

# TEENAGE PREGNANCY: SOCIETAL VIEWS AS SEEN THROUGH POPULAR FILM

by

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(Under the Direction of MARK VAGLE)

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation was written as website in script form representing how I, an academic researcher, work toward an understanding of the pregnant teenager and how that teenager is viewed in American society. This representation of that website was created for the graduate school approval of my dissertation. This script is written as if it is a conversation between a group of people who view teenage pregnancy with very different perspectives. This site is set up so that the viewer can move through each page in an orderly fashion *or* so that the viewer can jump from one section to another in random order. Each page has a variety of texts to explore. There are paintings which relate to the discussions between the five characters that participate in the script. I want the paintings to be there for interpretation and to frame the larger themes but they speak for themselves. There will be no subheadings to help with their descriptions. I have, however, provided a living space for reading participants to leave comments and thoughts about the pictures, clips, and the overall script. The script is set up as if there is a group of people who have watched the movie *Juno* and are discussing their thoughts about the film. As they speak they often feel the need to watch certain clips again and their discussion moves into and out of these clips. They often bring in thoughts from other movies that require viewings as well.

The use of a variety of media or texts is important to this intertextual document because it allows for constant movement between texts. “Intertextuality is the process whereby one text refers endlessly to other texts (their intertexts) and to their processes of social and cultural production (Fox, 1995). Intertextual analysis is the process whereby the analysis of one text is initiated into the processes and history of that text’s production. Agger (1990, p. 3) observes that intertextuality is a “...concept that indicates that various dialogues and negotiations are going on between texts and authors.””(Garrick, Keogh, Pendergast, & Dole, forthcoming, 2012).

In order to view the website, please click the following link: [www.missyjersawitz.com](http://www.missyjersawitz.com)

INDEX WORDS: TEENAGE PREGNANCY, TEEN MOMS, TEENAGE MOMS, TEEN PREGNANCY, JUNO

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this website to teenage moms all over the world. Your courage and determination inspires me. My hope is that this website will encourage you to fight the fight!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER 1 INTERVIEW WITH ADVOCATE



This scene begins with a question answer session between me a script writer (and creator of this website) and Advocate (a screen writer). Advocate is sitting on a stool in a blank room with blank walls and is framed by the camera. I am holding the camera and asking questions from off screen (never to appear on screen.)

Script Writer: Why are you trying to write this script?

Advocate: As a scholar and educator, I have a vested interest in providing young people with equal opportunities in life. I have worked with a variety of ages over the last twenty-two years

and have recently begun to focus on teenage women, particularly those who are pregnant.

Because the research literature is replete with studies that view teenage mothers deviating from societal expected norms (Hallman, 2007; Kaplan, 1997; Kelly, 2000; Luker, 1996; Luttrell, 2000; Pillow, 1997), I feel it is necessary to attempt to address this same topic with a positive or less destructive stance. Hopefully, this will allow these young women the opportunities that have been withheld from them in recent years.

Script Writer: How is it that you have come to see them as “deviant”? Is this the only way society tends to view teenage mothers?

Advocate: I have begun to watch movies that focus on teenage pregnancy. From these viewings, I have found that teenage mothers are actually most often spoken about in two ways; as accidents or as deviants. When dealing with working and middle class white populations, teenage pregnancy is seen as an accident or mistake, something the girl didn't intend to happen. She was careless and unfortunately that carelessness led to an infant. On the other hand, it seems to be assumed that Black and Hispanic young women have made intentional decisions to stray from the norm; they are deviants. These women are often over sexualized in societal views and thus can't help but have sex, which *of course* leads to pregnancy.

Script Writer: Is this just in film or have you seen this in other areas of your literature review?

Advocate: Yes, in fact, young mothers of color in contemporary culture, the media, public policy, academic settings, and in scholarly writings are often referred to in disrespectful and derogatory manners (Ferguson, 2001; Kaplan, 1997; Kelly, 2000; Luker, 1996; Luttrell, 2003). For many who fear change or breakdown in traditional family structures, pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers “represent adolescent female sexuality out of control” (Kelly, 2000, p. 25), as rebellion against authority, and as both the cause and the effect of poverty (Kaplan, 1997; Kelly,

2000). These teenage mothers (with or without a partner) and their children, are rarely even recognized formally as families. There may be potential benefits to society in re-examining and redirecting societies' pervasive negative attitudes about teen parents.

Script Writer: Tell me some of the benefits society might gain by reframing teenage pregnancy.

Advocate: Well, although the United States has witnessed a dramatic decline in the rate of births to teenagers since the early 1990s (Philliber et al, 2003; Sadler et al, 2007) there has been an influx of news and televisions shows focusing on teenage pregnancy. This has led the public to believe we have an epidemic on our hands and in some sense we do.

Script Writer: How so?

Advocate: There is some indication that the ethnicity of the mother is associated with birth rates for teenagers. Nationally, White adolescents have considerably lower birth rates, 39.3 per 1000, than do Black adolescents, 106.7 per 1000, or Hispanic adolescents, 99.3 per 1000 (Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1998; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). These numbers are drastically different and are enough cause for alarm.

Script Writer: Okay, but what does this have to do with your movie script?

Advocate: I want to write a movie about 'the pregnant teen' as not deviant because I don't think deviant is an accurate portrayal of the pregnant teen. Many scholars, such as Deutscher, Fewell and Gross (2006), Jenkins, Shapka, and Sorenson (2006), Chang and Fine (2007), Somers (2006), Out and Lafreniere (2001), and Thomas and Dimitrov (2007) have discussed teenage pregnancy in a manner that addresses the women as problems. These scholars tend to look at pregnancy prevention, behavior management, and child outcomes, and all as a deficit in some way to society. A different group of scholars (Hallman, 2007; Kaplan, 1997; Kelly, 2000; Luker, 1996; Luttrell, 2000; Pillow, 1997; Sadler et al, 2007; Zachry, 2005) have been working to

address this negative description. These scholars have tried to show a different side of the teenage mother by talking directly to these women to tell their stories. The idea that teenage women who have children are purposefully *trying* to go against the norm of society is the very idea that I am trying to combat.

Script Writer: Let's go back to an earlier question. How do you think your project will benefit society at large?

Advocate: Research literature cites a number of reasons for changing birth rate patterns in teenagers. Among these reasons are changing policies regarding prevailing "common sense" discourses such as welfare reform (Amin & Ahmed, 2004; Kelly, 2000; Moffitt, 2008), lack of high school completion (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Kilgore, Snyder, & Lentz, 2000), intergenerational poverty (Chapman, 2003; Eamon, 2001; Kaplan, 1997) and lack of contraception use or misuse of contraception (Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1998; Kelly, 2000).

Script Writer: So, wait a minute, is your goal in writing this script actually to lessen the welfare burden on society by encouraging people to accept teenager mothers into schools and making it easier for them to remain in school?

Advocate: No. My goal is to help people see these women as possibility rather than problem. Keeping welfare oriented language, intergenerational poverty, and lack of high school completion in the forefront of teenage pregnancy literature, oversimplifies the issue and situates the pregnant teenager as the problem.

Script Writer: You keep saying problem. Can you talk to me a little more about this idea of how welfare reform as a discourse constructs the teenager as problem?

Advocate: Welfare reform seems to be a prevailing discourse when talking about teenage mothers but this is a problem because it further demonizes the teenage mother. Society begins to

say, “You aren’t really a part of society because you are a drain on society.” When actually, pregnant teenagers and teenagers who are mothers *are* a part of society and labeling them as deviants does not help them ‘succeed’ in life.

I really want to advocate for the individual and I’m not compelled by prevailing discourses of welfare reform and burdens on society. All they do is further perpetuate a deficit orientation to teenage moms. That is actually not accurate or helpful to the teenage mother and the broader issue.

Script Writer: By ‘succeed’ you mean what exactly?

Advocate: Good question. Let me start by talking about how the pregnant teenager is defined and then let that lead into my answer.

In general, The Pregnant Teenager (aka Deviant) is defined as poor and not white. She doesn’t care if she has a child, is, herself, an accident (in society’s eyes), is over sexualized and is reactive.

Script Writer: Reactive?

Advocate: Yes, reactive in the sense that middle class white children think through things and occasionally make mistakes. The typical Deviant doesn’t think through things—they just do. So when someone wants to have sex, they do so because it feels right in the moment. White teenagers may accidentally have sex but they generally don’t and so they actively think about the situations they get into.

Script Writer: I’m a little confused because this seems to be the opposite of what you have been saying about the pregnant teenager.

Advocate: Okay, let me try again. In society, the poor black teenager is seen as sexually active while her white peer is not. The poor black teen does not protect herself even though she is sexually active while her white peer is assumed to not be having sex—so why would she need to worry about protecting herself?. If the white teenager gets pregnant, she didn't plan ahead because sex is out of the question and this instance is abnormal. An accident, while her black peer almost *planned* to get pregnant. The reactive part is that she is pregnant, so oh well, let's get on with it.

But because this is the view of society, teenage women are at a disadvantage when they are from low income backgrounds and are from minority ethnicities. A scholar, Kelly (2000), whom I've read recently, expresses concern that not only are the teenagers labeled stupid for not protecting themselves from pregnancy but they are also labeled sluts, tramps and whores because they are sexually active (Kaplan, 1997). On the other hand teenagers from middle class incomes are seen as women who made a mistake and because of that mistake have a pregnancy to deal with but they are not classified by said pregnancy.

Wendy Luttrell (2003) explains this as not only making wrong choices, but that teenage mothers are also *wrong-girls*. This wrong-girl discourse gives a false understanding of how isolation, poor relationship, and the lack of support are created by cultural factors and social conditions at an important turning point in the lives of teenage women (Kaplan, 1997; Luttrell, 2003).

Script Writer: Now that I have us off course, let's get back to "succeed" and what you mean by that.

Advocate: A successful person is one that completes high school, goes on to complete at least four years of higher education, then finds a mate, marries and finally has a child. Anything outside of that order is unsuccessful for the person as well as society.



Script Writer: So, not only do we need to prevent teenage pregnancy but we also need to push teenagers to wait until marriage to have sex and reproduce children?

Advocate: Exactly! Pillow (2006) talks about societal desire to keep sexuality away from teenagers and suggests that the presence of pregnant teenagers is a contamination issue. The presence of a pregnant student in a school setting is a constant reminder to administrators, teachers, and students that sexual encounters do happen in young women. The fear is that the pregnancy will then “rub off” onto other students who otherwise would have refrained from becoming sexually active (Pillow, 2006).

Script Writer: How does this affect education?

Advocate: A logical choice for some of these young mothers is that they stay in school because they see this path as a way to cement a foundation from where they can be successful later in life. There are, in fact, many teenage mothers who are successful and who pursue their degrees to create a better future for themselves and their children (Gilbert, 2007; Hallman, 2007; Orthner & Randolph, 1999; Philliber et al., 2003). Unfortunately, the majority of researchers fail to address these positive examples of teenage mothers and so society at large does not hear about these positive outcomes.

Script Writer: But how does this encourage teenagers to remain in school? And how does it encourage educators and society to support them while they are in school?

Advocate: Some consider it a concern that the mere presence of pregnant women in the classroom or school will prompt discussions on sexuality and that pregnant women should be separated not only for the safety of the school but for their own as well. Kelly noted that separating pregnant teenagers from teenagers who were not pregnant was seen as a way to protect them from being labeled as outcast when in reality this only upholds that stereotype.

It is often thought by society at large that teenagers who become pregnant are likely to drop out of school and not return. This is typically true when looking at the larger population of pregnant teenagers but there are many who do return and complete high school (Gilbert, 2007; Hallman, 2007; Luttrell, 2003; Orthner & Randolph, 1999; Pillow, 1999; Philliber et al., 2003). It happens that many teenage mothers are redefining their meanings of education through their responsibilities as mothers (Sadler et al, 2007; Zachry, 2005).

Although many students who are interested in continuing their education delay pregnancy because they view education as a means to a successful adult life (Luker, 1996; Kaplan, 1997; Kelly, 2000; Zachry, 2005), some students who have had children do return to school with the intent to prevent a lifelong dependency on governmental assistance (Zachry, 2005). By completing their high school education mothers are less likely to rely on welfare (Moffit, 2008).

Script Writer: Hmm. I guess remaining in school not only offers teenage mothers the opportunity to continue to learn, prepare for young adulthood, and increase the opportunity for economic success but it also keeps them and their children in daily contact with a community which is able to provide emotional support along with health services and even child care (Luker, 1996; Luttrell, 2003; Pillow, 2006; Sadler et al, 2007).

Advocate: Right. Although not all actually take advantage of these opportunities, but at least the prospect is better than not having any opportunity in education.

Script Writer: How can knowing this affect education?

Advocate: A school in which pregnant teenagers are enrolled that works to reassign identity to the young women who attended their school shows that there is potential for high school completion among those women who are pregnant or parenting. If the school saw these teenagers as learners—mothers and adolescents would be engaged in life in social ways that

helped them build their own understandings of self (Hallman, 2007). This points to the importance of schools creating effective learning environments for students who are mothering or preparing to mother.

Reconsidering the identities of students can begin to bridge the gap between understanding those students who have been labeled *at-risk* and foster curriculums that can best serve the pregnant and parenting teenage population (Hallman, 2007; Luttrell, 2003; Pillow, 2004). It is important to view the teen as a multifaceted being: mother, learner, adolescent, developing personality. This is critical for schools and society who are involved in the lives and futures of these teens. Not only, then, do we need to view the teen as multifaceted but we must also view the family as multifaceted. These mothers and children are in fact, part of a family regardless of what their make-up is: mother-child; mother, father, child; grandparent, mother, child; married father and mother, child; father (living with parents), mother (living with parents), child living with grandparents. This is only the beginning of a long list of possibilities.

Script Writer: WOW! I guess you have really thought this through.

Advocate: Of course, this is my life right now!

Script Writer: I want to move back to something earlier in our conversation. The deviant.

Advocate: Okay, I'll talk about schools and the deviant. Schools that educate teenage parents and pregnant teens challenge the negative notions of educating teens who are usually considered 'deviant' to show that these schools are helpful to society because they are encouraging students to continue their education which will help them form lives that are free of welfare dependency. Several researchers believe that schools are the main cause of dropout for teenage mothers because of inflexible policies, which force pregnant teenagers to leave school (Hallman, 2007; Kaplan, 1997; Kelly, 2000; Luker, 1996; Zachry, 2005). Even though these policies were

outlawed in 1972, many schools continue to force teenage mothers and pregnant teens out of schools and into alternative settings (Lesko, 1995; Pillow, 2006).

Script Writer: Really, the law requires that the pregnant teen be taught in her home school?

Advocate: Well, it actually states that pregnant teens cannot be forced to leave school or to even move to an alternative setting. It must be the teenager's idea or desire to find another school setting.

Script Writer: It does seem that this law isn't followed by schools today. The right to a public school education is such a common understanding for all people that it is a basic right or liberty of living in the United States of America (Harrison, 1972). This educational right should go beyond the realm of termination for any reason that does not affect the schooling of others so long as the student, her peers, and/or school staff are not in danger of physical harm. This right to a public education is a natural right that belongs to all children and should not be restricted for anyone regardless of the reason. So, teenagers who are pregnant should also be given that right to an education and should not have their reputation tarnished in a way that interferes with this education (Harrison, 1972).

Advocate: It's true, I couldn't have said it better myself. Although, lack of interest in school before pregnancy is cited as the main cause of school dropout (Kaplan, 1997; Kelly, 2000; Luker, 1996; Zachry, 2005), one of the main reasons for early dropout is actually that school administrators and faculty are not supportive of the academic endeavors of pregnant teenagers. Pregnant women speak of "overwhelming disorganization and inability to create a constructive learning environment" within their schools (Zachry, 2005, p. 2580). They also discuss teachers who were unable or unwilling to help them learn especially when they were struggling to understand the material being presented (Hallman, 2007; Luttrell; Zachry, 2005).

