

ence pregnancy and birth needs to be acknowledged and deserves recognition as part of her family's story. But to use such simple calculations, hmmm, do the math — am I a 50 percent parent because my children are adopted? What is the grandparent who raises a grandchild — a 25 percent parent? When my sons cried their eyes out at the recent death of their father (by adoption), I can assure you it was not half-hearted.

EILEEN RASSI AYLING  
*Brooklyn*

From the photographs Gillian Laub took to illustrate the cover article by Kuczynski, you might easily conclude that the author is a rich young woman who can buy a baby the way other people buy a dress. This is partly right. To the author's credit, she does not stint on unflattering details while telling the complex story of how she came to meet and employ Cathy Hilling, who became her friend over the year in which they cooperated in the effort to bring a baby into the world.

Kuczynski is a good writer. Laub is a good photographer. But who

earned for this article was worth it. I think she and the woman who helped her have a son will regret this forever.

JOANNE MCCARTHY  
*Madison, N.J.*

I enjoyed the thoughtful account of Alex Kuczynski's experience of achieving motherhood with a surrogate.

She was very honest as she charted the progress she made in reconciling some of the less-than-charitable preconceptions that she had about surrogacy. She clearly illustrated that the surrogate mother, Cathy, is intelligent and was frank about the financial incentive. Why then did you choose to contrast the women with photographs that are such an obvious cliché?

CYNTHIA MARTIN  
*Seattle*

It was 10 years ago this month when I stood in the elevator at Bloomingdale's with my 1-month-old son. The other women in the elevator commented on my ability to fit into my jeans with such a young baby. I smiled and replied, "I didn't gain a lot of weight before he was born." The secret of my newly adopted son

Kuczynski's article about her journey to motherhood, I was bothered by one particular aspect of the article that she seemingly glosses over. Kuczynski mentions that Rebecca, the daughter of Cathy, her surrogate, "had been an egg donor to help pay her college tuition." As a woman and recent Ivy League graduate who has been courted by couples and organizations advertising for egg donors in campus publications, I was both intrigued and horrified by this statement. Intrigued because, admittedly, my friends and I would occasionally half-joke that if our finances ever got so bad, we could always sell our eggs; horrified that many young women in this country have apparently had no choice but to turn to the invasive and emotionally complicated procedure of harvesting their eggs to pay for the exorbitant costs of higher education.

While our nation can be proud of the technology that we developed to give children to the childless and recognize the profound fulfillment that children bring to families, we should also be ashamed by what students resort to in order to

little more respect than you show Rourke.

BOB FANCHER  
*Portland, Ore.*

I am delighted to learn that Mickey Rourke's career is getting back on track. Those of us who have admired his work over the years have missed him. In his overview of his filmography, however, Pat Jordan fails to mention Rourke's greatest film, "Barfly," with a semi-autobiographical screenplay by Charles Bukowski brought vividly to life by Barbet Schroeder. The protagonist, a poet and a fighter, struggles against "obviousness" in all its forms. The scene in which Rourke spots Faye Dunaway sitting across from him at the bar and says to the bartender, "She looks like a distressed goddess," is for the ages.

STEVEN SMITH  
*New Haven, Conn.*

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