subject or rational citizen, together with her theoretical reflections on problems of objectivity, truth, selfhood and history, come together to offer a particularly promising starting point from which to develop a theory of representational analysis that might move us beyond a straightforward material or discourse analysis of representations of youth economic disadvantage.

One way to engage in an Arendtian critique of female youth homelessness is to move beyond socio-cultural, spatial and symbolic concerns to suggest that representations must to be read for the ongoing circulation of 'truth cults' or forms of 'mere appearance' which are normalized through traces of state rhetoric. Arendt's contention is that: "truth can only exist when it is humanized by discourse". Truth, then, in an Arendtian framework cannot exist since it is the 'agent, not the anti-thesis, of manipulation" (Disch, 1994: 289). Consequently, our goal must be to denaturalize the normative epistemological stance or truth posture of the actual representation. Following Felman, I suggest that a *critical consciousness* of the representation is a necessary precursor for seeking a more ethical stance on the very constitution of female youth economic disadvantage and homelessness in the present.

The central questions I pose of the representations *at the level of epistemolog*y and metaphysics, then, are concerned with revealing how representations reproduce what Felman identifies as 'endless repetition of catastrophe…as [victims] forever locked up in trauma'. For example, I am interested in exposing how the class, race and gendered posturing of female subjects reproduce what Arendt (1958, 1968b) has identified as *world alienation* through often static, positivist and *banal* accounts of female youth marginalization. We therefore need to pose more specific questions of the representation itself: how it reflects the historically evolving social position of women in the state as relegated to the space of the private; how it constructs the gendered, classed and racialized political subject/citizen; and how it reflects larger issues concerning social inequality and hierarchies of the social order. As Arendt (1968a) put it:

the fundamental fact about the modern concept of history is that arose in the same sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which ushered in the gigantic development of the natural sciences. Foremost among the characteristics of the age, which are still alive and present in our own world, is the world-alienation of man […] which is so difficult to perceive as a basic condition of whole life because out of it, did arise the tremendous structure of the human artiface we inhabit today, in whose framework we have even discovered the means of destroying it (53-54)[15]

By drawing upon Arendt's concerns with the modern concept of truth and the problems of the subject and citizen in history, I also wish to ask what role masculinist ontologies and epistemological traditions might play in shaping constructions of 'the poor female subject' as a more general and indeed inherited problem of 'gendered dichotomies' (see Mills, 1996) within particular fields/spaces of urban life which have confined women in particular ways. In this way, links between Bourdieu's and Massey's notions of field and space as grounded in social relations and masculine domination can join hands with an Arendtian concern with state formations of selfhood, history and truth cults.

Drawing upon this combination of conceptual ideas, I seek to reveal the forms of symbolic/masculine domination which characterize representations, and the 'conscious architecture' and borders through which they are secured. Zerilla's (1995: 179-180) interpretation of Arendt is helpful here:

Arendt sees the violence in these borders. She also sees the need to transgress or attenuate them. Intimating that the slave stood as the disavowed, embodied part of the free (masculine) subject, Arendt contests the very meaning of the subject's freedom and, by extension, the borders that he/she erects to secure it. [] "freedom [] is always partial and, when bought out at the price of disavowel, both illusory and empty".

Ultimately, then, we need to clarify the question of whether the representation actually takes on a distinction of '*mere appearance*' in a social space unwritten by metaphors of public failure (e.g., *the street*) – where there is indeed a failure, within the representation, to create thinking, acting other

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[15] I wish to reassert how the problems of *truth cults* might be related to misrepresentation on a large scale. I refer back to Hannah Arendt's concern with the conflation of truth and history. She writes: "the historian by gazing backward into historical processes has been so accustomed to discovering an objective meaning, independent of the aims and awareness of the actors, that he is liable to overlook what actually happened in his attempt to discern some objective trend. He will, for example, overlook the particular characteristics of Stalin's dictatorship in favor of the industrialization of the Soviet Empire or the nationalistic aims of traditional Russian foreign policy" (p. 88, *Between Past and Future*).

– over what Arendt (1958) refers to as *'meaningful appearance'*. If, for example, what one learns in reading such a representation is only a *static instance* of female youth homelessness rather than a meaningful picture of its social formations in the present, then we may assume that mere appearance is a reproductive and regulative function of the representation. Moreover, if what is revealed in the representational analysis fails to offer some analytic purchase upon the social locations of female youth homelessness or details concerning the nature of youth economic disadvantage as a social narrative or set of social conditions in process, then we are faced with an empty, reified and meaningless representation which has only the legacy of history before it.