Through studying teenage pregnancy I've seen that teenage parents were very interested in completing school so their children would know how important schooling was to them (Zachry, 2005). Although they noted they originally left school because they were pregnant or had a child, these teens also all returned because of their children (Zachry, 2005). It was important to them to complete school so that they could get a better job and in turn provide a more financially stable life for their children. One mother said, "If I hadn't gotten pregnant I wouldn't still be in school; I'm here for my baby" (Luttrell, 2003, p. 21). Being a good role model was important to these mothers. They believed that if their children saw them in school or knew that they had completed school they would be more likely to stay in school as well (Hallman, 2007; Kaplan, 1997; Kelly, 2000; Luttrell, 2003; Zachry, 2005). The women believed themselves to be responsible because they were modeling interest in school and encouraging their children to be interested in education also. They couldn't understand why others are so against them and consider them to be troublemakers.

Script Writer: What does the literature say about this?

Advocate: Many, including Luker (1996) would agree with this view of education for all. She and others also believe that the basic rights of some people have been taken long before they have even made a choice about how to live their lives (e.g., Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Due to unalterable life events such as premature birth and poverty of the child born to many teenage mothers, there is a question of the child's chances for survival and success. In fact, Aikens and Barbarin (2008), Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, Klebanov (1994), and Gutman and Midgley (1999), along with Luker express the concern that some believe the child born to a teenager has had his natural rights violated and that he is destined to failure even though he may show a vivid imagination and ability at a young age.

Luker (1996) discusses the thoughts that teenage mothers are simply too young and immature to make wise decisions for themselves and their children. Their choices then result in harm to both the teenagers themselves and their child. They can both be considered victims in this view; however, this belief often takes all of the responsibility from the teenage woman leaving her with no consequences for her actions (Luker, 1996). “It denies her the status of full personhood, exempting her from the obligations of being a moral actor held accountable for the choices she makes” (Luker, 1996, p. 4), and these actions may place the teenager in a position of having her choices made for her by those who feel they are working in her best interest (Luker, 1996). Adding to this argument Luttrell (2003) says that the education of teenage mothers has been fashioned as a responsibility of the teenager rather than a basic human right. Even though the law created through Title IX identifies education as a right, much of the responsibility remains with the teenager. Thoughts such as “do it for your baby,” “you got yourself into this mess and now you’re going to get yourself out of it by getting an education,” “tough love,” and even “you are responsible for more than yourself now” often take the place of any special curriculum designed for teenage mothers (*Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Luttrell, 2003; Sadler et al., 2007*). Luttrell (2003) further addresses this ‘your responsibility’ idea as well as the lack of curricular support, or administrative support, when she discusses the “adversarial ‘official’ messages ... and the not-so-subtle everydayness of regulation” in the school where she did her study (p. xvi). For example, Luttrell, along with others (see Fine, 1991; Musick, 1993; Kaplan, 1997; Kelly, 1997; Luker (1996); Zachry, 2005) believed simple things such as desks that are too-small for pregnant bodies position pregnant teenagers as wrong girls and misfits to the school society and that this positioning is somewhat a direct result of administrative influence.

Script Writer: Do you think the idea that teenage pregnancy, as a result of *low morals and poor values*, has encouraged the need to control this *epidemic*?

Advocate: Ha, ha! Actually, epidemic might not be the right term since teen pregnancy is the lowest in decades. When studying teen pregnancy, other scholars have found that it is more important to focus on structural and demographic changes within the United States (Kozol, 1994; Wilson, 1996; Zachry, 2005).

The change in the economy has resulted in the loss of jobs in low-income communities, which in turn creates a “sense of hopelessness” which is seen as a cause for the ‘increase’ in teen pregnancy and “diminished educational success.” Kozol (1994), Wilson (1996), and Zachry (2005) argue that the problem of teenage pregnancy can be solved by investing in low-income, inner-city communities and creating economic opportunities.

Script Writer: Is there really that much of a benefit when teenage mothers complete their education?

Advocate: Let me read you a quote from an article I’ve been reading. The article is from the Journal of School Health. I think I marked it, “oh”. Here it is on page 122. According to Sadler and colleagues, “there are improved outcomes for both teen mothers and their children if the young mothers are able to remain in school and complete their high school education, which places them in a better position to prepare for college, specialized training, or employment” (Sadler et al, 2007, p. 122).

Script Writer: So...

Advocate: So, yes. There are definite benefits for both the mothers and their children. When teen mothers stay in school they are less likely to have additional births during their adolescent years. Their children have better developmental, social and behavioral growth. They, the parents, are

also more likely to have higher economic status than their peers who drop out of school. And although, childcare is a major issue for teenage parents who do try to continue attending high school, some programs, such as Early Head Start and Right Start, are beginning to show outcomes that look promising for teenage mothers and their children (Sadler et al, 2007).



## CHAPTER 2 DEVIANT, ACCIDENT, OR ??



### CLIP--INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE – AFTERNOON—Poisonous

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/13494/591361368.mov>

Poisonous: After all, Juno is in a “blended” family. She is not prepared to be a mother when she still needs to be mothered.

Struggle: WOW!

Advocate: Poisonous environment? It’s not so simple. What makes a poisonous environment? A 16 year old mother? A father (Mark) who doesn’t want a baby? A mother (Vanessa) who wants a baby so badly that she will stay in an unhappy relationship in order to have what she cannot “have” on her own?

Smugly Do-Right: Well, it is just flat out wrong to have sex before marriage!

**CLIP--EXT. WOMEN'S CHOICE CLINIC – DAY—SuChin**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/12321/841633675.mov>

Smugly Do-Right: Ugh!! This whole scene makes me sick. How could she even consider going to an abortion clinic. I'm so glad she ran away as fast as she could!

Poisonous: I am surprised that she didn't go through with it. But I guess the producer had a different agenda altogether.

Advocate: What do you mean?

Poisonous: There is obviously a political agenda here.

Advocate and Smugly Do-Right: [together] What?

Advocate: I felt no particular pull towards any political statement. In fact, I saw this as a scene with a girl trying to have an abortion but realizing that she wasn't able to go through with ending the life of her unborn child.

Poisonous: Come on! This is obviously trying to sell a very political propaganda! It seems that the purpose of this scene is to show how horrible abortion is and that no one would choose to follow through with an abortion if they were given clear facts. In fact, Juno seems quite comfortable walking up to the clinic and even talking about the abortion with Leah much earlier. It isn't until Su-Chin's announcement that Juno's baby has fingernails that Juno begins to question her decision. Su-Chin triggers an 'over-awareness' to the use of fingernails in the clinic.

Smugly Do-Right: No way!! No way!! They are obviously saying that abortion is okay by even showing the clinic in the first place.

Advocate: Hmmmm, Daisy you are awfully quite. What are you thinking?

Daisy Freelove: I'm just watching and listening to everything.

Advocate: Well, I've never looked at it like this Poisonous. It just seems that Juno has a sense of responsibility to "nip it in the bud" before it leads to an infant. She begins to take control of her situation immediately by calling the abortion clinic and "procuring a hasty abortion". The decision about the abortion is her responsibility even though she attempts to get some input from Paulie Bleeker.

Poisonous: Well, it clearly had an effect on her. She can't help but notice the finger nails all over the waiting room! Personally, I don't even mind that this is the purpose of the scene. I think it is a huge understatement of how wrong it is to have an abortion. Culturally, we may say that it is fine but really most people wouldn't agree with abortion.

Advocate: Hmm, I never realized that Juno had been affected by the fingernail comment made by the protestor, Su-Chin. There is a conflict of responsibilities here because Su-Chin, in her own way, is responding to her religious belief that it is her responsibility to stop people from having abortions. By yelling after Juno that her baby had a heart, could feel pain and had fingernails, Su-Chin was trying to let the Juno know that it was her own responsibility to protect her unborn child.

But, Juno seemed to shrug this off. She did seem to be annoyed by all of the people who were there nervously awaiting their turn in the clinic but that is all I saw. Let's watch that clip again. I want to see if it comes across differently this time.

Smugly Do-Right: Wait, you aren't falling for this bit are you?

Advocate: Let's just watch the clip again!

**SUChin**

(calling out)

Juno! Your baby probably has a beating heart, you know. It can feel pain.

And it has fingernails.

**JUNO**

Really? Fingernails?

She considers the concept, then pushes open the clinic door.

**INT. WOMEN'S CHOICE CLINIC - RECEPTION – DAY**

The receptionist sits behind a pane of bulletproof glass. The waiting room is semi-crowded, occupied mostly by pregnant women, teens and ill-behaved children.

**PUNK RECEPTIONIST**

Welcome to Women's Choice, where women are trusted friends. Please put your hands where I can see them and surrender any bombs.

Juno flashes her best jazz hands.

**JUNO**

Hi. I'm here for the big show?

**PUNK RECEPTIONIST**

Your name, please?

**JUNO**

Juno MacGuff.

...

She takes a seat in the WAITING ROOM and rifles through a pile of old magazines.

The magazine selection is lots of "mommy mags" and health related periodicals. She selects an issue of Family Digest and gingerly flips through for a few moments. Then she looks over and notices the FINGERNAILS of a nearby teen, who looks as nervous as she does. The girl bites her thumbnail and spits it onto the floor. Juno looks away, but immediately notices another waiting woman, who absently scratches her arm with long fake nails. Suddenly, she sees fingernails EVERYWHERE. The receptionist clicks her nails on the front desk. Another woman blows on her fresh manicure. Everyone seems to be fidgeting with their fingers somehow. Juno suddenly looks terror-stricken...

Poisonous: Well?

Daisy Freelove: Huh, it always fascinates me to listen to all the different views on abortion. There is no way to know what everyone else really thinks. In fact, Poisonous, I know quite a few people who have no problem with abortion and wouldn't hesitate to follow through if that was what was right for them at that moment and I do agree with Poisonous about the purpose of this scene. It makes me angry to watch because I feel certain that Cody intended to change popular opinion or that she intended to please a certain right wing group. IT just makes me very angry!

Advocate: Although my initial interpretations led me to believe that abortion was simply a choice placed before Juno, which she ultimately did not choose, your comments have me reconsidering. Poisonous, I think you have disturbed my view point here! My new interpretation of this scene has me thinking that this scene *is* actually selling a very political propaganda.

[Director's Notes] There are several reasons Cody might have included this scene. There are three possible audiences that Cody could be talking to about abortion. The first audience likely does not support abortion and may even have desires to end a woman's

right to have abortions. Su-Chin's chant of 'All babies want to get borned!' and her sign that says 'no babies like murdering' send a clear message that abortion is wrong. Her final cry of 'God and your baby thank you' as Juno flees the clinic seems to point out one of the main reasons many in this group are opposed to abortions.

The second could be to show that the choice to abort is in the story line. Attempting to please those who believe that choice should remain open to women and that no other person can make that choice for you.

So, the ideologues would say that abortion is bad, abortion is good. But it is likely that most people fall somewhere in between these two discourses. Many of us might believe in a woman's right to choose but hope she is never in a situation where she has to wrestle with that choice. It is possible that Cody is using this scene to poke fun at something that is so politically charged in our society. For instance, the waiting room table in this abortion clinic has "mommy mags" on it as a way to bring humor in to deliver us some relief from what is a contentious, possibly explosive situation.

Daisy Freelove: I guess I shouldn't keep you in the dark anymore. I had an abortion several years ago and would do it again if it was necessary for the timing in my life.

Stunned silence from Poisonous and Smugly Do-Right.

Advocate: I was wondering when you were going to bring this up. I think it adds a whole other level to your thoughts on teen pregnancy.

Daisy Freelove: I'm not sure why.

Smugly Do-Right: Wha, how do you, I mean [deep breath] why? You talk about it so casually.

Like it was no big deal.

Daisy Freelove: It *was* no big deal. I wasn't ready to have a baby. I couldn't have supported it and so I aborted it.

Poisonous: Well, obviously it still bothers you.

Daisy Freelove: No. It doesn't. I feel no remorse or loss.

Poisonous: Bullshit. I'm calling your bluff. That is bullshit.

Advocate: Hey, come on now. It is *possible* that she is telling the truth.

Daisy Freelove: *Possible*? That is offensive to. Don't try to help me out.

Advocate: I didn't mean it to be offensive. I meant it to be sarcastic. Like there are people other than Poisonous and so there are many different views and feelings associated with many different things.

Daisy Freelove: Oh, well okay. And Poisonous, you can think anything you want. You can say it isn't true. *Whatever*. It isn't an issue for me. There are tons of people who have abortions and don't have any negative feelings or anything!

In fact, "*compared with young women who became pregnant before age 21 but did not seek an abortion, young women who had an abortion had significantly better outcomes on six out of 10 measures spanning education, income, welfare dependence and domestic violence*" (Fergusson, JBoden, & Horwood, 2012).

Poisonous: That can't be true! They always say that the emotional repercussions are so high and dramatic. Even the US Supreme Court says that is true. They said that is why women shouldn't have late term abortions (Charles, Polis, Sridhara, & Blum2008). So it has to be true!

Daisy Freelove: Okay, so maybe you need to get your facts straight. Did you hear this all word of mouth or did you actually do the research and read it because even though many claim that there is clear emotional harm, there is no empirical evidence. In fact, most high quality studies show

that there is no difference between those who abort and those who don't (Charles, Polis, Sridhara, & Blum, 2008).

Advocate: I read that, too. Didn't the US Surgeon General even write a letter to Reagan about this? I think he said that after looking through hundreds of articles about emotional symptoms evidence of" the data do not support the premise that abortion does or does not cause or contribute to psychological problems" (Koop, 1989)

Daisy Frelove: Yea, that was huge because he used to be a huge antiabortion supporter.

Smugly Do-Right: Is that real?

Poisonous: Oh, come on! You could probably find just as much literature on the other side that that argues that those who have abortions do have an emotionally negative effect.

Advocate: I'm not sure if we will ever be able to get Poisonous to look at this differently! Maybe we should move on!

Daisy Frelove: Yea, you're probably right. Let's talk about how Juno tells her parents that she is pregnant. I think this is so telling of who her parents are and how she is loved regardless of her actions. Actions don't make the person. The person makes the actions. Sometimes we make good choices. Sometimes we don't. That's all!

### **Telling Mac and Bren**

Advocate: OH! Struggle, I'm so glad you could make it! Come on in, and make yourself at home! We are just about to start talking about this next bit of the movie. You haven't missed much but you did say you've seen it so you will catch up quickly!

**Clip--INT. MACGUFF HOUSE - LIVING ROOM – AFTERNOON—I'm Pregnant**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/4236/251431031.mov>



Advocate: This is one of my favorite scenes in the movie. I have so many thoughts about what is happening here.

Smugly Do-Right: Do tell.

Advocate: When thinking about power in this moment, it seems that Juno is trying to stay in control, trying to prove that she is the one with all the power in this situation and yet she still has to tell her parents that she is pregnant and doesn't want them to kill her.

Poisonous: They should kill her!

Smugly Do-Right: Agreed!

Daisy Freelove: Why? Haven't you ever made mistakes? I mean, come on! Everyone makes mistakes at times.

Poisonous: No! Not this big of a mistake!

Smugly Do-Right: Not this mistake. I waited until I was good and married before I had intercourse. I think she did everything wrong here especially being intimate in this way before she was married.

Daisy Freelove: I'm not even talking about her having sex being the mistake. I was talking about not being prepared and even not using a condom. And I don't even know if you can call the pregnancy a mistake. Look at how she grew and learned from the experience!

Poisonous: She didn't learn anything. She went right back to her old ways!

Advocate: Okay, we are way off track here. Let's get back to the scene we just watched. As I was saying before, this entire situation creates a very awkward binary. The parent-child binary has been disrupted because she is not only a child, but also now a parent. The parent is in control and the child is trying to resist, but she is kept with the parent role as privileged—which confuses everything because Juno is also becoming a mother. She is caring for her unborn child as a

parent and yet still being parented by her dad and step-mother. There are two parents talking to each other about their children but there is also the parent-child dynamic at play.

Daisy Freelove: Oh! Yes! I see that and think the parent-child binary is fascinating!

Smugly Do-Right: Huh?

Advocate: Sorry! Like I said this is one of my favorite scenes and I get all into academic talk!

Tell me what you guys think is happening here.

Daisy Freelove: No, I agree. Once I got past the abortion clinic and fell into the movie, I found this to be a very provocative scene. There is so much going on and yet we have to “suss out” the situation ourselves. It would be interesting to hear what y’all think about it.

Struggle: When I found out I was pregnant, I was real scared. I think I am a lot like Juno in that way. She did a bunch of tests and so did I. I just couldn’t believe I was pregnant. She’s different than me because I never even thought about having a abortion. I don’t believe in them and neither do my family. It just isn’t something we do. We all just started planning and getting ready because we knew a baby was coming and we’d have to take care of it. My momma, my granmomma, my sister, my daddy. We all knew we’d have to take care of it. Abortion, it just wasn’t an option.

