



Syracuse University Florence

**MATRICENTRIC FEMINISM: THEORY, ACTIVISM,
POLITICS,
PRACTICE AND REPRESENTATION**

May 2-4, 2018, Syracuse University
Piazza Savonarola 15, 50132, Florence

Conference Overview

The conference, “Matricentric Feminism: Theory, Activism, and Practice,” hosted by the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement with Syracuse University, Florence, positions mothers’ needs and concerns as the starting point for a theory and politics on and for women’s empowerment. Maternal scholars maintain that the category of mother is distinct from the category of woman and for women who are mothers, mothering is a significant, if not a defining dimension of their lives, and that, arguably, maternity matters more than gender. They emphasize as well that the category of mother is distinct from the category of woman and that many of the problems mothers face—social, economic, political, cultural, psychological, and so forth—are specific to women’s role and identity as mothers. Indeed, mothers are oppressed under patriarchy as women and as mothers. Consequently, mothers need a matricentric mode of feminism organized from and for their particular identity and work as mothers. Indeed, a mother-centred feminism is needed because mothers—arguably more so than women in general—remain disempowered despite forty years of feminism.

Matricentric feminism is explicitly matrifocal in its perspective and emphasis—it begins with the mother and takes seriously the work of mothering—and is multidisciplinary and multi-theoretical in its perspective. Overall, matricentric feminism, to paraphrase feminist writer and activist Marilyn Waring, seeks to deliver a mode of feminism in which mothers and mothering count. The conference will examine the aims, themes, and challenges of matricentric feminism from the perspective of theory, activism, and practice as well as from diverse and various cultural and disciplinary standpoints.

The conference considers what changes are needed in public-social policy, health, education, the workplace, the family, and the arts to effect full and lasting gender equality for mothers in the 21st century. The conference is multi- and interdisciplinary with scholars from fields as diverse

as women and gender studies, anthropology, health studies, law, children studies, religion, political science, English literature, visual art, and psychology. The sixty-seven presenters and three keynotes include social researchers, academics, policy-makers, activists, health professionals, and creative writers. Matricentric feminism is examined in countries as diverse as Canada, United States, Spain, Australia, Italy, Turkey, Israel, India, Finland, and Austria and from many maternal subject positions including indigenous, African-American Canadian, queer/trans, refugee, poor, young, and abused mothers. The conference features a keynote address by Australian scholar Petra Bueskens, as well keynotes by Genevieve Vaughan and Andrea O'Reilly.

The Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (MIRCI) is a scholarly and activist organization on mothering-motherhood, developed from the former Association for Research on Mothering at York University (1998-2010).

The initiative houses the Journal of the Motherhood Initiative (formerly The Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering), Mother Outlaws, and is partnered with Demeter Press. The founder and director of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement is Andrea O'Reilly.

Syracuse University runs one of the most storied study abroad programs in Florence. Since its founding in 1959, when the first 12 students arrived by ship, the program has grown to host some 700 students a year coming from the U.S., most often for one fall or spring semester. Over several decades the international staff and faculty have helped the program earn a reputation for making considerable efforts to culturally integrate its students, including by placing them with host families and requiring them to study Italian. It also vaunts a robust internship program, a renowned art history masters program and an undergraduate curriculum that significantly expands beyond traditional study abroad subjects, including the first women's and gender studies focus in Florence, started in 1990.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY IN FLORENCE - USEFUL INFORMATION

Taxis

In Florence you generally cannot hail a taxi and will have to either call for a pick up, ask the SUF front desk advisor to call you one, or find the nearest taxi stand to pick one up. If you plan on paying with a credit card, you will need to let them know this before getting in the taxi or when you are on the phone requesting one as most cars are not equipped with the POS credit card machine. The main taxi service numbers in Florence are 055.4390 and 055.4242.

Parking

There is metered parking around the Syracuse center. The closest parking lot is located three blocks away, an underground lot open 24 hours, at Via del Ponte Rosso 4.

Wifi

1. Eduroam network – (preferred) For those who have active accounts with an Eduroam consortium member institution (<https://www.eduroam.org/where/>). You need to log in with your institutional email address and password.
2. SUFGuest network – has some speed and traffic limitations. Password is Milan#44

Building access

For security reasons, conference presenters are required to wear their name tag once they have registered so the front desk clerk knows who they are. There is only one entrance to the Villa Rossa (at Piazza Savonarola 15) and it requires a keycard. Guests are buzzed in. Normally they are required to sign in but, for conference attendees, wearing their name tags can suffice. Therefore, remember to always wear your name badges.

Nearby restaurants

1. Ristorante Perseus Viale Don Minzoni 10/R Tel. 055-588 226; Open Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. Closed Sundays Delicious food in a great setting. You come here for the bistecca alla fiorentina and other roasted meats.
2. Edi House Piazza Savonarola, 8-9r Tel. 055-588886; Open daily for lunch and dinner
3. Farina 00 Viale G. Matteotti, 30 Tel. 055-4089038; Open daily for lunch and dinner Great pizzas and sandwiches. Take out available.
4. Antica Trattoria da Tito Via San Gallo, 112r Tel. 055-472475; Open Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. Closed Sunday Da Tito offers a fresh fish menu on Fridays.

Favorite second courses: Polpette (meatballs), the peposo (peppered beef stew), and of course the bistecca fiorentina. Open since 1913!

