Puberty has long been recognised as a difficult and upsetting process for individuals and families, but it is now also being widely described as in crisis. Reportedly occurring earlier and earlier as each decade of the twenty-first century passes, sexual development now heralds new forms of temporal trouble in which sexuality, sex/gender and reproduction are all at stake. Many believe that children are growing up too fast and becoming sexual too early. Clinicians, parents and teachers all demand something must be done. Does this out-of-time development indicate that children’s futures are at risk or that we are entering a new era of environmental and social perturbation? Engaging with a diverse range of contemporary feminist and social theories on the body, biology and sex, Celia Roberts urges us to refuse a discourse of crisis and to rethink puberty as a combination of biological, psychological and social forces.

**Puberty in Crisis**

_Celia Roberts_ is Senior Lecturer and Co-director of the Centre for Gender and Women’s Studies in the Department of Sociology at Lancaster University. She is a long-standing editor of the journal *Feminist Theory* and author of _Messengers of Sex: Hormones, Biomedicine and Feminism_ (Cambridge, 2007).
Puberty in Crisis: 
The Sociology of Early Sexual Development

CElia ROBERTs
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University’s mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107104723

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First published 2015

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Roberts, Celia, 1968-
Puberty in crisis : the sociology of early sexual development / Celia Roberts.
pages cm
ISBN 978-1-107-10472-3 (Hardback)
1. Puberty. 2. Hormones, Sex. I. Title.
QP84.4.R63 2015
612.6'61--dc23 2015006505

ISBN 978-1-107-10472-3 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.
This book is dedicated to my parents, Hugh and Hilary Roberts, in grateful recognition of the care and love with which they saw me through my childhood and beyond.
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Working on this book I have been helped and encouraged by my family, friends and colleagues and supported by my employer, Lancaster University, the European Research Council and Cambridge University Press. It’s difficult to parse the complex network of people who should be thanked, and I hope I have not left anyone out.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge the support of my partner, Adrian Mackenzie, who kept our shared life on a steady and enjoyable course, as well as reading numerous drafts and listening to my attempts to speak my argument out loud. His 2014 gig in Copenhagen made finishing this book an exciting adventure. Our sons, Connor and Callum Mackenzie, arrived in the early days of this research. Kindly, they have sometimes been a little bit interested in what I am doing. Much more marvellously, they have made life beyond the computer as compelling and exciting as possible: I will always be grateful to them for that. My wider family, Hugh and Hilary Roberts and Moya Mackenzie, my brother, my sisters- and brothers-in-law and my uncles and aunts, have been endlessly supportive and generous. Other ‘family’ friends – in Australia and the UK – have encouraged and helped me. I want to mention Ruth and Rex Burgess, Suzanne Eastwood, Sally and Dylan Bushell, and Mark Westcombe in particular.

My academic friends, students and colleagues – from Lancaster and elsewhere in the UK, from Australia and from Scandinavia – will find themselves in many places throughout this book. Academic research is always work-in-conversation: I could not have written this book without their multiple contributions. I want sincerely to thank Imogen Tyler, Maureen McNeil, Marja Vehviläinen, Lutz Sauerteig, Natalie Gill, Sung-Yueh Perng, Bruce Bennett, Katrina Roen, Jackie Stacey, Karen Throsby, kylie valentine, Robbie Duchinsky, Hilary Hinds, Anne Cronin, Maggie Mort, Debra Ferreday, Stacy Gillis, Sarah Kember, John Law, Pedro Pinto, Ericka Johnson, Cecilia Åsberg, Sari Irni, Kate McNicholas-Smith, Ali Hanbury, Brigit McWade, Becky Fish,
Acknowledgements

Li-Wen Shih, Claire Waterton, Anne-Marie Fortier, Lucy Suchman, Vicky Singleton, Suzanne Fraser, Cron Cronshaw, Joann Wilkinson, Mette Kragh-Furbo, Oscar Maldonado, Andrew Sayer, Catherine Waldby, Anni Dugdale, Mette Nordahl Svendsen and Brit Ross Winthereik for reading drafts, discussing ideas, inviting me to present this work and/or giving me particular assistance to get this book done.

Part of this work was supported by a grant from the European Research Council awarded to Ericka Johnson of Linköping University under the Seventh Framework Programme, entitled ‘Prescriptive Prescriptions: Prescribing Healthy Subjectivities’ (FP7/2007–2013 / ERC grant agreement no. 263657, PPPHS.) I have benefited enormously from Ericka’s generous inclusion of me in her inspiring research group. A large chunk of the book was written whilst I was on sabbatical leave in 2011. These extended periods of relative peace are essential and I am grateful to Lancaster University for maintaining this important academic tradition.

Three emerging scholars worked as research assistants for me during this project: Sung-Yueh Perng prepared an extensive scientific database; Natalie Gill helped me with the bibliography and permissions; and Brigit McWade did some heroic reference formatting work right at the very end. Their cheerful professionalism and high-quality work inspired me to get on with mine.

Earlier versions of some of the work in this book have been published in the European Journal of Women’s Studies, Subjectivity, Feminist Theory and Sexualities. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers and the editors of these journals for their help in sharpening my arguments. Similar heartfelt thanks go to the anonymous readers of the draft manuscript of this book. I was fortunate to receive excellent, detailed feedback from each of them, and I have really tried to respond to their comments in this revised version. I want also to thank John Haslam, Carrie Parkinson and Frances Brown from Cambridge University Press for their encouragement and assistance.