Daisy Freelove: Is that something you believe or is it what your parents believe for you?

Struggle: What? No, I believe that. I don’t need nobody to tell me how I feel!

Smugly Do-right: Well, you are a *little girl* and you are talking about being pregnant. I can’t believe you’re even talking as if it isn’t bad. So I might not actually call you a bad girl but I would have guessed without looking that you were black, poor and irresponsible. Who else would be pregnant in this town? These girls just don’t think and they give up their bodies so quickly and easily. Some of them are even having sex when they are thirteen!! Why would I not

think of you poorly? Maybe I am just naive but I don't know any kids that go to school with my children who are pregnant and I'm sure none of them are having sex.

Struggle: Whoa! You don't even know me. I am not a little girl! How can you judge me? And Lady, I guarantee that many of the kids in school with your kids are having sex. Maybe even your own!

[look of pure shock on Smugly Do-Rights face]

Poisonous: Unfortunately, Struggle is probably right. I mean, come on. There were so many kids having sex even when we were kids.

Smugly Do-Right: What? Not in my school.

### **ULTRASOUND TECH**

I just see a lot of teenage mothers  
come through here. It's obviously a  
poisonous environment for a baby to  
be raised in.

Smugly Do-right: I guess. I didn't think about her seeing a lot of pregnant teens. That ultrasound lady is right, though! It is for the best and 'thank goodness' Juno realized that-- but most teenagers these days, have one, keep it, and keep having more. To have a baby when she can't even support herself shows that she is not putting that baby first. How do you think you're going to raise it in a positive environment, Struggle?

Struggle: I didn't know what I was gonna do. I felt like I was doing the right thing. The 'responsible' thing. I was pregnant and planned to keep my baby and people still thought I was a mess. They thought I was bad and making bad choices (Luttrell) because I was keeping my baby; but if I threw it away in some clinic I would be making bad choices still. There wasn't anything I

could do that was right. I mean how many of you could have that baby in your belly for all that time and then just give it away? I sure couldn't and if that makes me a bad person well, then I'm a bad person.

Advocate: It does *not* make you a bad person. And it doesn't make those who choose differently bad people either.

Daisy Freelove: You made your choice. I made mine. I was much older than you when I got pregnant. I was married and just not in a place to support myself, let alone a child. I think I made an educated decision and I feel no regret. People should worry more about themselves so that others can just live their lives. I did tell my parents but it wasn't their decision. It was mine and my husband's just like ultimately the decision falls on Juno.

### **JUNO**

But I'm going to give it up for adoption. I already found the perfect people.

Leah presents the Penny Saver photos of the Loring's.

### **JUNO**

They say they're going to pay my medical expenses and everything. I promise this will all be resolved in thirty-odd weeks, and we can pretend it never happened.

### **MAC**

You're pregnant?



### CLIP---JUNO-I'm Sorry

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/21147/189292814.mov>

Poisonous: I can't believe they are able to laugh about even the slightest bit of this. They have a pregnant daughter and this is how they handle it? Crazy if you ask me!

Advocate: Do you think the laughter could really be a sense of comedic relief to a situation that could end up being a very difficult time for their daughter. I mean some people handle stress with laughter.

Struggle: I know when I told my parents everything changed for me *and* my family. We could have used some laughter! My mom got so mad that she moved out. I guess she doesn't care at all. She left all the responsibility on me and now she doesn't even take responsibility for her own children! I'm okay though 'cause I do *got* my dad. So *she* got mad but my dad said that it was OK. He took care of me when I was sick and made sure I had the doctor visit. My dad makes sure we have food and clothes. It is hard 'cause I cook and clean for him and take care of him and my brothers and the baby but he *do* care. Even if *she* don't.

Smugly Do-right: I am soooo glad that it isn't my child. My girls would *never* do that! I would fall apart and cry my eyes out if one of them came home and told me that they were pregnant! I'm not so sure I would behave as calmly as Mac did! I mean he didn't even raise his voice and his daughter was telling him about having a *good* sexual encounter! I mean, really.



Daisy Freelove: Never say never!! You might be surprised by what your daughters do.

Advocate: I don't mean to insult you, Smugly, but it is interesting to me that parents in today's world can still be so naïve. I had friends who were very sexually active and their parents were completely oblivious. The parents believed them to be pure and innocent and sometimes when they discovered that their kids were engaging in sex they even blamed that sexual activity on other random things.

Poisonous: My parents still have no idea that I was sexually active when I was a kid. Heck, nobody but my boyfriend and me knows for sure. I even deny this to my younger sister and I'm in my late forties!

**MAC**

Did you say you were thinking about adoption?

**BREN**

Junebug, that is a tough, tough thing to do. Probably tougher than you can understand right now.

**JUNO**

Well, I'm not ready to be a mom.

**MAC**

Damn skippy, you're not! You don't even remember to give Liberty Bell her breathing meds.

**JUNO**

Once! And she didn't die, if you recall!

**BREN**

First things first, we have to get you healthy. You need prenatal vitamins. Incidentally, they'll do incredible things for your nails, so that's a plus. Oh, and we need to schedule a doctor's appointment. Find out where you're going to deliver.

**JUNO**

The term "deliver" is so weird. Can we not say "deliver"?

**LEAH**

How does "crap it out" sound?

**MAC**

Juno, I want to come with you to meet these adoption people. You're just a kid.

I don't want you to get ripped off by a couple of baby starved wing nuts.

**JUNO**

Sure, Dad.

Advocate: I love how supportive Mac is—even through his disappointment. We see Mac taking responsibility for Juno. He wants to protect her from harm even though he feels she has harmed herself. This is another intersection where the parent-child/parent dichotomy becomes blurred. He knows that she is trying to take care of the ‘mistake’ she made but she still needs Dad to protect her. He loves her enough to go with her.

**Clip--MAC-What Kind of Girl I Am**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/11868/930265913.mov>

Poisonous: I'm beginning to see the dichotomy you have been talking about Advocate. Juno struggles to take control and stay in control which is evident in her pacing, wringing her hands and hesitance to tell her folks about the pregnancy. But when she does tell them everything spills out like a waterfall that won't stop until the water is all gone! Juno shows them that this is how it is going to be; I found this great couple, they are going to adopt the baby, I'm in control, I've got everything figured out, you don't have to worry about a thing. When she finally pulls ‘off the band aide’ she hears the disappointment her father feels toward her when he states “Boy, I thought you were a girl who knew when to say when.” Juno hangs her head and says, “I don't really know what kind of girl I am.”

Advocate: Yea, this is a scene where she is acting as if, and probably is in some sense, an adult, she is caring for herself (and her child) in an adult manner and yet at the same time she is still



trying to figure out who she is, not only in this moment but also who she is going to be. A pregnant teen? A mom? A girl? A student? Who will she be?

Smugly Do-right: It's like when we were looking at Mac and you said that you didn't even know who you were. Aren't we all trying to figure out who we will be in the future as well as who we are now? I get her here, too!

Advocate: I am always trying to figure out what I think during this scene. These thoughts of insecurities that we are talking about, including my own, make me think about Juno in a different way as a pregnant teen. When I first felt the sorrow shown by both Mac and Juno in this scene (after many viewings) it changed the way I viewed the entire movie. I have a different view of the movie because in my original viewing I didn't have such a strong emotion and just stepped right over that scene with her other witty, breezy attitude. The writers may have offered up or desired for these emotions to be felt but it wasn't important to me at the time. Now, I don't see her quick tongue as non-caring or even un-concern but more as a coping mechanism.

Poisonous: Coping mechanisms? Huh? I think she just doesn't have any concern at all. She really just doesn't care.

Advocate: Well, now see the entire movie as Juno struggling through her own ordeal, trying to make sense of her new being. Still trying to figure out who she is as a person and now as a pregnant woman and still wanting to be a 16 year old teenager who doesn't need this power and doesn't want to have that kind of control. In every conversation that she has after this scene this new way of thinking kind of grabs on to me and changes my views of the sharp wit Juno uses throughout the movie.

This reminds me of when Juno and her dad have gone to meet the Loring and the lawyer to discuss the adoption. She seems almost flippant. She says, I'm just 16, I'm just a kid, I don't

know how to deal with this baby but at the same time she is very serious when she is talking about the future for the child. She doesn't need money or any kind of payment she just wants the baby to have a good home with parents that *love* and care for it and to care-fully raise it.

Daisy Freelove: Yea, I can tell there that she also put a lot of thought into giving the baby up for adoption. She gets *really* serious when she is talking about the baby; even in all her care-less talk she shows her need to parent and have the baby parented well. She knows what she is doing and seems to feel comfortable with her decision.

**Clip--EXT. LORING HOUSE - FRONT PORCH – DAY-Vanessa Vanessa**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/28526/926792893.mov>

Poisonous: We begin to see some of the poison that I've been talking about setting in here. The sarcasm not only makes it clear that Mac thinks Juno has not behaved responsibly but it also shows the lack of respect for her in front of new people.

Advocate: Yea, even though he is helping her deal with her own child and she has been responsible enough to find these adoptive parents. But I don't think Mac wants to make it known that he has an 'irresponsible child' just that he is uncomfortable with the situation.

Struggle: I get this all the time!

Smugly Do-Right: He is the father of the daughter who will birth their future child which might make Vanessa happy but Mac's statement shows his disappointment. Finally we are seeing him get a back bone.

Poisonous: Mac isn't getting a backbone here. He is undermining Juno in the most disrespectful way which can only result in disrespect from Juno toward him. This sarcasm is the whole reason they are in this mess to begin with!

Advocate: Okay but in the next scene we see that Juno feels very responsible for the child. She is looking for a set of parents who will care for and love her unborn child. She shows this concern in her body language.

Clip--Mac and Juno join Mark and Gerta Rauss on the couch.-A Junior

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/29543/3496799.mov>

Struggle: I get really frustrated with her. When that lady

Advocate: the Lawyer?

Struggle: *the lawyer* asks how far along she is and Juno replies 'I'm a junior.' I think, are you really that stupid? Do you really not know she is asking about the pregnancy?

Advocate: Or does she get it?

Poisonous: She's really just being a smart ass but why?

Smugly Do-Right: Is she trying to cover-up her feelings? Maybe but she probably is just being dumb.

Clip--Vanessa-Lucky Not You

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/16265/91837115.mov>

Advocate: But then this happens and I think yes, she is just a dumb ass. When the adoptive mother says how wonderful it all must be to have that life growing inside of you I start to get emotional.

Daisy Freelove: No, no she is just expressing her true feelings. She does wish it was Vanessa instead of her. She wants people to know that although she made this decision it is still present in her. She still has to go through the pregnancy. This feels like something I would have to work through with others. They are always saying how could you do that? I never could and I think well then, you are lucky it wasn't you. Those people don't really know how much thought I went

through before having the abortion. They don't know that I really don't think of it and it doesn't bother me at all!

Advocate: I hear what you're saying but it goes both ways. Juno responds with, you're lucky it's not you and I think stupid! Here she is saying this to a woman who desperately wants it to be her carrying the baby but she is not physically able. Juno literally doesn't have a clue that her words are so hurtful to Vanessa. This IS a painful situation for Vanessa and people tend to graze over it like it doesn't hurt and make you feel inadequate. I feel for Vanessa here because I am sort of in the same boat. At least I am starting to look into adopting a child in order to fill the void/need to be a mother. Juno has no way of understanding this need.

Stuggle: (rolling eyes) Why does everyone say things like this? I mean, I've always wanted a baby, I just didn't know it would come so soon.

Smugly Do-Right: Adoption? Really? Spill! How far have you gotten in the process? What is next? Are you really going to adopt?

Advocate: Struggle, I guess even in my attempts to change the world, I still get caught up in the societal views! So sorry. I will try to rethink this! Yes, Smugly, there is a lot to tell and I would love to talk about it but let's do that another time. Let's move on to the rest of this scene.

Smugly Do-Right: Fine, but don't think I will forget this!

Poisonous: I want in on that discussion too! I have a lot of opinions on adoption.

### **CLIP—GERTA—Old School**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/25696/734733609.mov>

Poisonous: I think we see Macs lack of parenting skills or at least his poor social skills.

Advocate: I just think he can't believe they are asking if she wants to be paid to have the baby. So I just want to remind you that you were supposed to be looking at Juno's body language. What did you see?

Daisy Freelove: Mac is protectively being the parent in this situation but is confused by the question. Juno catches on quickly, though and resolves it with the following.

**Clip—JUNO-III Equipped**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/20527/547099836.mov>

Smugly Do-Right: I guess she is slouchy which shows a lack of concern or interest.

Struggle: Then she leans in when she talks about the needs of the baby. Like she gets real serious and wants you to know she really means it. That, to me shows that she isn't ill-equipped. I may not be 'old enough' in the eyes of so many but I am a damn good momma to my baby. The know-how is one of those things that just kicks in when you have a baby. And it is okay to get help. How many of you did this without talking and crying for help? None of you!

Advocate: Yea, like she is leaning in because she doesn't want them to miss anything. She wants them to know that she is serious and has a real need for them to hear and understand. Watch what happens next.

**Clip—VANESSA-Sea Biscuit**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/29230/991896218.mov>

Advocate: Here Juno got serious for a few minutes. She talked specifically about the baby as if it was real. Almost immediately she needs to escape from the situation. This is what we were talking about earlier, her avoidance can only last so long before she has to acknowledge this whole thing is real. She quickly removes herself from the stress of it all by going upstairs to the bathroom.

Poisonous: And even having a jam session with the husband. What's up with that?

Smugly Do-Right: She leaves the others to avoid the emotions she is feeling? Hmm.

Advocate: Uh-huh, there is this real quick, witty serious sense to her and also this avoidance of the true situation and then she leaves to forget the real before things get even more serious.

Smulgy: Now that you mention it, the whole conversation with the adoptive parents and the lawyer seems to show Juno trying to avoid, trying to avoid in any way, a connection to what's happening to her; so 'yea of course I'm going to give the baby to you. If I could give it to you right now I would but it needs to cook a little longer!'

Struggle: I'm glad I had the baby. Um, I love this baby soooo much! Even though I could be out playing around with my friends like most teenagers my age, I can't even imagine life without him. I'm shocked that she handles all of this so easily.

Daisy Freelove: I'm not so sure she is avoiding by going to the bathroom but I get the rest of it. She does talk very casually.

Advocate: It makes you wonder doesn't it? I guess this is where things get difficult for me. I want what she has and what I think she is too young to have! I want her beautiful child. I would love to have a baby to look at and see his beautiful smile. Even with all of these thoughts of her being too young, I think she is lucky and how great it is for her to have a child. I sometimes wish I had given in to my desires when I was young and had a child.

Smugly Do-Right: You don't really mean that do you?

Advocate: Don't I? 'Cause here I sit waiting. I think it makes me jealous and envious. Why didn't I do that? Why have I waited so long? It isn't like I haven't had the chance and I *could* be a mom! Anyways, before Juno jumps up to leave we see Juno get praised by Vanessa for her

kindness. She tells Juno that she is “doing an amazing and selfless thing” Which seems to be a rare thing in Juno’s *and* any pregnant teenager’s life.

Struggle: Not many people ever say ‘good for you’ to me. I mean, I’m raising this kid on my own, going to school, and working a job. I think I deserve a little pat on the back!

Advocate: You certainly do!

Daisy Freelove: I’ll give you a good for you, Struggle! You are doing something strong. Not everyone can do what you are doing!

Advocate: Very rarely do we see someone giving Juno praise for her responsible actions in the pregnancy. There are two other specific times that stand out to me and they are both very short quick statements made by someone to her. The first is when Juno is telling Mac and Bren that she is pregnant.

**BREN**

Honey, had you considered, you know,  
the alternative?

Leah and Juno exchange glances.

**JUNO**

No.

**BREN**

Well, you're a brave young lady.  
You're made of stronger stuff than I  
thought. You're a little Viking!

**JUNO**

Cool it.

Poisonous: And Juno is so used to sarcasm that she doesn't even notice that Bren is praising her!

Advocate: The second is when Mark briefly mentions that Juno is unique in the teenage population. He is clearly still surprised by her and her willingness to carry and give away her baby.

**MARK**

You know, not many teenage girls in  
your situation would actually go  
through with this.