SECTION III.
METHODOLOGICAL INQUIRY

We have to combat all impulses to mythologize the horrible…..Perhaps what is behind it all is that individual human beings did not kill other individual human beings for human reason, but that an organized attempt was made to eradicate the concept of the human being.[16] (Hannah Arendt, 1968b)

The potential for a new juridical photographic realism was widely recognized in the 1840's, in the general context of these systematic efforts to regulate the growing urban presence of the "dangerous classes," of a chronically unemployed [] I emphasize this point because it is emblematic of the manner in which the criminal archive came into existence. That is, it was on the basis of mutual comparison, on the basis of tentative construction of a larger, "universal" archive, that zones of deviancy and respectability could be clearly demarcated (Sekula, 1989: 345)

We can now turn towards an examination of a sample of contemporary Canadian media representations of teenage women who are identified as homeless and who occupy the architectural space of the street in Toronto, Canada. I attempt, with the help of illustrations from related historical sources, to follow Bourdieu, Massey and Arendt in historicizing our subject and linking, where relevant, our contemporary hermeneutic interpretation, to other constructions of youth economic disadvantage in modern Canadian history. My purpose for doing so is to explore how the cultural fields of any structured urban space which are highly regulated by the state are related to the historical formation of ideas about female teenage homelessness and the 'working classes' in the present.

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[16] Letter 50, in Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers, Correspondence: 1926-1969, T 69 (Lotte Kohler & Hans Saner (EDS)).

As I have argued, dominant trends in the reading of female youth homelessness suggest a substantial emphasis on a surveillance or *discourse* reading of representations. Whilst, as Fraser and Gordon (1996) suggest, such a discursive reading is important, I argue that it can only be seen as a partial understanding of such representations largely because it ignores a feminist socio-cultural analysis of representations which takes as its starting point the idea that representations are grounded in material, cultural and spatial aspects of the 'social life world' (Arendt, 1958).

The journalistic representations that I now consider are designed to offer to a public readership a vision of female youth homelessness/economic disadvantage in the space of the street. Yet, as I attempt to show, it is eminently clear that such representations have been informed by broader rhetorical positions on youth homelessness. Such positions emerge as part of urban life and through the influence of, for example, the social control mechanisms of the law, history, science and political economy, each of which has played a part in the history of the symbolic construction of homelessness and gender as it appears in the theatre of public life. I engage in such a representational analysis through a socio-cultural interrogation of the assumptions which underwrite journalistic accounts of homeless female youth. These are drawn from a sample of contemporary images and textual accounts of female homelessness/youth economic disadvantage extracted from two Toronto daily broadsheets in the city of Toronto, Canada (dated between 1997-2001).[17]

SECTION IV. DEFINING FEMALE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS ON THE STREET

[INSERT FIGURE 3]

'MIRA THRIVES BUT MOTHERS RARELY DO', Linda Diebel, Toronto Star, 2001

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[17] I focus, in particular, upon one textual representation which accompanies a photograph of MIRA – *Mira Thrives But Mothers Rarely Do*. I then supplement our discussion of this textual representation with extracts from other journalistic accounts of female youth poverty to provide a more comprehensive picture of the role of representations in re-positioning economically disadvantaged youth as marginal political subjects in the present (see Bernstein, 1997). This latter analysis combines two often separated conceptual apparatuses – *regulation* (a term typically associated with cultural analysis) and *reproduction* (a term typically associated with materialist forms of analysis). These two concepts, as analytic framing devices, highlight how both materiality (as reproduction) and discourse (regulation) operate simultaneously as inseparable social processes through the function of representation. In conducting this analysis, I therefore expose both the nature of the symbolic codes which underscore the representation – what could be called the *hermeneutic* architecture – as well as the strategies which are deployed as part of the function of the representation.

'Homeless. Pregnant. Mostly in my life I have wanted to die'

STREET LIFE AND WORKING CLASS CONSTRUCTIONS OF FEMALE SELFHOOD: POLITICAL ECONOMIES, SYMBOLIC CODES AND EPISTEMIC POSTURING
i. Urban Zones of Dependency and Disparaging Female Selves

How might we read the image and textual account above as a space where female homelessness and youth economic disadvantage can be found? What historical markers bring us forward to the contemporary moment where such images of female homelessness are displaced into another cultural field – one decidedly linked to the private sphere and its place in regulating aspects of public consciousness in the present? The sample text carries the lead title, *Mira Thrives but Mothers Rarely Do*[18].

