

and I would find copies of *YM* and *Seventeen* in the bedrooms of older sisters. Behind closed doors we would gobble up the glossy pictures, advertisements and advice columns. We were so flattered that these magazines were written exclusively for us: *young girls*. But for some reason, we felt as if we were indulging in material that our parents disapproved of. To this day, there is something appealing and pleasurable, yet somehow scornful and embarrassing, about reading teen magazines. As a feminist, I feel as if I've been encouraged to believe that I'm not supposed to like them, let alone read them. However, I don't think this can be said by the thousands of girls and young women who consume adolescent magazines every month.

As Dawn Currie demonstrates in *Girl Talk: Adolescent Magazines and Their Readers*, (second wave?) feminism has tended to define teen-zines and women's magazines in two general ways: as scripts which reproduce gender (and race) identities through a male gaze, or as a vehicle for pleasure which is not to be confused with reality. Relating these concepts specifically to adolescent readers, Currie uses a number of theories—from literary to poststructuralist to materialist theory—to examine why young girls read these magazines and what we can learn from their perception of what they read.

Girl Talk investigates the status of adolescent magazines in the lives of young women by conducting a sociological examination into everyday practices surrounding identity formation. Currie discusses how textual analysis can show that the dominant reading of text can reinforce traditional femininity (in discussions of fashion, advertisements, quizzes and advice) by using advice and guidance about feeling good about one's self. She discusses how adolescent magazines interpellate young readers through articles and advertisements which promote heterosexual romance, physical beauty and personal hygiene. This is accomplished

amidst messages which urge young readers to 'be themselves' and 'accept themselves' as they are, and to put their own needs above those of boys and men. Currie finds that girls are encouraged to acquire the skills surrounding the creation of a 'feminine' appearance and at the same time, are given messages that reinforce the idea that feeling good is the result of looking good. As Currie postulates, this message means that teenzines contribute to both the doing and undoing of the reading "Subject." In opposition to studies which have shown girls' resistance to clever advertising or 'girl-y' articles, Currie ultimately finds that through this process, readers question *themselves*, instead of questioning the texts.

Currie's examination of teen magazines and their readers is illuminating, and clearly articulates an extensive range of theoretical concepts surrounding literary texts. Adolescent magazines are not examined as static objects; instead, her analysis includes ways in which meaning is taken up as a process by their readers.

What makes this book an interesting read is not only that it highlights academic reading of social texts and theory, but that such readings are complemented by the voices of young women themselves. The sample of young women consists of both self-identified readers and non-readers of adolescent magazines. The observations of these young women are based on the philosophy that youth themselves need to define what they feel is important, instead of looking at what researchers find the most relevant. Using the voices of her participants, Currie looks at the convergence between the discursive and experiential world of female adolescent realities.

One of the most notable parts of this research is that it acknowledges the reading pleasure which teenzines and women's magazines can provide, and that to get pleasure out of reading these magazines is not to betray one's commitment to feminism. Admittedly, not having read through a lot of theory in a while, it took a lot

longer to read this book than I had expected. Getting through the theory was challenging, but after turning the last page, I felt it was well worth the read. Currie has enabled me to articulate reasons why adolescent magazines are read and enjoyed by girls and young women, but also why these magazines and their readers should be a part of rigorous feminist analyses.

Education, Student Rights and the Charter

Ailsa M. Watkinson. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Purich Publishing Ltd., 1999.

BY SHARON FERGUSON—
HOOD AND MARIE TOUELL
WALKER

Ailsa Watkinson, in her book *Education, Student Rights and the Charter*, does an admirable job of interpreting the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms for educational institutes. She describes its application to date, and the changes that are necessary in the educational system to fully reflect its intentions.

Watkinson studied human rights laws and education while earning a doctorate in educational administration and she has worked with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission for over twelve years. This knowledge and experience is apparent in her book—she gives an overview of what the charter was designed to do, and clarifies each point with examples. She also describes several similarities and differences between the Canadian Charter and the American Constitution. It was a surprise to find that our courts relied so heavily on rights and freedoms deci-

sions from another country.

