Good Mother/Bad Mother

Cultural Motherhood from “Hansel and Gretel” to Coraline

Emily E. Culp
ENAM
BAD GOOD Mother
A Chronicle of Maternal Crimes, Minor Calamities, and Occasional Moments of Grace

Ayelet Waldman
My Research

• Early Modern Era (1400-1700)
• Victorian Era (1800’s)
  – Grimms’ “Hansel and Gretel” “The Juniper Tree”
  – Lucy Lane Clifford’s “The New Mother” (1882)
• Now
Early Modern Mothers

GOOD = silent, chaste, obedient, pious

BAD = Infanticidal Mother
Wicked Stepmother
Overly-Involved Mother
Wet-Nurse & Midwife
Witch: The Anti-Mom
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Mother</th>
<th>Witch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>Verbally aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaste</td>
<td>Promiscuous &amp; perverted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obedient</td>
<td>Wild &amp; insubordinate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pious</td>
<td>Flamboyantly sacrilegious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...the poor, prostitutes, postmenopausal, unmarried, widowed, or barren

Victorian Era

“On the maternal bosom the mind of nations reposes; their manners, prejudices, and virtues,—in a word, the civilization of the human race all depend on maternal influence.”

-Louis Aimé Martin

With great power comes great responsibility

...and blame!

“Hansel and Gretel”
“The Juniper Tree”
Public Views on Demographic Trends

% saying increase in each is ...  

- A bad thing  
- A good thing  
- No difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>A bad thing</th>
<th>A good thing</th>
<th>No difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single women having children</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People living together without being married</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried couples raising children</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay/lesbian couples raising children</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers of young children working outside the home</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women not ever having children</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of different races marrying each other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: “Don’t know/Refused” responses not shown.