The text begins:

GIMME LOVE", says Jazzy's T-Shirt, about something that's been in pretty short supply during her 19 tortured years on this earth….She is with Lone Wolf. He's been her boyfriend for two weeks, and now he's her fiance. "I didn't know I could have love until I met this guy"…Jazzy is a tall girl, with gorgeous green eyes and the worn look of a much older woman. She thinks she's two, even three months pregnant, she's not sure. She doesn't think anybody but Lone Wolf really cares anyway. That's what life has taught her.

The lead line states that Jazzy – the subject and object of the representation -- is in desperate need of love. There is an ideological assumption present that we can only know Jazzy as a set of essential characteristics through her dependence upon a male on the one hand, and upon the state on the other. What seems relevant in the social organization of this circuit of symbolic gestures is the link that symbolic codes such as *helplessnes*s, *insecurity and dependency* (e.g., GIMME LOVE) have to young homeless women and how such class and gender codes play a role in shaping the status of the gendered subject in the space denoted as the 'street'. What are the politics of misrecognition which operate to undermine the status of Jazzy and other diverse young women living on the street without a home?

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[18] See Table 1 for a more formal analysis of what is described in this section of the paper.

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When gender, class and street life are connected through a set of semantic codes and forms of moral authority which are predicated on female youth dependencies or biological functions linked to the private sphere, the space of the street becomes a site where images, both of young women and the public are mutually distorted. This is largely because the slippage between private and public is rendered more visible, and the female body (rather than life on the street or its underlying social conditions per se) emerges as an objective or static image of surveillance and policing. Indeed, this problematic slippage is precisely the site of misrecognition, with young women perceived to embody 'poverty' as a characteristic 'what', reproduced across time as a form of *symbolic domination*. We, like Fraser (1997: 253), do not view misrecognition as 'merely cultural':

> To be misrecognized […] is not simply to be [] devalued in others' conscious attitudes []. It is …to be denied a full partner in social interaction and prevented from participating as a peer in social life – not simply as a consequence of distributive inequity[], but rather as a consequence of institutionalized patterns of interpretation and evaluation that constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect or esteem. When such patterns of disrespect and disesteem are institutionalized, for example, in law, social welfare, medicine and popular culture, they impede parity of participation, just as surely do distributive inequities. [] n my conception, therefore, misrecognition is an institutionalized social relation not a psychological state.

To extend Fraser's argument to the case with which I am concerned here, I argue that misrecognition, as an institutionalized social relation, is manifested in spatially organized representations of street-involved female youth[19]. We can, therefore, no longer ask whether representations of young women, such as Jazzy/Mira, or of the 'street' itself, belong to an individual consciousness. Rather we should ask, following Descombe (2000), what kind of material social world (with what kind of a history) can identify with such a concept as female 'dependency' and 'deviancy', or what forms of symbolic domination manifest the space within which such a concept may operate. The key problem, then, with the representation of Jazzy as homeless, pregnant and *dependent* on male love is its elusive power as a phenomenon of social reproduction –

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[19] As Wright (1997: 4-6) suggests: "Urban spaces are not neutral backdrops to individual actions of the 'poor', but socially produced disciplinary spaces within which one is expected to act according to a status defined by others, a status communicated by specific appearances and locations, by the visual comportment of bodies. Homeless street identities are not simply a product of a deranged mind or an amoral character. Rather, they merged from the complex negotiations over the meanings of urban space within which homeless persons find themselves. These meanings are generated in the making of the city, the provision of services, the behavior of those who have power over the powerless. […] Negotiations are conducted not merely over the definitions and redefinitions of urban space, but also over the meaning of distinctions created between different races, classes, and genders."

as something ultimately entrenched in women's symbolic/domestic link to the private sphere and the historical notion of women as non-citizens -- which has particular symbolic force when applied to those young women identified as working-class, 'poor' or who live on the street.

Such representations are also tainted with what Arendt has memorably coined the 'banality of evil". Felman (2000) writes: 'If the banality of evil designates a gap between event and explanations, how does the law (*and we would add here the media*) deal with the gap"? For example, if Jazzy is constructed as *dependent* and *helpless*, it is because these constructions are inherited from a complicated representational past which is, in many ways, also banal. The construct of dependency as banal serves to mask the social conflicts which frame Jazzy's own circumstances - the sexual/spatial division of labour and space, colonialism, global forms of stratification, urban dispersions and containments, neo-liberal cuts to public housing supports for young women, and masculine domination on the streets itself. In other words, Jazzy is labeled as dependent and must embody such a condition by virtue of the public and historical character of gendered dependencies in the past. These have been premised upon hierarchically organized working-class codes of female subordination rather than upon an awareness of social inequalities in a symbolic economy of control and division (see Fraser & Gordon, 1995). The essence of a concept such as *dependency*, then, is that it is always pre-established; the idea of Jazzy's dependency is not really designed to inform the public in the present about the characteristics of young women living in poverty. Rather, the term has been shaped by a socio-historical process through which it remains operative for the future, "for the generations to come, for people who will have to accept it as an already operative rule" (Descombe, 2000: 45).