**JUNO**

I weighed my options. But after all  
this, I'm glad I didn't, you know,  
get rid of it. I want to have it.

For you guys.

**MARK**

You're something else.

Struggle: More often than not, adults just judge me like so many people do with Juno. You know like the lady in the school office and the ultrasound lady. But there are others I'm sure, even if we don't see them in the movie.

Smugly Do-Right: In fact, we see several situations where she is looked upon as the misguided irresponsible teenager she is, who was reckless and careless with her body resulting in a baby.

Can we watch the scene when Juno is in the office to check-out for an ultrasound?

**CLIP--INT. DANCING ELK SCHOOL - HEAD OFFICE – DAY--Administrator**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/27529/173967731.mov>



Struggle: That lady is so rude! She is worse than a guy looking at boobs! She can't take her eyes off Juno's bump.

Daisy Freeloove: She is also the kind of person who would look that way even if Juno had gotten an abortion.

Poisonous: But her look of condemnation just amuses Juno who smirks as she pulls the slip from the administrators grip. I would expect this from Juno because she thinks all of this is funny!

Smugly Do-Right: Let's watch a short bit of the ultrasound again. The part with the technician watching Juno, Leah, and Bren oohing and ahing over the images they are able to see on the screen.

### **INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON**

SPLOOGE! We see ultrasound goo being squirted onto Juno's exposed pregnant belly. An ULTRASOUND TECHNICIAN is using a Doppler device to view the contents of her burgeoning bump.

Bren and Leah ooh and ahh at the resulting image.

The tech takes measurements and types them into her database.

### **ULTRASOUND TECH**

That's the feet...

### **ALL THREE**

Oooh...

### **ULTRASOUND TECH**

And there's a hand...

The monitor reveals the baby's head.

### **ALL THREE**

(various)

Check that out... No way...

**BREN**

(dreamily)

Would you look at that?

**LEAH**

Check out Baby Big-Head. That kid is  
scary!

**JUNO**

Hey, I'm a sacred vessel. All you've  
got in your belly is Taco Bell!

**LEAH**

Touche.

**JUNO**

(gazing at the monitor)

It is really weird looking. It's  
like it's not even real. I can't  
believe there are saps who actually  
cry at these things.

Juno and Leah look at BREN, who is dabbing her eyes  
discreetly.

**BREN**

What? I'm not made of stone.

**ULTRASOUND TECH**

Well, there we have it. Would you  
like to know the sex?

**LEAH**

Aw, please Junebug?

**JUNO**

No way. No, I definitely don't want  
to know.

**ULTRASOUND TECH**

Planning to be surprised when you  
deliver?

**JUNO**

I want Mark and Vanessa to be  
surprised, and if I know, I won't be  
able to keep myself from telling  
them and ruining the whole thing.

**ULTRASOUND TECH**

(condescending)

Are Mark and Vanessa your friends at  
school?

**JUNO**

No, they're the people who are

adopting the baby.

**ULTRASOUND TECH**

Oh. Well, thank goodness for that.

**BREN**

Wait, what's that supposed to mean?

**ULTRASOUND TECH**

I just see a lot of teenage mothers  
come through here. It's obviously a  
poisonous environment for a baby to  
be raised in.

[Director's Notes: The technician seems to be looking at them in a condescending way. She even appears to be a little short and uninvolved in the process as she is telling them what they are seeing. Her voice is clipped as she shows the hand, feet and head. But everything comes to a boiling point when she makes her feelings known.]



Struggle: I remember my first ultrasound! It was really special and scary all at the same time. My lady was much nicer but I have seen people like this. I wasn't as lucky as Juno because I didn't have my mom or a friend with me. It was just me so I was glad that my lady was nice and supportive. I don't think I would have had the nerve to stand up to her like Juno did if she had been mean. I know I never have before with any of the other mean and ugly people I have had push me around. But anyways, when I heard the heart beating I cried just like Bren! My baby had a thumb in its mouth when we started but he was such a wiggle worm that we couldn't get a good picture.

Smugly Do-right: Do you think a person would actually say that? I do believe she is right to think it is a 'poisonous environment for a baby to be raised in' but I cannot believe that anyone is

so bold as to say it straight out especially with the mother there. That is just going to create an uncomfortable situation!

Daisy Freelove: Of course. I got comments that are even worse than that as I was walking into the abortion clinic. When I came out I could barely get to my car because the protestors were so pushy.

Advocate: But some people will speak these types of thoughts out loud to young mothers or at least in front of them. I have actually heard people speak loudly about teenage moms intentionally so that the mother can hear them and feel shamed. Some people want to be sure that everyone around them has no doubt about their beliefs about teenage pregnancy. It is disrespectful and in reality the one doing the loud talking should be ashamed. My young women talk about the embarrassment and humiliation they have been subjected to in public due to rude people and it just makes me feel a sorrow deep down. I can't change the way people act but I can try to make them more informed about what they are doing and that teenage moms have feelings just like the rest of us! If only everyone could see that often pregnant teens have many responsibilities that they are struggling to take care of including school, health, and family. They are often just searching for acceptance in a society that seems to reject them for their actions.

Struggle: The biggest time that I get the most looks is when I'm in the store and my baby starts to cryin'! Everyone in the store looks at me and gives me mean glares. I can almost hear them saying things about me in their heads and sometimes they actually make ticking noises at me! I just never know what to do when that happens because if I yell at my baby I'm a bad momma and if I don't I'm a bad momma. Juno was lucky because those women with her love her and stick up for her which seems to make her say more, too. And really, I see babies crying all the time in stores and it don't have anything to do with how old that momma is!

## CHAPTER 3 WHAT IS TEEN DAD?



Advocate: Okay, let's get started. Just a reminder that I wanted to talk about Bleeker's role in all of this. Somehow we never mention him. Let's watch the clip and then talk about it.

### **Clip--EXT. DANCING ELK SCHOOL - TRACK - DAY**

[http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Channel\\_10796/892413767.xml](http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Channel_10796/892413767.xml)

Bleeker is running alone on the track. His exhalations are icy puffs in the air. Bleeker's friend VIJAY jogs up alongside him. Vijay is a solemn, skinny boy, much like Bleeker.

### **VIJAY**

Hey man.

**BLEEKER**

Oh, hey Vijay.

**VIJAY**

Did you hear Juno MacGuff is pregnant?

**BLEEKER**

Yup.

**VIJAY**

Just like our moms and teachers!

**BLEEKER**

Yup.

**VIJAY**

Did you hear it's yours?

**BLEEKER**

Yup.

**VIJAY**

What a trip, man.

**BLEEKER**

I don't really know anything about

it.

**VIJAY**

You should grow a moustache. You're  
a real man now.



**BLEEKER**

I can't grow a moustache. It never  
comes in evenly.

**VIJAY**

Me neither. But I'm going to stop  
wearing underpants in order to raise  
my sperm count. See you.

VIJAY jogs off. Bleeker STOPS and wipes away his sweat

Advocate: Keep thinking for a few minutes before you say anything. There is another scene I  
want us to see.

**EXT. DANCING ELK SCHOOL - TRACK - AFTERNOON**

Paulie Bleeker is running as fast as his legs can carry him  
on the Dancing Elk track. There's a very sparse crowd in the  
bleachers. As Paulie approaches the tape, his envious teammate  
Vijay looks on. Bleeker's mom is seated near Vijay, holding  
a video camera.

**JUNO (V.O.)**

I decided to not call Bleeker to  
tell him that I was having the baby.  
He had a big meet against Manteno  
and I didn't want him to get all  
worried about me and choke.

Director's Notes] It is interesting how Juno is trying to protect Paulie Bleeker even when she is in labor. Juno's stance of not wanting to distract Bleeker during his important meet, positions her in a mothering role. She seems to be much more concerned about his welfare than her own needs for his support and help during this important moment.

Paulie breaks the tape, winning the race. The fifteen or so people in attendance cheer.

**VIJAY**

(admiringly)

His legs are as swift as his seed.

**MRS. BLEEKER**

What did you say?

Bleeker pants at the finish line, dripping with sweat.

**ANNOUNCER**

P. Bleeker has just broken a district

record in the 400.

Bleeker looks out at the BLEACHERS, scanning them for Juno.

She's not there.

**JUNO (V.O.)**

But he figured it out anyway.

Bleeker takes off RUNNING toward the parking lot without

stopping to explain. His mother stands up, confused.

Poisonous: Now that is a supportive mother. Juno's folks could learn a lot from Bleeker's mom.

Advocate: Seriously? That's what you took from that scene?

Smugly Do-Right: What did you want us to see? Bleeker is running a race and then runs off to be there for Juno. He is a great kid.

Advocate: Oh, man! I have a lot more work than I thought I did.

Smugly Do-Right and Poisonous (together and a bit whiny): What?

Advocate: Well, don't you see what is happening here? Juno is being ostracized and Bleeker is being revered.

Smugly Do-Right: And? He has tried to be supportive the whole movie.

Advocate: Okay, but he is as much to blame for this pregnancy as she is and yet he has no consequences. His parents don't even know he is 'pregnant' and they think of Juno as a tramp and a whore (Kaplan, 1997). Wait let's watch a couple more clips.

#### **EXT. BLEEKER HOUSE – NIGHT**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/22657/789296736.mov>

Juno parks her PREVIA on the street. She walks up to the house and rings the doorbell.

BLEEKER'S MOM answers, visibly annoyed. Her eyes drift down to Juno's middle.

#### **JUNO (V.O.)**

Bleeker's mom was possibly attractive once. But now she looks a hobbit. The fat one that was in The Goonies.

#### **BLEEKER'S MOM**

Hi Juno. What can I do for you?

#### **JUNO**

I borrowed Paulie's physics notes in  
school today. I'm pretty sure he  
needs them back, or his grade could  
plummet to an A minus.

**BLEEKER'S MOM**

Fine. Come in.

She steals another glance at Juno's belly.

**INT. BLEEKER HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Bleeker's mom escorts Juno wordlessly up the stairs and down  
the hallway to Paulie's bedroom. Juno discreetly tries to  
charge ahead of her, but her expanding middle prevents her  
from getting past Bleeker's mom. They share an extremely  
awkward moment wedged side-by-side in the narrow hallway.

Bleeker's mom nudges past Juno and knocks on Bleeker's  
bedroom door. The door has a cheesy racecar-themed decoration  
hanging on it that says PAULIE'S VRROOOM! It looks like  
something a 5-year old might have.

Advocate: In this second clip Mrs. Bleeker actually mentions how she feels about Juno. The  
interesting thing is how Bleeker reacts.

**BLEEKER'S MOM**

Juno MacGuff called while you were  
out running. She wants to know if  
you're coming to her little

coffee house performance on Saturday.

**BLEEKER**

Thanks for the message.

**BLEEKER'S MOM**

You know how I feel about her.

**BLEEKER**

You've mentioned it about fifty times.

**BLEEKER'S MOM**

I just hope you don't consider her a  
close friend.

Bleeker's mom gives up and closes the door.

Advocate: It seems as though she thinks Juno is contaminated. Almost like if Bleeker hangs out with her he, too, will become pregnant. Like the fear is that the pregnancy will rub off onto her precious Paulie who otherwise would have refrained from becoming sexually active (Pillow, 2006).

Poisonous: Well, he does come from a good family and she did suggest that they have sex.

Advocate: We don't know that for sure.

Smugly Do-Right: Advocate's right. They never show us that scene. We don't know who initiates or if it just happens. They both look pretty shy in 'the' scene and he is already naked in the chair when she drops her drawers.

Poisonous: Well, of course *she* is the one who suggested sex! Bleeker's mom would know if he was doing that.

Advocate: Ah, but Bleeker *is* doing that and his mom *doesn't* know. She is so oblivious that she is even letting him take a girl on an overnight date for prom.

**Clip--INT. DANCING ELK SCHOOL - BLEEKER'S LOCKER - DAY**

I'm A Planet

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/6842/857035158.mov>

Bleeker retrieves a book from his open locker. Juno marches  
up to him, belly leading the way.

**JUNO**

Are you honestly and truly going to  
prom with Katrina De Voort?

**BLEEKER**

Um, hi?

**JUNO**

Leah just told me you were going  
with her.

**BLEEKER**

Yeah, I did ask her if she wanted to  
go. A bunch of us from the team are  
going to Benihana, then the prom,  
then Vijay's parents' cabin.

Juno is clearly AFFRONTED.

**BLEEKER**

(meekly)

We're getting a stretch limo.

**JUNO**

Your mom must be really glad you're  
not taking me.

**BLEEKER**

You're mad. Why are you mad?

**JUNO**

I'm not mad. I'm in a fucking great  
mood. Despite the fact that I'm  
trapped in a fat suit I can't take  
off, despite the fact that everyone  
is making fun of me behind my back,  
despite the fact that your little  
girlfriend gave me the stinkeye in  
art class yesterday...

**BLEEKER**

Katrina's not my girlfriend! And I  
doubt she was actually giving you  
the stinkeye. She just looks like  
that all the time.

A GIRL strides past (obviously KATRINA) with a sour look  
aimed squarely at Juno.

**JUNO**

Whatever. Have fun at the prom with  
Soupy Sales. I'm sure I can think of  
something way more cool to do that  
night. Like I could pumice my feet,  
or go to Bren's dumb Unitarian church,  
or get hit by a ten-ton truck full  
of hot garbage juice. All those things  
would be exponentially cooler than  
going to the prom with you.

She starts to walk away.

Bleeker takes a deep breath.

**BLEEKER**

You're being really immature.

**JUNO**

(turning around)

What?

Bleeker BRACES himself and pushes up his lab goggles.

**JUNO**

That's not how our thing works! I  
hurl the accusations and you talk me  
down, remember?

**BLEEKER**



Not this time. You don't have any reason to be mad at me. You broke my heart. I should be royally ticked at you, man. I should be really cheesed off. I shouldn't want to talk to you anymore.

**JUNO**

Why? Because I got bored and had sex with you one day, and then I didn't, like, marry you?

**BLEEKER**

Like I'd marry you! You would be the meanest wife of all time. And anyway, I know you weren't bored that day because there was a lot of stuff on TV. The Blair Witch Project was on Starz, and you were like, "Oh, I want to watch this, but we should make out instead. La la la."

**JUNO**

Forget it, Bleek. Take Katrina the Douche Packer to the prom. I'm sure you guys will have a really bitchin'

time!

**BLEEKER**

(searching for a  
comeback)

Yeah, well... I still have your  
underwear.

**JUNO**

I still have your virginity!

**BLEEKER**

(looking around,  
panicked)

Oh my God, SHUT UP!

**JUNO**

What? Are you ashamed that we did  
it?

**BLEEKER**

No...

**JUNO**

Well at least you don't have to walk  
around with the evidence under your  
sweater. I'm a planet!

Juno picks up her BACKPACK dejectedly and slides it over her  
shoulder. She's about to walk away, when...

**BLEEKER**

Wait, let me take that.

**JUNO**

Huh?

**BLEEKER**

You shouldn't be carrying that heavy  
bag. I'll take it.

**JUNO**

Oh. It's fine. What's another ten  
pounds?

She turns around, wipes TEARS off her cheek (making sure no  
one sees) and continues down the hallway.

Smugly Do-Right: I must admit that this scene bothers me. I can't figure out what he is thinking.

Poisonous: He's thinking I can't take this girl to prom because she looks like 'a planet'! I mean  
how do you show those prom pictures to your kids years from now?

Advocate: Yes, I'm sure that is what he is thinking! Come on, he is only thinking of himself  
here.

Poisonous: She's the one who told him to go with her.

Smugly Do-Right: I don't know. He does seem a bit self-centered. Even if she has been aloof, he  
hasn't pursued her at all and was glad to have her make all the decisions. He should have been  
the one to tell her about Katrina.

Advocate: Or better yet, asked Juno to go.

Poisonous: I think he is so smart here. He made a wise decision not to tarnish his reputation by going with a girl like Juno.

Advocate: A girl *like* Juno? He is a boy *like* Juno.

Poisonous: It's different for boys.

Smugly Do-Right: No it isn't. It is wrong for both of them. All people, male and female, should wait until they are married to have sex. And he chose to tarnish his reputation when he had sex with her in the first place—but only hers has been tarnished. He is revered.



Poisonous: He is just showing her that if she doesn't need him, he will move on.

Advocate: But what of the immature comment?

