Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Science

of

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BA (American University of Paris, 2013)

“Young Adults’ Perceptions of Parents’ and Other Couple Relationships and Influences of These Perceptions on Their Own Romantic Relationships: An Exploratory Study”

Department of Psychology

Wednesday, April 13, 2016
2:00PM
Cornett Building
Room A228

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Marion Ehrenberg, Department of Psychology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Danu Stinson, Department of Psychology, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Natalee Popadiuk, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Marina Bettaglio, Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Research has consistently demonstrated the “inter-generational transmission of divorce.” In comparison to the patterns seen in families with continuously married parents, this research also points to a greater likelihood among young adults who experienced their parents’ divorce during childhood to consider leaving their own romantic partners, including spouses, when medium to low levels of satisfaction are felt. To contextualize under what circumstances and how young adults may be influenced by their perceptions of these family-of-origin dynamics, the present study explored young women’s narratives about their parents’ romantic relationships and another observable romantic relationship in their environment. These narratives included a general description of the romantic relationships, and queried perceptions of efforts invested by the parents in their relationship. Young women were also asked to clarify their expectations regarding how much effort is appropriate in romantic relationships. Twenty-two young women were interviewed and their narratives were analyzed using Charmaz (2006)’s grounded theory approach. Participants were active agents in the creation of meaning about their parents' romantic relationship and their parents' divorce. Their narratives were complex, sometimes paradoxical, and suggested participants understood some of the dynamics in their parents’ romantic relationships. The themes, which emerged from the perceptions of their parents’ romantic relationships, their parents’ mistakes and what they felt they have learned from witnessing their parents’ romantic relationships, provided several avenues of interest for future research and clinical practice.