Not unlike the ideas which inform the historical images and corresponding text we have highlighted from previous historical periods, the social gestures of class and gender dominance of the past appear to shape the organization of symbols underpinning the representation of Jazzy and her pregnancy on the street in the present. As the representation of Jazzy/Mira goes on to read: 'It has nothing to do with birth control and everything to do with wanting to be loved and

belong and having a '*home*' (see Table 1 below for a more thorough-going representational analysis). An interdisciplinary sociological reading of the journalistic account which corresponds to Jazzy's story would therefore stress how such symbols and codes – such as helplessness and dependency as classed -- are all predicated upon what Hannah Arendt has identified as a form of *mere appearance* or *mythologies of the horrible* which essentialize homeless identities through their containment within the metaphorical landscape of the street. [20] [21] As Heyder (1996) remarks:

> The most common myth among social service workers [] is that people living on the street have simply made the wrong choices in life….If you don't have enough money [] then it is your fault. If you're an addict, then you just have to make another decision and all will be well…What this mythology doesn't explain is that different people are making different decisions from different positions in society and under different circumstances. You don't become homeless because of individual decisions, addictions, or mental or physical disabilities."[1]

Yet the myths which Heyder (1996) reveals often go unmentioned in such journalistic accounts of street life for young women: "It's sad for the mothers when they lose the very thing that gives them hope for the future. So their immediate response is to have another baby" (Mira Thrives Representation, Toronto Star). This tragic female subject is rendered an unworthy female subject/mother in the present. She is by nature and through her body, mentally deranged and criminogenic. She is alien; she is tragic, she is mythical, she is non-citizen. Ultimately, then, Jazzy's plight stands for the embodiment of poverty as the central site for reproducing a positivist position on female identity in the state:

> And there hasn't been any luck for Jazzy, or so many of the other pregnant women and *desperate* women who *roam the streets* without support and usually dealing with *demons of mental illness, abuse and addiction*?

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[20] I draw upon Cindy Katz's concern with restructured space to highlight the impact of global restructuring on young's peoples lives in urban inner cities, such as New York. Katz (1998) writes: "in New York city, for instance, dis-investments in manufacturing [] along with declines in construction and infrastructural maintenance, and the shrinking of government posts have dimmed the prospects for reasonably well paying stable employment, and most certainly for meaningful work, of many working class young people…Unemployment among teens 16-19 years old in New York City, for instance, increased from 18-36 per cent from 1988 to1993" (p.134).

[21] As Heyder (1996) remarks: The most common myth among social service workers [] is that people living on the street have simply made the wrong choices in life….If you don't have enough money [] then it is your fault. If you're an addict, then you just have to make another decision and all will be well…What this mythology doesn't explain is that different people are making different decisions from different positions in society and under different circumstances. You don't become homeless because of individual decisions, addictions, or mental or physical disabilities."[21]

In this respect, such young women *who roam the streets* cannot, by virtue of their spatial location, gender and class, be defined as the idealised autonomous and free liberal subject even if they are expected, despite social constraints, to perform inside white, middle-class arenas of choices and freedom[22]. It is in this way, therefore, that representational knowledge, as an organization of symbols or codes which forms *a history of the present*, reasserts a particular class position and set of social control functions – what Basil Bernstein has named an *invisible pedagogy*. It is this invisible pedagogy which shapes not only public consciousness about female youth poverty as linked to a working-class notion of the private sphere but also moulds an image of female 'poverty' as a classic instance of working class femininity. I quote Bourdieu (1998: 25) at length here to illustrate my point:

> The particular strength of the masculine sociodicy comes from the fact that it combines and condenses two operations: it legitimates a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction. The work of symbolic construction is far more than a strictly performative operation of naming which orients and structures representations, starting with representations of the body []; it is brought about and culminates in a profound and durable transformation of body and minds [].