Smugly Do-Right: Yea, I think my mouth actually hit the floor when he said this.

Advocate: I know, right?

Poisonous: Well, look at her. She is acting kind of juvenile. Showing him that she is jealous and all.

Smugly Do-Right: I think she has had her feelings hurt.

Advocate: I think it might even be something deeper than that. She has been craving his attention and support throughout the entire movie and yet she doesn't know how to ask for it. Is this another instance where she could be seeking love? I think so. In fact, I think it that is what the whole movie is about. Juno's search for love. Her need to find and even understand love.

Smugly Do-Right: Keep talking.

Advocate: Well, let's look at how we, society, look at love. What is it? What does it mean?

Where can it be found? Can anyone have it? Can anyone give it?

Poisonous: Dictionary.com on my phone says that love is a profoundly tender, passionate affection for another person or a feeling of warm personal attachment or deep affection, as for a parent, child, or friend.

Smugly Do-Right: Love can only come from God.

Poisonous: Let's leave God out of this!

Smugly Do-Right: Not sure if you can.

Advocate: Before we get into something we can't even begin to solve, let's take a break and cool off.

## CHAPTER 4 PARENTING TEEN MOM?

Advocate: Mac is the type of father who truly cares for his children even though he doesn't always know the appropriate way to show these feelings. His love for Juno is apparent throughout the movie.

Poisonous: This is a man that just doesn't seem to know which way is up. I feel like I've said that a lot, but both he and Bren just seem to be lost and oblivious to their daughter's whereabouts. I feel like if I walked up to them at any point during the day and asked where Juno was they wouldn't be able to tell me. In fact, I bet they wouldn't even know where to begin looking for her (muttered—where the hell ya been Juno). It just shows that not everyone was meant to raise children.

Advocate: Oh, I kind of am in love with Mac.

Smugly Do-Right: Me too!! I think he tries so hard to take care of his daughter and has been doing so without the help of Juno's mother. He's doing the best he can. I mean what kind of woman leaves her child?

Advocate: Isn't that a little bit like giving your child up for adoption? I mean, we don't really know anything about her mom or why she left; Just that Juno feels the sting of her abandonment. I don't think it is really fair for us to talk about the mom.

She lives on a Havasu  
reservation in Arizona...

**PHOTO: ARIZONA TRAILER PARK**

**JUNO (V.O.)**

...with her new husband and three  
replacement kids. Oh, and she  
inexplicably mails me a cactus every  
Valentine's Day.

**INT. MACGUFF HOUSE - JUNO'S BEDROOM - DAY**

PILE OF NEGLECTED CACTI festering in a corner of Juno's room.

**JUNO (V.O.)**

And I'm like, "Thanks a heap, Coyote  
Ugly. This cactus-gram stings even  
worse than your abandonment."

Poisonous: All I have to say is 'Like mother, like daughter!'

Advocate: But you just said that Juno shouldn't keep the baby because it was a poisonous  
situation to raise a child in! Again, let's not talk about Juno's birth mom right now. We can get  
back to her in a little while.

Smugly Do-Right: I don't think we can really talk about Mac without talking about Juno's mom.  
We might have to jump back and forth!

Poisonous: I agree! I think both of them together and apart make up what Juno is today. She is a  
pregnant teenager because of her parents. That's why she should keep the baby. That's why she  
shouldn't have had sex to begin with. And that's why she is in the mess she is in!

Advocate: Okay, I give in. Let's meet Mac officially.

**Clip--INT. MACGUFF HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Juno, her father MAC, her stepmother BREN, and LIBERTY BELL  
sit at a very typical kitchen table, eating dinner. MAC

shovels food while chatting about his day.

**MAC**

You should have seen this octopus  
furnace. I had to get out my Hazmat  
suit just to get up in there...

**JUNO (V.O.)**

My dad used to be in the Army, but  
now he's just your average HVAC  
specialist. He and my mom got divorced  
when I was five.

Next clip is cut directly into this clip but separated here for reading.

**MAC**

So Juno, how did your maneuver go  
last night?

**JUNO**

Which maneuver, sir? The one in which  
I moved an entire living room set  
from one lawn to another, or the one  
in which I cleared a sixty-four ounce  
blue slushie in ten minutes?

Advocate: So we know that he is a working class father and husband with two daughters.

Smugly Do-Right: [interrupting] By *different* mothers.



Advocate: [trying to hide an eye roll] He lives with his daughters, Juno and Liberty Bell, and his second wife, Bren.

Smugly Do-Right: We don't learn much more other than the fact that he is very sarcastic to his children.

Advocate: No, you're right. There isn't much here in this scene but we do hear that he is interested in what Juno is doing with her time.

Poisonous: When do we hear that?

Advocate: When he asks Juno how her night was.

Smugly Do-Right: Well, he does ask but they never really get to anything real in these discussions. They just seem to scrape the surface!

Poisonous: I'm not even sure they are doing that, scraping the surface. He asks her in a very satirical way. How was your maneuver? What is that? Soooo, dumb. He only says this because he truly doesn't know what her 'maneuvers' were. He has no idea where or what she might have done that evening let alone the evening before! She has to ask what he is talking of and doesn't really answer either. It just *all* seems to be so superficial.

Advocate: I don't disagree, but I do think that maybe there is more to this scene than meets the eye. If we dig a little deeper maybe we see a father who cares but doesn't know how to show that care. Maybe we see a man who is trying to hold all of these different aspects of his life together.

Poisonous: Maybe, but I doubt it!

Smugly Do-Right just nods, snickering along.

Advocate: I'm curious. Why does this seem so farfetched to both of you? Is it because he is divorced or is it because his daughter got pregnant? Or is there a different reason all together?

Smugly Do-Right: Well, I guess it is because he is so non-committal. He doesn't seem to really want to know about anything Juno is up to; especially this particular question he is asking at dinner. When the subject is changed he never moves back to his original question. He is easily drawn away from any question worth pursuing or that might bring forth information full of substance.

Poisonous: It's the divorce for me *and* his daughter *IS* pregnant. How involved can he really be?

Smugly Do-Right: Also, when Juno tells him she is pregnant he seems almost unbothered by the news.

Advocate: He seems very upset to me!

Smugly Do-Right: Maybe but he doesn't even seem to be shocked by the news. No major questioning. He doesn't even begin to lay down guidelines or rules that might be more strict. They just go on with life as things were before she got pregnant. She can come and go as she pleases and even says they don't really care.

Advocate: When does she say that? I don't remember ever hearing that and I have seen this movie a million times!

Smugly Do-Right: You know the scene when she is at the Lorings. Vanessa says "your parents must be wondering where you are." Juno says back "Nah, I'm already pregnant so they figure what other shenanigans can I get into!"

Advocate: Oh, yea. Hmm. She does say that but I don't think it means they don't care.

Smugly Do-Right: Mac just sits there dumbfounded. Almost no reaction at all to begin with and then he even laughs about it!

**INT. MACGUFF HOUSE - LIVING ROOM – AFTERNOON**

**MAC**

Who is the kid?

**JUNO**

The baby? I don't know anything about  
it yet. I only know it's got  
fingernails, allegedly.

**BREN**

Nails? Really?

**MAC**

No, I mean the father! Who's the  
father, Juno?

**JUNO**

Oh. It's, well, it's Paulie Bleeker.

Bren and Mac burst into shocked laughter.

**JUNO**

What?

**MAC**

Paulie Bleeker? I didn't know he had  
it in him!

**BREN**

(giggling)

He just doesn't look, well, virile.

**LEAH**

I know, right?

Advocate: Okay, Smugly. You have me stumped. I'm not sure what to make of this either. I know my own dad wouldn't have acted like this. In fact, I'm pretty sure he still wouldn't act like this if I got pregnant today!! I've even experienced very different reactions from the parents of the teen moms that I've worked with. One mom actually left the family and blamed her divorce on the teen who was pregnant. The others might not have had such severe reactions but the women I worked with did have serious discussions with their parents and a few were even placed on restriction. Macs reaction baffles me. I'm not sure how to take it. To me it seems contradictory to my other interpretations of his actions. Maybe I need to rethink those interpretations.

The thing that brings me back is his discussion with Bren after the girls leave. He brings it back to blame and wants to make sure he isn't doing something wrong with Juno.

Poisonous: Maybe he does but only to make sure *he* isn't to blame. He doesn't really seem concerned for Juno. His only concern is that he didn't do something wrong. He always brings it back to himself. It's not Juno isn't ready to be a mom or even she is just a kid. It's I'm not old enough to be a grandfather.

**Clip--MAC**

Just tell it to me straight, Bren.

Do you think this is my fault? Her  
mother's fault?

**BREN**

I think kids get bored and have

intercourse. And I think Junebug was  
a dummy about it. But we have to  
move on from here and help her figure  
it out.

**MAC**

I'm not ready to be a Pop-Pop.

**BREN**

You're not going to be a Pop-Pop.  
And Juno's not going to be a ma.  
Somebody else is going to find a  
precious blessing from Jesus in this  
garbage dump of a situation. I  
friggin' hope.

**MAC**

(conspiratorially)

Did you see it coming when she sat  
us down here?

**BREN**

Oh God yeah. But I was hoping she  
was expelled or into hard drugs.

**MAC**

That was my first instinct too. Or  
D.W.I. Anything but this. And I'm

going to punch that Bleeker kid in  
the weiner the next time I see him.

**BREN**

Oh Mac, no! He's a sweet kid. You  
know it wasn't his idea.

Mac shrugs in agreement.

Advocate: I guess I do need to think this through some more! Let's watch another clip in the meantime. One that I think will make me feel better about my own thinking! I also hope you will have difficulty arguing against Mac in this scene. If you can come up with anything valid to say that is bad about Mac after this I just might have to go back and change my thoughts on everything!!

**Clip-INT. HOSPITAL - BIRTHING SUITE - DAY**

Juno is curled up on her bed in the birthing room. The birth  
is obviously over; there's that air of stillness and  
accomplishment, a task completed. The doctors have cleared  
out. Mac sits in a chair next to the bed, looking like he's  
not sure what to say.

He holds up a deck of Playing cards as if to initiate a game,  
but Juno gently pushes his hand away. Their eyes meet. His  
expression is helpless, hers is utterly drained.

**MAC**

Someday, you'll be back here, honey.

On your terms.

Juno nods and swallows.

Advocate: I love this scene! It makes me cry every time I see it!

Smugly Do-Right: This is my favorite scene with Mac in the whole movie! He is so loving and caring and gentle with her. He says just the right thing. No lecture, no mean words, just love.

When I see this, I wonder if you aren't right about everything, Advocate! Maybe he has been trying to make it through day by day and just hasn't known how! I don't know. He seems to really be hurting for her and he seems to love her soooo much. He even seems to be sending a little love to Bleeker, too, because he appreciates him coming to support Juno!

Poisonous: Maybe if he did this the whole time she wouldn't have gotten pregnant in the first place!! I still say he has no idea how to be a father! She was smart to give up her baby. She has never had any good role models in the parenting realm.

Can we take a break! I need to get another drink!

Advocate: Feeling a little threatened, Poisonous? No worries, we'll take a break! We can make more popcorn, too.

Smugly Do-Right: OOOO, POPCORN, YEA! When we come back can we watch the part where Juno tells Mac and Bren, again?

Poisonous: Fine.

Advocate: Sure!

**Clips--INT. MACGUFF HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

**MAC**

You're pregnant?

**JUNO**

I'm so sorry, you guys. If it's any

consolation, I have heartburn that's  
like, radiating down to my kneecaps  
and I haven't gone number two since

Wednesday. Morning!

**BREN**

(interrupting)

I didn't even know you were sexually  
active!

Juno cringes upon hearing her most-hated term.

Skip to Mac at end

**MAC**

Juno, I want to come with you to  
meet these adoption people. You're  
just a kid. I don't want you to get  
ripped off by a couple of babystarved  
wingnuts.

**JUNO**

Sure, Dad.

Mac nods, satisfied, then contemplates the situation dismally.

**MAC**

I thought you were the kind of girl  
who knew when to say when.

**JUNO**



I have no idea what kind of girl I  
am.

Advocate: [to Smugly] So, what's up?

Smugly Do-Right: Well, I think Mac actually begins to show interest or adult control in some sense at the end of this scene. He tells Juno that he is disappointed in her and also that he wants to watch out for her best interest in the adoption situation.

Advocate: This is one of the scenes where I can really relate to Juno. I have really spent time in thought about this situation and I felt her sorrow and shame. I can empathize here because I sometimes feel this uncertainty still. I know what and who I want to be, but not really what kind of person I *am*. I'm a 39 year old woman and I'm still trying to figure myself out. Aren't we all? I get her confusion or thinking process here. Unfortunately, I get his point of view also. If I were a parent, I couldn't help but feel some disappointment. I mean, who wants this for their child?

Smugly Do-Right: We also see this while they are at the Lorings for the first time. You know, when Juno asks Mark if he is ready to be a dad.

CLIP—Mac begins to see Mark

Mark is caught off guard.

**MARK**

Sure, why not? I mean, every guy  
wants to be a father. Coach soccer,  
help with science projects and... I  
don't know. Fatherly stuff.

Mac casts a subtle, dubious glance at Mark.

Smugly Do-Right: Mac sees the future in that one bit alone. Mac seems to be thinking, something isn't right with this guy.

Daisy Freelove: I think you are right, Advocate. I think Macs *smells* Mark's fear and disinterest in being a father.

Poisonous: But he doesn't do anything about it! And he is so sarcastic the rest of the time!

Advocate: Maybe he is sarcastic but he does mention that this is one of his and Juno's finer traits. He uses the sarcasm as a form of gentle nudging with Juno. When he introduces himself and Juno, I think he is almost correcting Juno's smart behavior toward Vanessa repeating her name.

Poisonous: NO! He is just sarcastic and that is ugly!

Advocate: I think there is meaning behind the sarcasm. Like the whole scene in the kitchen after Mark tells Juno he is getting a divorce.

**Clip--INT. MACGUFF HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Mac is alone at the kitchen table going over the family finances while drinking one of Bren's weight loss shakes.

Juno enters.

**JUNO**

Hi Dad.

**MAC**

Hey, big puffy version of Junebug.

Where have you been?

**JUNO**

Dealing with stuff way beyond my

maturity level. Where is everyone?

**MAC**

Bren took Liberty Bell to her tot  
ice skating class.

**JUNO**

Tot ice skating? Tots can't ice skate.

Liberty Bell's still getting the  
hang of stairs.

**MAC**

No, but you know Bren. She dreams  
big.

**JUNO**

Yeah, she does.

**MAC**

You look a little morose, honey.

What's eating you?

**JUNO**

I'm losing my faith in humanity.

**MAC**

Think you can narrow it down for me.

**JUNO**

I guess I wonder sometimes if people  
ever stay together for good.

**MAC**

You mean like couples?

**JUNO**

Yeah, like people in love.

**MAC**

Are you having boy trouble? I gotta  
be honest; I don't much approve of  
you dating in your condition,  
'cause... well, that's kind of messed  
up.

**JUNO**

Dad, no!

**MAC**

Well, it's kind of skanky. Isn't  
that what you girls call it? Skanky?  
Skeevy?

**JUNO**

Please stop now.

**MAC**

(persisting)

Tore up from the floor up?

**JUNO**

Dad, it's not about that. I just

need to know that it's possible for two people to stay happy together forever. Or at least for a few years.

**MAC**

It's not easy, that's for sure. Now, I may not have the best track record in the world, but I have been with your stepmother for ten years now, and I'm proud to say that we're very happy.

Juno nods in agreement.

**MAC**

In my opinion, the best thing you can do is to find a person who loves you for exactly what you are. Good mood, bad mood, ugly, pretty, handsome, what have you, the right person will still think that the sun shines out your ass. That's the kind of person that's worth sticking with.

A wave of REALIZATION crosses Juno's face.

**JUNO**

I sort of already have.

**MAC**

Well, of course. Your old D-A-D! You  
know I'll always be there to love  
and support you, no matter what kind  
of pickle you're in.

He nods toward her belly.

**MAC**

Obviously.

Juno laughs and hugs her father, planting a smooch on his  
cheek.

**JUNO**

I need to go out somewhere for just  
a little while. I don't have any  
homework, and I swear I'll be back  
by ten.

She salutes and dashes out of the kitchen.

**MAC**

You were talking about me, right?