It is clear that Watkinson views the Charter and its impact on education from a feminist perspective, although she doesn't say this herself. She discusses the charter as being based on the ethic of care rather than the ethic of justice. People who complain that judges go too far and read verdicts into the Charter are clearly out of line. The Charter, according to Watkinson's explanation, was intended to be generous. Its basic premise is that rights are to be extended past a legalistic ethic of justice to an ethic of care. Justice requires that people be treated equally. Care reminds us that equality can be very unequal if one's background and personal circumstances are not taken into account. The Charter requires changes in our institutions that will provide meaningful equality. The use of story is another feminist method of communication that makes *Education, Student Rights and the Charter* comfortable to read. Watkinson includes life stories as well as actual court cases to illustrate her points.

Diligence in monitoring student rights is required as our society has a long-standing tradition of not respecting children as full-fledged human beings. In her book, Watkinson describes many specific areas in detail. In the area of conscience and religion within schools, the courts have taken the context into account. Freedom of religion is not adequately provided for by allowing children to leave a classroom when religion is discussed or prayer is held. Being separated out is not real freedom because peer pressure and the need to belong is paramount to children. On a related topic, student rights of freedom of expression and assembly have been upheld reasonably well as have equality for differences in race, gender, economic status and sexual orientation. In court challenges on freedom from sexual harassment the courts have drawn heavily on workplace experiences and decisions. They are clear that the responsibility

is with the administration to provide a harassment-free space for students.

Unfortunately, students with disabilities can't approach the Charter with confidence that they will find support. In the area of dealing with disabilities, the courts often defer to educators and fail to name discrimination. To date the constitutionality of suspensions and expulsions have not been tested. One of the questions to be dealt with in this regard is the conflict between expulsions as discipline and the obligation to attend school.

The depth of Watkinson's understanding of various rights and the way they are approached in educational institutions is evident in her discussion on search, seizures and detention. This subject is largely about privacy and legal rights. Educational officials have always had rights over students that would violate body and property privacy in other circumstances (e.g. locker and body searches). While this situation raises questions of respect for children and young adults that is worthy of attention in itself, the outcome of questions in these areas is interesting. Detention is not seen to be a legal issue if it is for purposes of school discipline. Regarding search and seizure, teachers and principals appear to have a choice under the law as it is currently being applied. If they decide to search students or student property as a matter of school discipline, they must handle the situation as a discipline situation even if drugs or other unlawful material is found. If they intend to call the police if anything significant is found, they must involve them up front so that all the legal rights of the student are observed at every step in the process.

The book concludes with a detailed discussion of corporal punishment. To date, Charter rights have not been upheld in the face of section 43 of the Criminal Code which allows force to be used against children. This could be an area for activism for those with an interest in

opposing the right of educators to assault children.

One point that is touched on briefly at the conclusion of the book is the need for programs to familiarise teachers and educators with children's rights under the Charter. Those who are called to work in this area will find *Education, Student Rights and the Charter* a useful and necessary resource.

La Garde Partagée: L'équité en Question

Denyse Côté. Montréal : Remue-ménage, 2000.

PAR CAROLINE CARON

La plupart du temps, lors d'une séparation, les parents s'arrachent enfants et argent. La guerre se termine le plus souvent par la condamnation du père à *payer* et celle de la mère à *soigner*. Les rôles traditionnels, quoi.

Ce type de règlement, appelé *garde légale partagée* ou *garde légale conjointe*, n'a rien à voir avec la *garde physique partagée*, où les deux parents se partagent en alternance la charge et la garde de leurs enfants. Puisque cette prise en charge partagée entraîne la répartition des coûts, il n'y a aucun versement de pension alimentaire. Malheureusement, ce type de règlement est plutôt rare, car il repose sur la bonne foi des ex-conjoints et le désir sincère de maintenir la relation avec leurs enfants.

Malgré sa rareté, le phénomène est apparu dans notre société depuis une dizaine d'années et la sociologue Denyse Côté s'est proposé de l'étudier. Elle a interrogé les parents qui pratiquent la garde physique partagée pour saisir toute la portée