What more than any other factor, that which extends this problem of helplessness and dependency into the private, is its association with deviant motherhood and the possibility of giving birth to a child with 'no fixed address'. It also endorses a particular set of classed meanings through a shared symbolic system that organizes knowledge about working-class and economically disadvantaged girls in hierarchical ways. As another journalistic representation remarks:

> most infants are seized by children's aid societies before their first birthdays usually because of *parental neglect* rather than abuse – but more and more young mothers are trying again, says Michele Anderson, outreach supervisor at Convenant House, a shelter for homeless youth in downtown Toronto. [] They keep on having a baby, determined that CAS (Children's Aid Society) will not get the next one. They feel options like school or jobs are closed to them, so they have a child. Then they have status. They're *somebody's mom* (Globe and Mail, 1998).[23]

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[22] This idea harks back to Arendt's question in *Between Past and Future*: "For whom does freedom exist".

[23] As the journalistic account above suggests, the cultural reproduction of a historically sedimented domestic narrative is closely associated with young women's spatial/social location in the state. Yet it serves to undermine the role that globalizing forces play in reshaping urban life for those young women who may be living without a home. Indeed, if we are to study the problem of urban

Let us endeavour to turn back the clock to assess the historical legacies that contemporary representations of young working-class women encapsulate. An educational report published by the Industrial School's Association in 1927 historicizes the treatment of female homelessness reaching back nearly three-quarters of a century:

> but when I asked them [the employees of the training school] if they can teach a group of girls to cook, or to launder or to make dresses from seven in the morning until mid afternoon…. it is in working with them and interesting them in the useful activities of life ..that they lose their desire for perpetual loafing and the wretched and depressing inferiority complex []The first step is to clean up…. (*brackets, our addition*).

A similarly resilient image of youth economic disadvantage is captured in the following, written in 1914: "two acts of parents and deserted mother struggle to live in poverty manor. All three families bear the pauper's stamp and the tears of the mothers have become their stock in trade. Nine undernourished children live here in rooms where the sun never shines and they suffer" (Toronto Star [year].

[INSERT FIGURE 4]

'Rear of 512 Front Street, August, 1914': Women and Children Outside of House,
<u>Series 372, Sub-series-32, Item 315</u>

One might say then, that in charting the path from the past to the present, the reproductive codes are entrenched in an *ontology of the domestic subject* or, to put this more literally, in images of helpless impoverished mothers who must essentially 'clean up' in order to enter the public realm as legitimate citizens of the state[24]. This image of the domestic subject also reaches

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restructuring more substantially, it is the very disinvestment in urban space as a legitimate place for female youth to find social support, together with the privatization of the 'left hand of the state'[23] across time, which threatens their lives. The threat does not come from young women themselves nor from their desire to have children.

[24] Whilst I have argued that Jazzy's story has a particular inflection, so too do other representations. Unlike the historical representations I have examined thus far, the following journalistic account appears to have a stronger social welfare orientation and a clearer connection to the idea that a description of social conditions might change the course of poverty for working class youth in the future. One earlier caption taken from the Toronto star in post-WW1 Canada is entitled as follows: "Two Feet of Sidewalk child's only play space". The caption reads: "Children play on cramped Tracy Street because their back yards are too tiny to play in, parks too far away for youngsters to go alone. Parents would like to see the street closed to traffic so that children can play in comparative safety []. It would break your heart to see where the poor city children have to play. [] Every mother on the 'streets of narrow escapes expects someone to be hurt" (Toronto Daily Star [1947]). Paradoxically, in the above account, there is greater emphasis on the inequality

back to earlier historical descriptions of lone mothers or women more generally as simultaneously dependent and helpless. These descriptions arise in relation to industrial forms of capital in the 18th and 19th century and their affiliations with masculinity as a dominant cultural form. In this respect, Fraser and Gordon's (1995) seminal piece on the genealogy of dependency is helpful here. They write:

> In pre-industrial English usage, the most common meaning of dependency was subordination. A dependent, from at least 1588, was one who depends on another for support, position, etc; an attendant, subordinate [] It is important to note that dependency begins to mean something far more negative in the 18th and 19th centuries as industrial capitalism begins to grow and become a legitimate ideological force. The oppositional category which was indeed valorized was independence. Therefore, what in pre-industrial society had been a normal and un-stigmatized condition became deviant and stigmatized (p. 39).