Advocate: The sarcasm is woven with a love and concern that is hard to miss.

Smugly Do-Right: Yea, he isn't always sarcastic. There are several other moments when he is sincere and concerned for Juno's welfare.

**GERTA**

Mark and Vanessa are willing to

negotiate an open adoption.

**MAC**

(protective)

Wait. What does that mean?

Daisy Freelove: And he's also looking out for Juno here:

**VANESSA**

Are you looking for any other  
compensation?

**MAC**

Excuse me?

**JUNO**

Well, no... I'm not going to sell  
the baby.

Smugly Do-Right: AND, if we go back to my favorite scene with them after Juno gave birth, he is really concerned and doesn't know what to do to help her. His concern is overwhelming, that's why I cry when I watch it!

Mac sits in a chair next to the bed, looking like he's

not sure what to say.

He holds up a deck of Playing cards as if to initiate a game,

but Juno gently pushes his hand away. Their eyes meet. His

expression is helpless, hers is utterly drained.

**MAC**

Someday, you'll be back here, honey.

On your terms.

Juno nods and swallows.

Clip--Over Mac's shoulder, a silhouette appears in the doorway.

It's Bleeker in his track uniform.

Juno sees him and bursts into sudden, ragged sobs. Mac glances

at her, alarmed. Paulie moves toward the bed. Mac clears his

throat, gets up and leaves the room.

Advocate: The way Mac puts his hands on Bleeker's shoulders is so kind. I always feel like he is thanking Bleek for being there because Mac knows that Juno needs Bleeker.

Poisonous: I'll give you that one, but I think overall he is just so sarcastic and without feeling.



## CHAPTER 5 BEING MOM TO TEEN MOM

### INT. MACGUFF HOUSE - DINING ROOM – NIGHT

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/22559/378443854.mov>

Advocate: Although Bren has been with Juno for ten years of her short 16 year life, Juno doesn't really refer to her as her mom. She is her step-mom, and is called by her first name, even though she is the only real mother Juno has known. Bren, however, seems to know Juno well and is one of her biggest advocates.

There are many times throughout the movie that we see Bren standing up for Juno and supporting her when many other parents might not have the strength or desire. The first scene that stands out is the scene with the ultra sound technician. Bren jumps all over this lady even while she is referring to Juno in a derogatory way. She is allowed to speak negatively of her step-daughter but nobody else is allowed to speak poorly about Juno.

Clip--Bren Defends

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/18224/498488298.mov>

Poisonous: Bren is so wrong in this situation. She is rude and disrespectful to the medical technician and then they laugh about it!

Smugly Do-Right: Although, you should always be respectful to people in medical services, I was just as shocked as Bren was when the tech said that! I can't believe she had the nerve to be so bold!

Poisonous: But the tech *is* right! A teenager raising a child *is* a poisonous environment! How could they raise a child better than adults even if they are stage parents?

Advocate: The teenage mothers that I have dealt with are climbing an uphill battle but many of them are raising very capable children (Luttrell, 2000). The hill is not always something they have made for themselves but something that society has placed before them. Yes, they are young. Yes, they often have very little money. Yes, many times family support is low. Yes, the fathers aren't likely to be involved in raising the child. But don't you think that many single adult women in this country find ways to raise children even as the only source of income?

Smugly Do-Right: Well, I think you were making sense until you brought the single adult mother into the picture. I don't think women should raise children alone no matter their age. Children need a strong male figure to set an example for them.

Advocate: But what if the male figure isn't strong, or is actually hurtful and harmful to the child? What should the mother do then? Stay with him because she shouldn't raise a child alone? Sorry, we have gotten a bit off topic. I do want to get back to the discussion of Bren and how she relates to Juno.

Poisonous: Okay, we can move back to topic but before we do I have a comment that I need to talk about. You guys have really confused me. At first I agreed with Smugly when she said that the mother should always stay with the father

Smugly Do-Right: Wait I didn't say that!

Poisonous: Anyway, now I am confused. I don't know how to deal with these situations. One way has to be right but I'm not sure which. It is a poisonous environment for children to grow up without a father but it is even more poisonous for a child to grow up in a dangerous (emotionally or physically) environment. I guess I just answered my question when I said more poisonous.

Advocate: Why do you think one has to be right? Couldn't the 'right' way be somewhere in between or even a question that can be answered differently for each mother?

Poisonous: Hmm, I've never thought of that. I think I need more time to figure this out.

Advocate: Okay, while you think, I want to keep going with this story line so let's move on to another clip. This time I want us to look an excerpt from the movie *Save the Last Dance*.

### **Clip—Meet Christopher**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/21256/818389.mov>

Chenille triple unlocks the door, lets Sara in. Sara's surprised -- the apartment is surprisingly quaint and extremely neat. It looks a helluva lot better than Roy's place. Chenille is dressed in hugely baggy military-style pants and a tube top with a form-fitting, short-cut leather coat over it. Sara takes it in.

**SARA**

Cool outfit.

**CHENILLE**

Slammin'. Slammin' outfit.

**SARA**

... I look okay?

Chenille gives her the once over. Decides to lie.

**CHENILLE**

Yeah. You look okay.

(then)

Moma Dean. I'm leavin'.

**FROM ANOTHER ANGLE**

GRANDMOMMA DEAN enters with a toddler ("CHRISTOPHER") in her arms. She sports snow white, waist-length dreads and she's wearing a dashiki lounge. Despite her white locks, she doesn't look old enough to be a grandmother. She hands Christopher to Chenille. Inspects Sara. Her eyes are open, kind.

**CHENILLE**

(fussing over  
Christopher)

Grandmom, Sara. Sara, Grandmom.  
Also known as Momma Dean. And  
handsome here is Christopher.

**SARA**

Hi.

**MOMMA DEAN**

Hello. Now don't get him all  
riled up, Chenille. I want to get  
some sleep tonight.

Chenille kisses Christopher, hands him off to Momma Dean.

They exit. Sara looks tentatively at Chenille.

**SARA**

Is that... is he... yours?

**CHENILLE**

He sure ain't Momma Dean's.

Advocate: What do you think now after you have seen this clip?

Smugly Do-Right: Shows us another teen mom leaving her baby with someone else to raise.

Poisonous: Very irresponsible.

Advocate: But, she has a strong mother figure in her grandmother and...

Poisonous: Exactly, her grandmother *not* her mother.

Smugly Do-Right: I've seen this movie. I agree with Poisonous. This is another poisonous situation.

Advocate: [sigh] *AND* I was gonna say they live in a nice clean apartment and both obviously love and care for Christopher. How can this be a bad situation? In the next scene Chenille actually explains that Christopher's daddy is bad news and so it seems that she doesn't have much to do with him. Let's keep watching.

### **Clip--INT. Seen Your Back**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/20586/84735881.mov>

Chenille and Kenny. In the middle of a contentious moment. He tries to give her some money. She snatches it out of his hand. Kenny looks at her. He's hurt.

Chenille's too mad to see it.

### **CHENILLE**

What? I'm supposed to get excited because you decided to skate by and drop a dollar on the dresser?

### **KENNY**

It's more than a dollar. And it's  
all I got.

(beat)

I got laid off rom B.W.I.,  
Chenille. I been workin' part-  
time. Money's tight. You know  
how you are about money. That's  
why I haven't been coming around.

Chenille stares at him for a long moment. Her voice is  
low.

**CHENILLE**

Money ain't got nothin' to do with  
it, Kenny. You don't come around  
because you don't feel like comin'  
around. You don't want the  
responsibility of comin' around.  
As long as you out there and I'm  
in here, you know your son's being  
taken care of. You ain't got no  
worries when it comes to him.

**KENNY**

And you don't have no feelings  
when it comes to me. All you do

is bitch and complain about what I  
don't do. I get sick of that.

**CHENILLE**

Be sick of it. You ain't got to  
see me to see your son.

**KENNY**

I'll be sure to keep that in mind.

He leaves. Chenille stands there, mad at him. Mad at  
herself.

Poisonous: Well, there you have it! That just shows how ugly it can be in a teenage family. They are yelling right in front of their baby! The baby is crying and they keep on yelling.

Smugly Do-Right: But Chenille won't let Kenny take the baby. That is the good part of this clip. I can see that she loves him and wants him to love her and his baby but she doesn't love Kenny enough to send Christopher home with him while his is so irate!

Advocate: YES! You see the care and desire to protect in Chenille even though she is a teenager!

Smugly Do-Right: Yea (sheepishly), I guess I do.

Advocate: Maybe you are beginning to sway! Let's get back to Bren now. This next bit also shows how Bren is trying to protect Juno and keep her from harm, or in this case pain.

**INT. HOSPITAL - BIRTHING SUITE - DAY**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/22899/203686760.mov>

We see Juno is in a BIRTHING SUITE at the hospital, pacing  
impatiently, bent over in obvious discomfort. She's wearing  
her Chuck Taylors and knee socks with her hospital gown.

Leah and Bren stand nearby.

Juno doubles over in pain.

**JUNO**

(panicked)

Ow, ow, fuckity-ow. Bren, when do I  
get that Spinal Tap thing?

**BREN**

It's called a spinal block, and you  
can't have it yet, honey. The doctor  
said you're not dilated enough.

**JUNO**

You mean I have to wait for it to  
get even worse? Why can't they just  
give it to me now?

**BREN**

Well, honey, doctors are sadists who  
like to play God and watch lesser  
people scream.

Juno lets out a genuine shriek of pain.

**BREN**

(checking her watch)

Shit.

(To the doctor)



Hey, can we give my kid the damn  
spinal tap already?

Poisonous: She sounds so dumb in this scene, spinal tap.

Advocate: Maybe, but think about how you would feel if your child were in pain. Would you speak ‘properly’ the whole time? You would probably yell whatever came to mind first to get help. That is what Bren seems to be doing here. [pause]

Daisy Freelove: Everything you both just said is so frustrating to me. You sound like you are both so much better than they are because you come from a better home and are more educated.

Advocate: Oh! I don’t know what you mean. I wasn’t placing judgment on Bren in anyway. I was saying that everyone struggles to keep it together sometimes when they are worrying about someone they love!

Daisy Freelove: Maybe that is what you were saying but it sounded classist.

Advocate: Yikes! I never meant for that to happen.

Daisy Freelove: Well, we often don’t “mean” for things to happen. Isn’t this one of the whole reasons you brought us together? I thought we were here to examine what we mean—maybe call each other on our shit.

Advocate: Well...um...let’s...let’s just get back to Bren. There are also times when Bren just shows love and concern for Juno like she does while she is in labor. She uses pet names for Juno and tries to teach her about life. We saw Bren cry during the ultra-sound when she looks at the pictures of the baby in Juno’s belly, and she gets panic-y when Juno’s water breaks.

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/16122/889494126.mov>

Smugly Do-Right: Bren seems to even get her feelings hurt by Juno's harsh words. It's almost like she can never live up to Juno's expectations of a mom. That must hurt. She has raised this little girl since she was very young and doesn't always get the respect she deserves from her.

Poisonous: I don't think she deserves respect. She never knows where Juno is and doesn't seem to care.

Smugly Do-Right: Yes she does care! She is asking her about her whereabouts and even trying to explain to her why she can't go over to see the birth parents whenever she wants! Juno is just disrespectful to all authority.



Daisy Freelove: As Sartre (1961) said, “We only become what we are by the radical and deep-seated refusal of that which others have made of us” (p. 17).

Advocate: Aren't your children pushing the limits now that they are in their teens (Schmitt, 2011)? Aren't they experimenting with independence (Brown, B. B, 1990; Lifton, 1993)? [head

nods] Well, Juno is right in the middle of her teen years and is trying to figure herself out in a very confusing situation. I think we should cut her some slack.

Honestly, I think Bren is doing the best she can. She is a strong woman and Juno is a strong young woman. Both of them are trying to be in control and they often just butt heads. Bren does always seem to find a way to add a positive side to everything related to Juno and this makes me like her.

## CHAPTER 6 DESPERATELY WANTING?

Poisonous: So, I have to admit something to you guys.

Advocate: OH, Yes!! You're finally changing your mind?

Poisonous: Not quite, but I am actually incredibly intrigued by Mark and Vanessa and want to talk about them to hear what y'all think.

Advocate: Oh (disappointed). Okay, let's start with some clips of Mark.

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/17346/215593467.mov>

Poisonous: I don't know who I think is more disgusting in this situation. Juno, Mark, or Vanessa.

Smugly Do-Right: Are you kidding? Mark! This relationship completely icks me out. He is 36 and she is 16! Gross. What is he thinking? I think she is definitely searching for something to keep her sane but this is just wrong. I really doubt that she actually knows what she is getting into here. She was even warned by Bren but she is just so naïve (review). How can that be?

Advocate: Bleeker even questions it when Juno tells him about how cool Mark is. He asks, "Is that normal?" referring to the fact that she has been hanging out with him. She just blows it off and changes the subject but then she goes running to Mark when she and Bleek have the big fight.

Daisy Freelove: I know that at that age all I was looking for was some kind of positive male attention. Look at Leah. She is interested in a teacher because he listens to her and talks to her.

Juno just wants to be heard or seen or understood or something.

(still frame of Leah and Keith/Mr. Conyers)

**LEAH**

Keith's hot.

Smugly Do-Right: I've been thinking all along that Juno is the instigator and fully responsible for the pregnancy. Now I'm wondering if she really even knew that pregnancy was a result of 'the sex'. Throughout this part I don't think she ever really gets that Mark is making advances toward her. She just seems so clueless, which is again the complete opposite of what I thought throughout the rest of the film.

Advocate: Yeah, she doesn't seem to get it even when Mark doesn't want Vanessa to catch her alone with him. She's oblivious.

A door suddenly slams upstairs. Vanessa's home.

**MARK**

Vanessa. Shit, you better get out of  
here.

**JUNO**

Why? What the big deal?

**MARK**

Nothing. She just hates when I sit  
around watching movies and 'not  
contributing.'

**JUNO**

I'll handle this. I'm really good at  
diffusing mom-type rage.

Juno jumps up and rushes out.

**MARK**

Wait... aww, crap!

Daisy Freelove: Again, look at the TV shows our kids watch these days. Young girls are always pretending to be older. Look at Gossip Girl. Those girls go to bars and drink and talk to older men all the time.

Poisonous: Even in Twilight! Bella is in love with Edward and he is hundreds of years older!

Advocate: So many movies about teenage moms who are not from white families seem to show that the baby daddy's are much older. In Baby Boy, the older Jody, has a daughter by a teenager mother, Peanut, and a son by another teenage mother, Yvette (although this mother might be his age). Here we even see Peanut cleaning up so that grandma doesn't catch her and Jody *misbehaving*.

Sex while Peanut's Mother listens

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/11120/4753639.mov>

Advocate: Most of the teenager's mothers that I know have had children by older men.

Sometimes even 10 years older. Even in Save the Last Dance, Chenille (a black low income teenager), is in love with an older man.

Clip—Meeting Kenny

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/26992/3663392.mov>

Chenille pushes her way to the bar, tugging Sara along.

A tall, angular twenty-something MAN on the far side of

the bar sees her. She sees him. Sucks her teeth, nudges

Sara.

**CHENILLE**

That's him. Comin' over. Kenny?

Don't look.

So of course Sara does. She makes a silly face at  
Chenille as Kenny sidles up to her. Chenille rolls her  
eyes half-heartedly.

**KENNY (MAN)**

What's up?

Daisy Freelove: They are only in high school and seem so cool and with it. Male attention seems to feel so good to these girls and if it comes from an older man why is that a bad thing. Kids hang out with adults, adults hang out with kids. That is reality and if it happens, it is for a specific reason.

Poisonous: Mark does seem to encourage her interest, her attention and Vanessa seems to know something isn't right but she still sends Mark up to look for Juno. Kinda like a lion stalking his prey. The way he smirks when she drives up just shows his true intentions and they aren't good. From the beginning he kinda invades her space on the stairs and invites her into his as they sit and sing together.

**Clip—INT. LORING HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY**

Juno opens the bathroom door and instantly BUMPS into Mark.

**JUNO**

Whoops! Yikes, I didn't expect to  
see you up here.

**MARK**



Sorry. I was just getting something.

**JUNO**

Did your wife send you up here to  
spy on me?

**MARK**

What? No! Do we come off like paranoid  
yuppies or something?

