

## **STEPFORD MOMS: The Cultural Compromise of Yuppie Mothers**

*Maternal love makes every woman slave* (Balzac)

By Nina Costanza

*Thanks to the post-boomer advent of competitive parenting, children no longer are allowed merely to have fun. Not even at birthday parties. No longer special days for cake and balloons, birthday parties now must be instructive. A "smart party" featured a paleontologist leading children around a junkyard looking for dinosaur bones. Whatever happened to pin the tail on the donkey? Over-achieving, guilt-ridden, day-care, quality-time, dual-career yuppie moms and dads have tossed the donkey into the recycling bin...and turned their kids' single special day into a didactic opportunity. These parents, after all, haven't been choking down coffee in two-hour commutes so their kids can climb trees and drool over mud pies. They've sacrificed sanity so their kids can have the best - whether they want it or not. (Kathleen Parker)*

Yuppie motherhood, comprised of the children of baby boomers and mothers of Generation X, is both a new phenomena and a regression to a Victorian model of mothering: New, as it connotes the contemporary generation of mothers classified as “yuppies”, and reactionary – mothering in retrograde – as a return to the Victorian era of responsible mothering when true womanhood was judged by purity, piousness, domesticity, and submissiveness. In an era when feminism is assumed as a behavioral norm, appropriated into social consciousness, or emblematic of popular mind-sets, commerce, and fashion, does this form of mothering represent a failure of feminism rather than its evolutionary progression, as yuppie dogma might presume? Purity, piousness, and domesticity – hold for both Victorian and yuppie mothers (whether working or stay-at-home yuppie mothers), as well as a moral superiority over their chosen method of mothering and family life set-ups. These mothers are ordained with dignity and increased authority at home, justifying their education and their roles in public life. Both are also submissive, but in significantly divergent ways. Victorian women were submissive to the husband’s authority, his arrangement of family life, and his designation of children’s roles in home and world. The Victorian world was not child-

centered, but patriarch-centered. Family life was set up to make a comfortable home world for a supporting father, to protect progeny from a hostile and immoral public world, and to produce children to perpetuate their class. The marketplace was considered unholy, while children were innocent and impressionable, and the family sacrosanct. The yuppie mother is also submissive, but not to her husband. In conjunction with her partner (with passing regard to feminism' treatises of gender equality), the yuppie mother is submissive to the needs of her children, or what she presumes these needs are, in order to breed future, ambitious, and well-armed competitors in an aggressive, lucrative world. Yuppie families are child-centered, and the typical yuppie mom believes herself to be self sacrificing and altruistic for the betterment of her child.