What seems clear in this analysis of representations thus far is that certain constellations of dependency appear to be associated with a middle-class conception of unacceptable or abnormal femininity which dates back to 19th and 20th century conceptions of urban Canada. In this case, female homelessness is powerfully shaped by notions of gendered dependencies which are seen as polluting urban space yet geographically ordered in terms of power relations. Indeed, it is here that we see most clearly how *regulation and reproduction* work simultaneously as processes which shape the role that representations may play in the larger context of class, identity and state-formation, and particularly in notions of the public and private. On one level, the representation possesses an amalgam of codes and symbolic references which regulate the very conditions of what it might mean to be classified as 'female and homeless' in urban life and therefore outside the constituted and respected public. On another level, the representation could be seen as the exemplar case of that which Bourdieu (2001) names the 'automatic effects' of the social order. As an automatic, reproductive and sometimes formulaic kind of masked or invisible

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inherent in the formation and distribution of urban space. This kind of representation might provide some insight into the spatial dichotomies between homeless youth and consumers in the geographical division of space. We also learn something about how the dispersion/containment of the working classes in organized urban landscapes might operate as a social relation.

pedagogy, classical theories of femininity, race and class permeate the ethical core of the representation. The female subject, when located on the street or defined as homeless, seems somehow frozen in time, as a reified ontological construction trapped within the middle-class ideals of an acceptable, public femininity.

Urban Zones of Sexual Deviancy and Delinquency

My concerns have thus far dwelt upon female homeless youth who have been constructed, through media and photographic representations, as dependent political subjects. However, other organized symbols of deviant femininity, promiscuity and failed motherhood, are also present in contemporary journalistic representations of street life in the present[25]: 'Girls who live on the street are not only contributing to the rise in Canada's teenage pregnancy rate, growing numbers are *refusing* to have abortions and attempting to keep their babies' (Toronto Star, 2001). And again:

> It has taken some time but Tanya Douglas has finally become 'somebody's mom'. Her first baby was seized by a Children's Aids Society worker when he was one week old. [] There was little hope she would reclaim her baby. A runaway from foster homes where she was raised after being abandoned by her parents, she was working as a prostitute, using the money to buy crack, cocaine and heroine. Within five months she is pregnant again with her second son […]. Indeed, with expectant homeless mothers frequently dabbling in a dangerous mix of crack, unprotected sex and poor nutrition, their newborns face a higher risk of being born prematurely, at low birth weight, with a host of medical problems including HIV (Globe and Mail, 1998).

As before, the codes in play here elicit what Bourdieu refers to as an automatic androcentric function. Each of these codes has little to do with informing the public about the social conditions underlying female homelessness, its structured neo-liberal political economy, or the state's role in its perpetuation or eradication. Rather, they are replete with essential, criminogenic narratives which describe a tragic, hopeless female subject. Now, however, the gaze

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[25] See Table 2 for a more complete summary of an analysis of the representation referred to here.

of public consciousness shifts towards the homeless female body as sexually deviant and delinquent.

Tanya, like Jazzy, is caught between irreconcilable options which cannot be separated off from the spheres of deviant sexuality and motherhood as they are constructed through class formations and young women's spatial location on the 'street'. Indeed, their very status as mothers is threatened when they occupy the space of the street: "she (Tanya) is pregnant with her second son and dabbling in a dangerous mix of crack and unprotected sex". Representations of female youth homelessness are therefore often tied to culturally specific assumptions about women's 'irrational' and sexually deviant nature– assumptions which are premised on mythical assertions about the fundamental and ultimately biological weaknesses of women.

And yet, counter-narratives of youth economic disadvantage offer precisely those forms of knowledge which might link the gap between practical experience and public consciousness. As one youth living on the street put it:

> I can't get any type of financial assistance because I fall through the cracks of the system. That means you're sixteen to eighteen years old, aren't a ward of a state or a school: exactly my situation. You can't get welfare, so you have to get a job. Except you need a place in order to get a job because you need a shower and decent clothes before you can go job hunting. Obviously, just look at me - you can't always stay clean or look decent living in the street. Or you need a place to get a home visit to maybe get kiddie welfare – which is almost impossible to get if you're not in school – but you need a deposit to get the promise of an address.

In summary, we might say that the media representations I have examined position homeless femininity as child like and deviant against a paternalistic state which, in these circumstances, favors abortion whilst continuing to idealize the historically gendered, racialized and classed link between womanhood and motherhood (see also Kelly, 1997). As another contemporary representation of female youth homelessness purports:

> the inquest into Jordon's unlikely starvation has accomplished something: It has shone a spotlight onto a population of <u>rootless</u> young women on the streets of Toronto. These people are bucking the trend of Canada's slumping teenage birth rate and <u>producing</u>

children in staggering numbers….But at last we see long overdue attention paid to teenagers on the street who are deliberately becoming pregnant, and the health and social services that should step into the lives of these floundering, occasionally treacherous mothers. The babies they produce are usually a calculated attempt to capture the sense of family and belonging that eluded them. When social workers seize a child, the defiant young women only become pregnant again (Globe and Mail, 2001).