**JUNO**

Well, you don't just invite a random  
pregnant teenager into your house  
and leave her unsupervised. I could  
be a total klepto, for all you know.

**MARK**

I don't get a klepto vibe from you.  
Evil genius? Maybe. Arsonist? Wouldn't  
rule it out.

**JUNO**

I did steal a squirt of perfume.  
What do you think? It's Clinique  
Happy.

She holds her WRIST up to Mark's twitching nostrils.

**JUNO**

Smell those sparkling topnotes!

Mark inhales.

**MARK**

Am I supposed to feel happy now?

**JUNO**

You should be happy, Holmes. I'm giving you and Vanessa the gift of life. Sweet, screaming, pooping life! And you don't even have to be there when the baby comes out of me all

covered in...

**MARK**

Viscera?

**JUNO**

Blood and guts.

**MARK**

We'd better get back downstairs ASAP.

Juno mocks his use of "ASAP" silently.

Poisonous: I mean from the moment "Mark and Juno lock eyes" when they are talking about giving the baby in an 'old school' way. Vanessa sees this, seems a little disturbed by it and yet she does nothing. Dumb.

Daisy Freelove: Maybe. But if we could just help young women to be more informed then they can make intelligent decisions about sex and their future and it wouldn't matter how Vanessa feels about it or not. Juno would know what was going on. She would feel the flirt in Mark from

that first connection. If they choose to socialize with older men then so be it. They know the consequences but if we don't teach them how can we expect them to behave differently?

Advocate: Well, even if she doesn't 'accept' the teaching from Bren, she seems to get something because she has a real reaction to Mark in this next scene.

**CLIP—They Dance**

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/25624/96558149.mov>

Juno rests her head on Mark's chest. They dance in silence for a few moments, then stop moving. Mark pulls Juno as close as he possibly can, given her expanding girth.

**MARK**

I'm leaving Vanessa.

**JUNO**

(quiet at first)

What?

**MARK**

It's just not working out, but I'm getting my own place in the city...

and I've got it all planned out.

It's something I've wanted to do for

a long time...

Juno backs away.

**JUNO**

(growing)

No.

**MARK**

No?

**JUNO**

No. No, you definitely cannot do  
that, Mark. That's a big, fat sack  
of no!

**MARK**

What's the matter?

**JUNO**

This isn't what we agreed on. You  
guys have to take care of... this!  
You are the chosen custodians of the  
big-ass bump!

She **GESTURES** wildly to her belly. Suddenly, something matters  
to her far more than the approval of an older guy.

**MARK**

But I thought you'd be cool if...

**JUNO**

(interrupting)

I want you guys to adopt the Buglet.

I wanted everything to be perfect.

Not shitty and broken like everyone

else's family. Listen, once I have the baby, Vanessa is going to finally be happy, and everything will be all right. Believe me on this one!

**MARK**

A baby is not going to fix everything.

Besides, I don't know if I'm ready to be a father.

**JUNO**

(aghast)

But you're old!

**MARK**

I... How do you think of me, Juno?

Why are you here?

**JUNO**

I don't know. I just liked being your friend. I sort of liked becoming furniture in your weird life.

**MARK**

This...

(he gestures to the dank surrounding room)

...this is what my life has become.

Stuff in boxes. Stuff underground.

Is that so appealing to you?

**JUNO**

Yeah, I guess... Is this my fault?

Is Vanessa mad at you because of me?

**MARK**

That's not the point. We're just not

in love anymore.

**JUNO**

Yeah, but didn't you love Vanessa  
when you married her? If you love  
someone once, you can love them again,

I know it. My friend Leah has gone  
out with the same guy, like, four  
times. You're just not trying.

Mark suddenly sees Juno for what she is -- a teenage girl.

**MARK**

I'm such an idiot. I can't believe

what an idiot I am.

He paces over to the wall and KICKS it softly.

**JUNO**

Please don't get a divorce! God,

Mark, just do me a solid and stay  
with your wife.

**MARK**

God, you're so young.

**JUNO**

Not really. I'm sixteen. I'm old  
enough to tell when people are acting  
like total a-holes!

[Director's Notes] Juno's decision to go ahead with the adoption is one that is important to her as she figures out her way in the world and it is also important for Vanessa who had been planning for this child for so long. When she finally goes home she seems dejected and a little lost in her own skin. Her father notices this and encourages her to open up. Juno explains that she has been 'Dealing with stuff way beyond my maturity level.' They continue to talk but the main point when thinking of responsibility is that even though she is only sixteen, she *is* dealing with the pregnancy and *is* trying to be responsible.

Smugly Do-Right: I am relieved that after he tells her he is getting a divorce, she immediately pulls away and begins to think about the baby. Her main responsibility becomes much more important. She obviously feels responsible for finding a good home for this baby and puts that above her own wants and needs.

Daisy Freelove: or is this the first time she really gets Marks's advances?

Advocate: Hmm, I'm not sure. I do think this is where some of her love for the baby and Vanessa come into play. We get to see a different relationship build between Juno and Vanessa

even though they don't really ever have much contact or communication. I really feel her falling in love with Vanessa little by little throughout the movie and it culminates in the scene when she leaves the not at the front door.

There's a LOUD KNOCK on the front door.

**EXT. LORING HOUSE - ENTRY - NIGHT**

Mark opens the door. There's a folded piece of paper sitting on the doormat. He squints and sees Juno pulling away in the  
van.

Mark carefully unfolds the piece of paper -- it takes a minute because of Juno's proficiency in "teen girl origami." He holds it up. We can see there's WRITING on the back.

**MARK**

It looks like a bill from Jiffy-Lube.

Vanessa takes the note from his hand and turns it over,  
examining it.

**VANESSA**

It's for me.

Smugly Do-Right: But it seems to start at the mall.

Clip-- One of the little girls in the group tugs at Vanessa's sleeve.

Vanessa happily follows the little girl over to their play area and begins to play energetically with her.

Juno watches intently, but Leah just snickers.

**LEAH**



She's gonna steal that kid for her  
collection.

**JUNO**

Right, seriously.

They watch Vanessa for a few more moments. The other kids  
wander over toward the play area while their mothers ignore  
them. Vanessa continues to entertain the children.

**LEAH**

Bo-ring!

Leah stands up. Juno lingers for a moment.

Advocate: Actually, this is one of my favorite scenes in the whole movie. I love how Juno looks  
on with awe and assurance at Vanessa's love and desire to be a mom.

Poisonous: Okay, I can kinda see the love but it's just all so messed up!

Advocate: How so?

Poisonous: Come on! This perfect married couple gets a divorce! The would be dad is coming on  
to a little girl. Juno gives the baby to a woman without a husband who is obsessed with being a  
mom.

Clips of Vanessa's Obsession

<http://podcasting.gcsu.edu/4DCGI/Podcasting/UGA/Episodes/13449/32821529.mov>

Daisy Freelove: You have this same reaction to the abortion clinic. Do you see this as equal to  
abortion? What should she do? She didn't have the abortion just like you wanted! She now has a  
baby and according to you she can't keep him because has a messed up home life.

Poisonous: They should find a family that is complete and without fault.

Advocate: Good luck there!!!

Daisy Freelove: Really! You mean you think it would be better for this baby to live in a temporary foster home while they search for an intact ‘ideal’ family? They would never find a home! There is no such thing! And even if there was, Vanessa is a woman who wants this baby more than anything else and will be with that boy from day one.

Advocate: And going back to the clips, some people would say that is normal behavior for a mother to be. She acts as if she is the one who is pregnant. She begins to nest, is in awe when she feels the baby move for the first time, and is excited to see the first picture of her baby. She is even nervous every time she sees Juno because she is worried over the baby’s health, just like a first time pregnant mother.

Poisonous: Yes, but she can’t parent that child without an income and so she must leave the baby in the day care system. That is no way to raise a baby. Come on Smug, back me up here.

Smugly Do-Right: Sorry Poisonous, I don’t agree with you on this one. Of course I *wish* the baby had a mom *and* dad but it is better to have *one* loving parent than to have *none* at all.

Advocate: I think you made a good point earlier, Poisonous, when you mentioned that V noticed something weird b/w Mark and Juno. There are so many places where we see foreshadowing for the ending of divorce. A few in particular are: when Vanessa sees Mark and Juno meet eyes on the couch, when she walks in on them singing and blushing, when Juno is there when she gets home from work, when Juno is crying, when Mark puts Juno’s bag on her shoulder.

Poisonous: I’m actually wondering why Mark becomes so interested in Juno to begin with. She is everything he doesn’t want. She is pregnant OR is this why he is attracted to her?

Daisy Freelove: Because she *is* pregnant? Could he find her more appealing than Vanessa who can't get pregnant? Maybe he is attracted to Juno because she can get pregnant and doesn't want a baby.

Smugly Do-Right: I wonder what he thinks is going to happen in the end when he says he is leaving Vanessa. Does he think Juno is going to have the baby and they will raise it or does he think she'll find someone else to give the baby to?

Poisonous: HE does seem to be more drawn to her the more pregnant she gets, finally making his move when her belly is so big it gets in the way of them dancing. All those clips show him with his scary smirk. Maybe he does want her because she is pregnant. Even when he hears about Paulie Bleeker for the first time, "Mark looks jolted, as if it's the first time he considered that her baby might have a father." Like he doesn't like the thought of Juno with someone else. He has to change the subject quickly so as not to linger over the idea!

Daisy Freelove: Or maybe he just wants to find a way out of an unhappy marriage.

Advocate: I think Poisonous might have something here. He could be attracted to her fertility even though he doesn't want to have a baby. Juno is probably attracted to him because of his age and yet she is also disgusted by it at the same time. She says, "your old" like it is the worst thing in the world and that he should automatically want to do old people things, like have a baby and stay married.

Daisy Freelove, it could be that Mark is just trying to get out of the marriage but I'm not sure that it is so unhappy. They seem to care about each other very much but they just want different things out of life.

Daisy Freelove: But doesn't that, wanting different things in life make a marriage a bad marriage?

Advocate: I don't know, maybe. I'm wondering at what point do you think Juno realizes that she trusts Vanessa or actually wants Vanessa to be the mother of her baby? Do you think it is really when she writes the note or could it be one of those other moments?

Smugly Do-Right: I think it is in the mall.

Poisonous: I don't think she ever really thinks anything of Vanessa.

Daisy Freelove: I think she doesn't really get it until she has the baby. She wants someone stable and Vanessa is stable until she has him. That's when she says that bit about the baby always being Vanessa's. I think she gains some perspective at that moment. That is why she cries when she sees Bleeker. She realizes that she needs him and that Vanessa needs the baby.

Advocate: I think she may know all along, but that it sinks in after the baby is born like Daisy said. But another of my favorite scenes is right after that when V holds the baby for the first time.

**Clip—INT. HOSPITAL - MATERNITY WARD - DAY**

A NURSE reaches into one of the maternity ward bassinets and  
gently lifts up a swaddled newborn baby.

The nurse turns and addresses an unseen spectator.

**NURSE**

Would you like to meet your son?

Pull back to reveal she's speaking to VANESSA, who stands,  
paralyzed, several feet away.

**VANESSA**

I have a son?

**NURSE**

(amused)

You are the adoptive mother?

**VANESSA**

I have a son.

**NURSE**

Healthy kid, too. Didn't waste any  
time getting out.

Vanessa reaches out for the baby and gingerly accepts him in  
her eyes. She spends a few moments just looking at him.  
She feels someone watching her, then looks up to see a Bren  
leaning against the doorway.

Vanessa blinks away her tears self-consciously.

**VANESSA**

How do I look?

**BREN**

(gently)

Like a mom. Scared shitless.

Vanessa laughs.

Advocate: I love this because it shows how much Vanessa needs the baby and also, how much Bren loves the baby even though she will never really be the grandmother.

Smugly Do-Right: This scene makes me nostalgic. Holding my babies for the first time was always so moving to me. The awe she holds for the baby as she holds it and feeds it tells me that

Juno did make the right decision. That little boy will grow up in a loving home regardless of how many parents are raising him!

Advocate: You mean the scene at the house with us finally getting to see the note?

**Clip--JUNO (V.O.)**

I think he was always hers.

**INT. LORING HOUSE - NURSERY - DAY**

The nursery is perfectly decorated in Vanessa's immaculate taste. Nothing looks as though it's been touched. We see the antique ROCKING CHAIR sitting empty.

**JUNO (V.O.)**

It ended with a chair.

We pan past the wall Vanessa had said "needed something."

There's a framed note on the wall. It looks like it was handwritten on the back of a Jiffy Lube bill. We see that it says: "Vanessa -- If you're still in, I'm still in. Juno."

Smugly Do-Right: The movie could have ended with this clip and I would have been satisfied with everything!

Poisonous: YES! Satisfied, no but I hate the fact that they show her all happy and perfect at the very end. That is not possible! She is forever changed and I think that is important to show.

Daisy Freelove: What do you mean forever changed?

Poisonous: Well, she just had a baby and then gave it away! Her life has been altered and her inner being is different because a piece of her is missing.

Daisy Freelove: Here we go again! Maybe but why does that have to be a bad thing?

Poisonous: Because it is a bad thing! It's like having an abortion. Part of you dies.

Daisy Freelove: Back to the abortion stuff. I think you are wrong. Some people have abortions and give their babies up for adoption and have no repercussions. Some people are able to move on with their lives with those things being a part of them and not a 'problem' of them. I don't have any problems. I didn't right after the abortion and I don't, even now, years later!

Poisonous: You say that it doesn't bother you but you always have a very strong reaction to the abortion subject.

Daisy Freelove: Yes, because I've been told so many times that there is something wrong with me for not regretting my decision. The reaction is to the reaction of others not to the actual abortion. And besides, either way, fine or not, life goes on and you have to live your life every day. She is just living her life.

Advocate: Although I think the Vanessa scene could have been the end of the movie, it isn't a movie about Vanessa. It is a movie about Juno and I think it is good to see her enjoying life again. They've made peace with everything and feel good to be living the life of a teenager.

Struggle: No, I don't think so. I don't know who she thinks she is foolin! That baby grew in her belly. It is her baby! I would never be able to give him up. She bawls after the baby is gone. That ain't because she don't want that baby!



Struggle: But at least she knew what was right for her. You can't argue with that!



## CHAPTER 7 METHODOLOGY

### Background of Study and Research Questions

Late spring 2011, as I was talking through my options with Mark Vagle, my new major professor, we had a discussion about how the media portrays teenage mothers and pregnant teens (TM). My initial thoughts remained consistent with my original conception of teenage pregnancy—that is, TMs are deviants from society in the eyes of most of the general population. I was intrigued by the observation that most movies of teenage mothers deal with middle or working class white girls, with relatively few movies with minority teenage women as the main character--unless some form of violence is involved in the pregnancy. There are however, many movies where the focus in the movie is a white woman and a token black girl who usually has a baby on her hip. This became the focus of our discussion and eventually we came to wonder about the movie *Juno* in particular. A movie both of us loved and thought was a good starting point for further examination of *societal conceptions* of the teen mom.

I began to watch the movie *Juno* with a wide variety of people. Anyone who was willing to discuss teenage pregnancy became a part of the viewings and discussion. This also became the topic of most of my conversations outside of viewings. Each group of people had very distinct perspectives. Some of the groups seem to gravitate to one particular perspective, while others would have several different perspectives present in the discussions-- thus creating a very different dynamic. These various perspectives started to form as “characters” in my mind—they slowly became people who I could recognize and could discuss so many different things. This thinking helped me develop clear composite characters (cite???) that I could assign specific

names, which signified the consistent, often complicated and competing, perspectives I was beginning to theorize.

So, I began to think of these perspectives as characters in a larger discussion teenage parenthood. Although all of my data came from similar experiences, it was through a “process of continually reflecting upon [my] interpretations of both [my] experience and the phenomena being studied so as to move beyond the partiality of [my] previous understandings and [my] investment in particular research outcomes” that I came to develop different characters (Finlay, 2003a, p. 108).

Earlier in the summer I started thinking of creative ways to “use” my characters to communicate the complicated ways in which teenage mothers are portrayed. in the form of a script/movie. The longer I dwelled with this idea the more it “became” my writing. I began to think of ways that this could potentially serve as the actual dissertating process. Writing a mock-documentary became the focus of my study. Who were the people in the script and why were they the ones that were talking became my central question. The story became me watching *Advocate* as she had discussions with a few friends about teenage pregnancy and motherhood while watching the movie *Juno*. I began to think as three different people: first, a doctoral student analyzing movies and ideas, then the director of a documentary about how a producer creates a movie theme *and* also the producer of a movie about teenage pregnancy.

I wanted to know if it was possible to write about teenage pregnancy without referring to the teen as a deviant. I wanted this movie to tell a different story. One that was like *Juno*, yet not like *Juno*. I wanted to write a movie that challenged the “pregnant teen as deviant” mindset. But I was plagued by the question of how the general public might receive such a movie. Was it even possible to talk about teenage pregnancy without having a deviant view?

However, this concern led to me step back and wonder about more foundational questions, all of which became central to my study: In what ways is the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy constructed and portrayed in popular films? For example, how do these portrayals differ by race and class, are black teenage moms typically portrayed as hyper-sexualized, how often are white teenage moms portrayed as working class or in poverty, how are the fathers (across race and class) portrayed?

### **Methods**

Although this project is presented in an artistic manner I feel that all of these research questions *are* answered through the discussions, paintings and clips in the script. I feel that Advocate and Daisy Free-love both help to alter the image of teenage mother so that she is seen less as problem and more as possibility. Through their discussions with Poisonous, Smugly Do-Right and Struggle, I feel that they retheorize the teenage mom.

As a researcher situating this study in commitments to phenomenological methods (Vagle, 2010b), I must be constantly aware of phenomena associated with teenage motherhood. In this case, the phenomena is how society constructs teenage pregnancy. Dahlberg (2006) explains that “the word ‘phenomenon’ means ‘thing as intended’” (p. 12). Thus, as researchers, we should be aware that real meanings are not something we insert into the research but they are present already in the bond *connecting us with* the phenomena (Dahlberg, 2006). According to Giorgi (1997), we can only begin to grapple with the phenomena through analysis and description of how things are created in and by awareness of the elemental experience. As Heidegger (1998) explains, my main concern is with *being*, my being in particular, in order to make sure that the phenomenon, how society views pregnant teenagers, shows itself.

van Manen (2002), through Merleau-Ponty, “describes consciousness as embodied awareness of primordial experience. Consciousness is existence in and toward the world through the body. His phenomenology is existential, oriented to lived experience, the embodied human being in the concrete world” (<http://phenomenologyonline.com>). The study of the phenomenon can never produce unquestionable knowledge. There must be an openness to a rebirth of knowledge. This representation of my research data shows how the phenomena is not concrete through the various interpretations from each character. Heidegger (1998) clarifies this thought with:

We typically work with the different meanings that are present in the descriptions. We try to discover a pattern of meanings that partly is made up by differences and similarities among these meanings. However, in this “wading about” in the multitude of meanings it is important that we work actively with the emerging meanings, taking up one meaning and watching it as a figure against the others as background, then taking up another one making it a temporary figure, and so on. (p.14)

It is also important, while searching for the meaning that we are aware that the meaning of the phenomenon *belongs* to that phenomenon. And just as Gadamer (1975) discusses, we need to “distinguish the true prejudices, by which we *understand*, from the *false* ones, by which we *misunderstand*” (p. 298-299; also see Finlay, 2008). Throughout my research, my bridling (e.g., Dahlberg, 2006; Vagle, 2009) helped me be aware of my understandings and misunderstandings. When we let the phenomenon reveal itself we avoid placing meaning on the phenomenon that does not belong there. The objective of the researcher is to reflect on her own understandings and how they influence her research throughout data collection and analysis “and to devise ways of

containing their seductive power” (Finlay, 2008, p. 17). In order to do this I tried to address many different understandings throughout the script with the characters.

Finlay defines reflexivity as the “process of continually reflecting upon our interpretations of both our experience and the phenomena being studied so as to move beyond the partiality of our previous understandings and our investment in particular research outcomes” (Finlay, 2003a, p. 108; Finlay, 2008). One of the main ways that I am using phenomenological methods is by being *reflexive* through the bridling process. Dahlberg & Dahlberg (2003) state that the term “bridling” not only deals with the researcher’s pre-understandings but also the whole understanding of the phenomenon. “We bridle the understanding so that we do not understand too quick, too careless, or slovenly, or in other words, that we do not make definite what is indefinite” (Dahlberg, 2006, p. 16; also see Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2003). This became a statement that I pinned to my computer as I reviewed the data. It was evident as I wrote that sometimes my understandings were careless and came too quick but because I was looking at the phenomena through so many different lenses, I was able to catch these slovenly definitions. I often found myself shocked by the response that came from one character to another, realizing that I was catching myself in my own assumptions.

Vagle explained that, for him, bridling is a process of “constantly interrogating my own assumptions and understandings of each situation I encounter, especially in research” (M. Vagle, personal communication, December, 2010). Although I was always attempting to bridle and self-check throughout the data collection, analysis and writing, I find that I continue to bridle through sections that I thought were complete—that is, the script I have written continually shifts and changes. The ways in which I construct the characters, and their dialogue with one another, continually becomes something a bit different as think, re-think, write, and re-write. This

reemphasizes the idea that there opening up this phenomenon is not a definitive process and so my work will never truly be *complete* (Dahlberg, 2006; Vagle, Hughes, and Durbin, 2009). I constantly try to interrogate my own feelings and preconceived notions of the research. This interrogation was a struggle, but luckily always allowed for and created new ways of thinking about the phenomena. This is why I my bridling throughout the presentation of the script rather than discussing them in another section of this dissertation.

I entered into the research process thinking that I had a very open mind but throughout my initial work with teenage mothers I began to feel insecure about my own thoughts and understandings. I soon realized that my assumptions often got in the way of my work. In the following excerpt, I one can see how I continued to allow my assumptions to surface and my attempts to interrogate those assumptions. This passage was my attempt to recreate the thoughts I had during a discussion with some of the teenagers that I worked with. One of the women was discussing her home life leading up to her pregnancy. These were *my* words and assumptions during the discussion.

I assume that her mother was just like her. Got married young and had kids right away. I don't understand how she could give in so quickly to Jess moving in with her boyfriend when she has seen what happens with this kind of young relationship. Why didn't she stop her 14 year old child from ruining her life? Of course, she is just like a sister in age and maturity. She never had the chance to truly grow into a responsible adult before her daughter was already at the same age as she was when she married. And wouldn't life be easier without one more mouth to feed? Yuck!!! This disgusts me!! I can't believe these thoughts are actually present in my mind. I don't know why I can't get them out and yet they stick and make me feel soooooo dirty!!

Although this represents my feelings at the time of the discussion, it also shows my own struggle to fight societal views. Here I was thinking the very thing I am trying to resist.

By taking a reflexive (bridling) stance throughout the entire study, I was able to try to loosen that which holds me to societal views (Merleau-Ponty, 1995).

We do not want to cut them off and we *cannot* even cut them off as long as we live, but we must, as Merleau-Ponty encourages us to, loose them up in order to give us that elbow room that we need to see what is happening when we understand phenomena and their meanings. (Dahlberg, 2006, p.16).

This relates to Finlay's (2008) argument that we should do our best to try to shelve our "presuppositions and go beyond the natural attitude of taken-for-granted understanding" to look at the world with a sense of openness and wonder and yet still "reflexively restraining pre-understandings" (p. 2). She definitely expresses that "most phenomenologists would agree that this stance—or perhaps more accurately *process*—is one of the more (if not *the most*) significant dimensions of phenomenological research" (p. 2).

Openness is the mark of a true willingness to listen, see, and understand. It involves respect, and certain humility toward the phenomenon, as well as sensitivity and flexibility. To be open means to conduct one's research on behalf of the phenomenon. This ...shows how important it is...not to decide beforehand upon the methods by which the phenomenon should be studied. (Finlay, 2008; p.16; see also Dahlberg *et al*, 2008; van Manen, 2002)

#### Writing Tentative Manifestations of the Phenomenon

"Life—as we come to it and as it comes to others—is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 17). I found that representing this

data intertextually, through video, visual arts, and dialogue has presented as a form of narrative.

Reissman (2008) explained that each of the following becomes the narrative:

stories told by research participants (which are themselves interpretive), interpretive accounts developed by an investigator based on interviews and fieldwork observations (a story about stories), and even the narrative a reader constructs after engaging with the participant's and investigator's narratives. (p. 6)

The last two sentences of this quote describe exactly what this study has aimed to do.

Analyzing the data began by repeatedly watching and reading the script of the movie *Juno*. I then read and listened to my bridling journals. Initially, to create data, I marked each section in the movie that was appealing to me. This became a narrowing down process, which required me to move quickly through the text without thinking about why something stood out to me. This process involved marking any piece of the script or journal that jumped out at me or was of interest for whatever reason (Marshall, 1981; Seidman, 2006). While reducing the data I began "to analyze, interpret, and make meaning of it" (Seidman, 2006, p. 118). The analysis focused on the film and script in the beginning. I looked at the movie thinking about what seemed important to Juno's existence, which I call *moments*. I eventually made a chart marking these moments. I also marked differences between the script and the film.

As stated earlier, data collection was quite different in this study. The collection of data came straight from within my own thinking. As I invited people to watch movies with me that had teenage pregnancy in them, I explained that we would be watching and discussing with a focus on the teenage pregnancy or on the teenage mothers. This helped set the stage for the conversations which occurred throughout the movies and then again at the end of the viewing.



These conversations furthered my understanding of societal views and this is where my bridling began.

As I watched the movies alone and with others, I would write in my bridling journal. I bridled throughout my conversations around the movies and also after I left each group. Over the last year, my journal, as well as my audio recorder, traveled with me wherever I went. Whenever I had a thought while writing about the data, writing through the script, talking with individuals, or just moving about life, I added that to my journal. A small notebook was also with me at all times and I added comments and thoughts as they came to me throughout my day. Although my bridling journal entries began with paper and pen, I also turned to a more verbal format as I bridled outloud into my audio recorder. As stated earlier, the thoughts gathered in my bridling journals became my primary form of data apart from the movies themselves. I used this bridling to think through, analyze and create the characters present in the script.

This bridling, lead to tentative manifestations which are communicated through the intertextual relationship among the characters in the script, the use of the paintings, the video clips ,and the Podcast's of the director's notes. Manifestations in phenomenology are "the ways in which we find ourselves being in relation to the world through our day-to-day living" (Vagle, 2010b, p. 394). Therefore tentative manifestations are seen as "meaningful glimpses of phenomena– glimpses that acknowledge the inherent complexities and conflicts in trying to capture a tentative sense of others' intentional relations" ( Vagle, 2010b, p. 406). are *post-intentional* in that all meanings are assumed to swiftly change (Vagle, 2010a).

As I discuss the methods used in the production of this dissertation, I find it hard to write it as one text. It is multiple texts in one and "one of the main standards of textuality is intertextuality. It concerns the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon

knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts” (Mebuke, 2011). In short, intertextuality, as seen in the instructions given at the beginning of this web page, is the process whereby one text refers endlessly to other texts (their intertexts) and to their processes of social and cultural production (Fox, 1995). Intertextual analysis is the process whereby the analysis of one text is initiated into the processes and history of that text’s production. Agger (1990, p. 3) observes that intertextuality is a “...concept that indicates that various dialogues and negotiations are going on between texts and authors.” (Garrick, Keogh, Pendergast, & Dole, 2012).

To close, I describe how each “text” is constructed in this intertextual dissertation—my website.

### *Characters*

To develop the characters used in this script, I relied on multiple encounters with text. Having many conversations about teenage pregnancy around and through the movie text, *Juno*, I was able to use the experiences of others to build on my own experience with the phenomena of teenage pregnancy (Mebuke, 2011). Through many viewings of *Juno* I came to believe that people tend to base most of their opinions of most phenomena on their past experience--so much so, that in this case, watching *Juno* was so tightly woven with personal experiences (Bonifazio, 2007) that it became nearly impossible to pry apart. The characters I have created not only do the work of “representing” various interpretations, they try to capture glimpses of complications and contradictions.

I use each character to “tell [the story] from a different point of view or focalize [a view] through a different character” (Turk, 2011). At times the discussion between characters may seem somewhat exaggerated. My hope is that through these exaggerations the characters

and thus the subject of teenage pregnancy will appeal to all sorts of complicated emotions for those who interact with it.

### *Paintings*

Because I aim to reach out to an audience that transcends one consisting only of colleagues and those alternative readers and viewers, alternative representation and various forms of art are necessary in order to create a website that will have the reader “captivated by the spectacle” of teenage pregnancy (Barone, 2008). I hope that this form of representation will progressively lead to social awareness of the complexity of teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood (Sartre, 1988).

Following hooks’ (1994) lead, this representation of teenage pregnancy should promote future presentation of and engagement with text that “are defined as on the edge, as pushing limits, disturbing the conventional, acceptable politics of representation” (p. 4-5). My hope is that this allows for “emotion that is effectively expressed through art [as a] result of a thoughtful composition of significant subject matter into an aesthetic form in which that emotion is embodied” (Barone, 2008, p. 41). The art within the script act as a guide through that which is not easily understood by being “open, easy, and solicitous, while words are coded, abstract, and remote” (Kunka, 2001, p. 36).

### *Video Clips and Pod Casts*

The use of film and audio clips in the script helps my aim “to approach film in its specificity, as an experiential process as well as a stimulus to philosophical thought” (Powell, 2007). Both the pod casts and the clips are important to this dissertation because they do what written text and still frames cannot (Stam, 2000). They allow the ‘reader’ to see emotion in action. “In film, consciousness is determined by the “as-if,” a suspension of disbelief” meaning

that we put aside our understanding that film is not real in order to experience it as if it were real, thus allowing us to join in to the emotion of each scene (Shaw, 2008, p. 22).

Seeing that this is a post-intentional phenomenological study I must address the use of phenomenological analysis. Shaw (2008) explains that

phenomenological film analysis confronts theories of film spectatorship that statically divide the film experience between a viewing subject and an object viewed. Contrary to this dualism, phenomenology's immanent correlation of consciousness rather makes film experience reciprocally alive, eliding fixity.

The pod casts also allow me to insert information that is helpful to the text but might not fit into the script. This allows the reader to follow without a disruptive insertion. The reader can then use the podcast as they please to add to the text they are reading.

### *Comments*

The creation of interactive comment boxes throughout the script, but especially following paintings, creates a living text that acknowledges that “all reading, of course, involves some degree of participation by the reader” (Turk, 2011). Because my dissertation is interactive, individual voices of audience members may be raised in common concern—either within the artistic textual engagement itself (between reader and text), and/or afterwards, among members of an audience of readers or viewers. In these conversations, ideas and ideals may be shared for the purposes of an improved reality (Barone, 2008, p. 39).

The “process of interpolating co-textual and intertextual information may be prompted by the author, but it can only be completed by a reader who is both willing and able to collaborate on the construction of the text” (Turk, 2011). By allowing a space for textual interaction, I have

assured that the reader can make her own thoughts known and relevant to the societal awareness of the issues of teenage pregnancy.

## CHAPTER 8 IMPLICATIONS

To begin, just as Elliot Eisner said “my argument [in presenting in this manner] was that universities out to be places in which doctoral students could explore imaginatively new methods and .... You might say I was interested in pushing the boundaries of possibility” (Eisner, 2008).

More questions:

Arts-based research tends to create more questions through the work that it does.

Although, many are searching for answers, arts-based research can provides avenues in which to explore more questions about the research at hand. Thus arts-based research tends to produce more questions.

Eisner suggests that the “tension between the more literally oriented conclusions of conventional research and the metaphorical conclusions” of arts-based research are both necessary and have value for the advancement of education, especially the education of pregnant and parenting teenagers.

My hope is that through the exploration of this website, empathy may be established, connections made, perceptions altered, emotions touched, equilibria disturbed, [and] the status quo rendered questionable” (Barone, 2008) with those who formerly held negative feelings toward teenage mothers.

In fact, the ultimate goal of this specific project was to explore teen pregnancy and the views society ‘places’ on teenage mothers. The hope is that through the discussions held in the script and more importantly, the discussions that will occur because of this script, teachers,

administrators, academics, and society at large will recognize the need to support those teenage mothers who are striving to lead 'productive' lives.

In order to improve the educational lives of teenage mothers, as well as that of their children, more people need to be made aware of the prejudices surrounding these women. By exploring the lives of teenage mothers, listening to their stories, and following their children as they begin their educations society could begin to support these young mothers as they maneuver through life.

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