This deviant representational status requires that girls and young women who may live on the street or are homeless remain under greater public surveillance. As Alexander (1997) argues, such surveillance practices cannot be viewed only a contemporary phenomenon; at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries it was most often 'girls of low status who suffered public reproach' when there were affiliated with the street. Yet, in honoring such a classed imperative in contemporary representations, young women are extracted from their context and the social meaning and significance of their lives is lost. Consequently, the political/global economy of a neo-liberal restructuring and, ultimately, the doxic elements of the social order are eclipsed by the shame that is generated for homeless women through their representation and posturing as deviant political subjects in the present. The representation therefore turns naturally toward a realist and positivist shadow of the past, the problem of homeless female youth left hanging in the minds of the public as de-historicized and de-contextualized. In other words, the ideas which form the foundation of the representations seem to circulate – as a *symbolic, hermeneutic male taxonomy or symbolic instrument*. Such ideas have to be read against an underlying and hidden class assertion of acceptable private female dispositions as part and parcel of the history of middle-class, colonial visions of femininity. The representation can therefore be thought of as possessing a particular disposition of inferiority that has been inherited through the active and discursive transmission of gender, race and class codes in particular spaces of the social order over time. Bourdieu (2001) writes:

> The principle of the inferiority [] of women [] is nothing other than the fundamental dis-symetry, that of subject and object, agent and instrument, which is set up between men and women in the domain of symbolic exchanges, [] women can only appear there as objects, or, more precisely, as symbols whose meaning is constituted outside of them and

whose function is to contribute to the perpetuation of [] the symbolic capital held by men. (pp. 42-43)

From this viewpoint, representations of female economic disadvantage can no longer be viewed as singularly attributable to an author as his/her singular psychological deficit (his or her singular 'cogito') but, as Descombes suggests, to a kind of collective consciousness that has, in the past, shaped public knowledge about gender, youth and poverty, and which has ultimately forced representations into the domain of organized and inherited thought: "[representation] is an organized system that represents the world to itself and is animated in mental life" (Descombe, 2000). The conceptual relations which characterize representations therefore cannot be separated from human relations or the philosophy of the subject. It is in this way that one can envision a clear link between representation, ontological dominance, space and social relations as regulating 'what counts as knowledge' about female homelessness and economic disadvantage in the present. It is here too that one sees that the material, historical, symbolic and epistemic must be tied together in understanding socio-cultural representations of gender. This is why young homeless women ultimately appear on the public stage of media representations as a liability, and made responsible for the death of children rather than exposing the new global state and its historical part in setting up the conditions under which such tragedies occur. And, if we take the representation beyond the symbolic organization of knowledge, we can begin to see how it expresses what Hannah Arendt has referred to as a kind of truth cult about young women which forms a habitus -- in the *cultural field of the street* -- of deviance and disgrace. In this context, the power of earlier ideas to inform the social construction of female homelessness are extraordinarily salient.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this paper has been to highlight the elements of regulation (the material/cultural discourses that shape what is viewed as the 'normal' conditions of female homelessness) and reproduction (the codes that reproduce social inequality for economically disadvantaged female

youth) which operate through representations of female homelessness in contemporary journalistic forms. Throughout, I have also highlighted how an interdisciplinary critique of these representations speaks to larger philosophical, historical and spatial questions about the ethical and epistemological constitution of female selves, and have attempted to link such issues to the symbolic economy of female youth poverty in the present. What I have exposed through such an analysis is the ways in which such representations of female youth poverty are often grounded in a spatial notion of the tragic female character which ultimately accords with the symbolic histories of female incompetence in modern urban Canada. Young women are often socially constructed as dependent, deviant and in need of help, as pathological, hopeless and promiscuous when they are not members of the dominant class, live on the street or have children. In virtually all the representations we have examined, regardless of the variation in theme and content, what seems clear is the degree of judgement placed upon women as essential characters, together with the virtual absence of men and class and race relations from textual accounts of female economic disadvantage or female homelessness. Indeed, it would seem that such explanations possess what Felman (2000) identifies as a particular *normative architecture* that has shaped collective understandings of female youth economic disadvantage in the present. I wish to argue that this *normative and indeed reproductive architecture of homeless female bodies*, as a *theatre of collective remembrance (see Simon, 2000)*, cannot be understood in its entirety within a discourse model for to do so would be to limit our understanding of the role of representations in reproducing aspects of the social order. While it seems abundantly clear that the discourse of the text regulates how we might think about female youth homelessness in the present, it is also clear that the discourse embodies a particular form of historical and symbolic meaning which has been, and continues to be, constituted by larger social, cultural and material relations, which are not independent of each other.

I have identified here that one such relation is asserted through symbolic domination which is manifestly at the core of reified narratives of 'what' (not who) young homeless women are, which in turn is conflated with the space of the street; both are defined in terms of 'lack',

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deviancy/criminality, and marginality (outside the constitutive 'public'). The trauma of young

persons or their *monumental victimization*, rather then a critical consciousness of the role of the state

in reproducing conditions of inequality, seem to reside at the centre of such representations. It

would further seem that the media has, as Felman (2000) suggests, " therefore submitted to the

effects of the trauma rather than the remedy". We cannot, in such circumstances, obtain a

translation into public consciousness over time of the effects of youth economic disadvantage.

Arendt (1968a) writes:

> No one has ever doubted that truth and politics are on rather bad terms with each other,
> and no one, as far as I know, has ever counted truthfulness among the political
> virtues…What does this mean for the nature and dignity of truth and truthfulness. Is it of
> the very essence of truth to be impotent and of the very essence of power to be deceitful.
> And what kind of reality does truth possess if it is powerless in the public realm, which
> more than any other spheres of human life guarantees the reality of existence to natal and
> mortal [men] – that is, to beings who know they have appeared out of non-being and will,
> after a short while, again disappear into it.

What Arendt is telling us here is that a person, when usurped by narratives of despair and trauma,

is "robbed of language with which to articulate his or her own victimization. What is available to

him as language is only the oppressor's language. But in the oppressor's language, the abused will

sound crazy, even to himself, if he describes himself as abused" (Felman, 2000: 33). This kind of

approach to the formation of representation is tied substantially to a symbolic economy which

honours the liberal, autonomous subject and cannot readily explain how young men and women

negotiate the social conditions which underwrite their social construction or experience.

What I seek to explain here is that it is crucial to recognize the role of social reproduction

in the cultural formation of representational narratives. Indeed, we need to understand better how

social conflicts are masked through media accounts of female youth poverty largely because

young homeless women are constructed as an embodiment of poverty. This absence within the

account renders public space as static and atemporal, eliminating the possibilities for a 'space of

appearances' (Arendt, 1958) where young women might be found in a meaningful sense. But

beyond this, the reproductive outcomes of these approaches can be profound. Divisions,

ideologies and forms of marginalization arising from larger state processes, such as media representations, can be read through, albeit differently in different contexts and periods, to the symbolic dispositions inherited by girls who live, as mythical characters, in poverty. They are repositioned as the tragic political subject within a rigid public/private divide (e.g., as degenerate and pathological non-citizen versus active citizen). The outcomes that emerge are instances of contemporary homelessness rather than a constellation of competing yet connected narratives of public life, and a notion of the self as unfolding, as incomplete, yet grounded in social location. This 'epistemic posturing' and the presuppositions entailed by the expression of ideology through the representational form may consequently enact a public memory of economically disadvantaged youth, but such memories do not necessarily highlight change, conflict and contestation, as embedded in class stratification, or as part of the expansion of legal justice. If we are to view the forms of social conflict which shape representational forms of economically disadvantaged young women as fed by something more complex than a straightforward liberal claim of gender inequality or as a *realist* and often criminogenic ontological account of female youth poverty, then we need to understand representational forms not as mere *discourse* of an ungrounded, immaterial kind. but as constitutive elements of the larger social order, within which the ontological status of subjects is constructed[26]

I am therefore arguing here that the combined interdisciplinary positions of theorists such as Massey, Bourdieu, Felman, and Arendt and others (e.g.,, Sangster) capture important and sometimes elusive dimensions of representations which a straightforward discourse analysis might eclipse. What is elided is how a social construction of gender through representation is premised upon social and historical formations and therefore plays a role in the formative socio-historical and cultural process of 'Bildung' (Boudieu, 1997). What is lost in a discourse analysis is the social construction of the tragic and deviant female body as carrying with it, as one of its primary functions, an explicit pedagogic and material action and set of underlying codes which ultimately

undermines the position of homeless women in the state and may lead to the problem of

misrecognition in the future. In the process of 'Bildung', an essentialized female self is prolific in

journalistic culture:

> She was 18 and a crack addict, flopping on the floor of a friends apartment after spending
> most of her pregnancy on the streets of Toronto […] (Globe and Mail, 2001).

However, as Kristeva (2001) argues,

> a life [charted] without action or speech never comes alive, as it were, [when it is
> shrouded in artifacts] within the human community directly [] It is one thing to
> adumbrate this singular dimension of human experience by way of negation i.e by
> focusing attention on what it is not. It is quite another matter to aim at direct conceptual
> articulation, which would include some explanation for the role of the state in this
> articulation.

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