5. Trattoria Cesarino Via Giovan Battista Niccolini 16-r Tel. 055-2479169; Open daily for lunch and dinner Menu changes daily at this family run trattoria a block away from Piazza d'Azeglio. You will find traditional Tuscan fare with a very friendly wait staff who treat you like you are a part of their family.
6. Pane e Olio Via Faentina, 2/r Tel. 055-488381; Open daily for lunch and dinner The menu changes daily based on availability of produce, so whatever the table next to you is eating (or the waitress suggests) is what you should have! They usually serve a well-coordinated 3-4 course meal (including desert) for a very reasonable price.

Recommended attractions and events, tourist tips

1. Just a few blocks south of the Syracuse center on the way downtown, in Piazza Santissima Annunziata, is a recently opened museum that documents the history of the world's oldest orphanage, the **Ospedale degli Innocenti**. Famous as a monument of Renaissance architecture designed by Brunelleschi in 1419, it is still dedicated to the care of children, housing a nursery school and the global research office for UNICEF. You can still see the turnstile at the left end of the front porch where mothers left their babies centuries ago, and the museum contains a massive collection of the keepsakes left with the foundlings in hopes of being reunited with them.
2. The best place to revel in 'wisteria hysteria' is the Giardino Bardini, only recently opened to the public so still relatively unknown (Costa S. Giorgio, 2)
3. Check out the event listing for May at Girl in Florence (<http://girlinflorence.com/>). The blog itself is a great place for Florence recommendations.
4. This Design Sponge city guide for Florence is also great for recommendations: <http://www.designsponge.com/2013/06/florence-city-guide.html>
5. If you're really short on time, leave the Uffizi Gallery for your next visit. Seeing Michelangelo's David at the Accademia, on the other hand, is totally doable. Pro tip: go at 5:30pm when there's little-to-no line. It closes at 6:50pm so you'll have plenty of time. If you really want to visit the Uffizi, plan to spend 2-3 hours inside. Go around 3:30pm for shorter lines.



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MATRICENTRIC FEMINISM: THEORY, ACTIVISM, POLITICS, PRACTICE AND REPRESENTATION

May 2-4, 2018, Syracuse University
Piazza Savonarola 15, 50132, Florence, Italy

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2, 2018

- 11:00 am-12:00 pm** **REGISTRATION (ROOM 14, GROUND FLOOR) & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST (VILLA ROSSA GARDEN*)**
- 12:00 pm-1:15 pm** **WORDS OF WELCOME BY ANDREA O'REILLY, KEYNOTE ONE: PETRA BUESKENS, "MODERN MOTHERS' DUAL IDENTITIES AND THE NEW SEXUAL CONTRACT," CHAIRED BY ANDREA O'REILLY (ROOM 12 & 13/GROUND FLOOR)**
- 1:15 pm-1:30 pm** **BREAK**
- 1:30 pm-3:00 pm** **CONCURRENT SESSION A1-A3**

SESSION A1: MOTHERS AND MOTHERING IN ACADEME (ROOM 'LA LOGGIA'/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Lori Chambers

- Victoria Bailey, "Turned Away at the Door: Challenges to Entering Feminist Academia as a Mother"
- Lisa Bednar, "Speaking of Motherhood, I Need to Leave Early to Pick up my Child Today: The role of Matricentric Feminism in Supporting Indigenous Students"
- Erin Graybill Ellis, "Pregnancy and Birth in the Ivory Tower"
- Adwoa N. Onuora, "M(othering) and Violence on Sacred Ground"

SESSION A2: MOTHERS IN LITERATURE (ROOM 35/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Karen Lane

- Sheila Rabillard and Karen Bamford, “I Have Kept You Inside From the Beginning”: Marie Clements's Maternities”
- Melissa Gjellstad, “Millennial Mothers in Norwegian Literature”
- Ürün Şen-Sönmez and Beyhan Uygun Aytemiz, “From Sacred to Feminist Motherhood: A Survey of the Modern Turkish Novel”

SESSION A3: SUPPORTING AND EMPOWERING MOTHERS (ROOM 31 & 32/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Meaghan Brady Nelson

- Jamie Day, “Divine Mommy: Women Supporting Women under the Transformative Energy of the Divine Feminine”
- Andrea O'Reilly, “‘Have Your Cake and Eat It Too’: Challenging and Changing Normative Gender Roles Through Partnerships”
- Nitza Berkovitch (Presenter) and Shlomit Manor, “Grandmothers Providing Childcare: Between Familism and Neoliberalism”
- Eva Doherty Gremmert, “Empowering Mothers of Special Needs Children”

3:15 pm-3:30 pm **COFFEE BREAK (VILLA ROSSA GARDEN*)**

3:30 pm-5:00 pm **CONCURRENT SESSION B1-B3**

SESSION B1: MATERNAL RELATIONS (ROOM ‘LA LOGGIA’/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Lisa Bednar

- Myra Sabir, “The Mother Controls the Nature of Perception & Perception Controls Everything”
- Joan Garvan, “Mothers and the Play of Meaning in Time and Place”
- Hayley Edwardson, “A Mother’s Story”
- Veeksha Vagmita, “Family (and) Intrigues: Coping With/Through Mothering”

SESSION B2: MATRIARCHAL POLITICS AND MYTH (ROOM 35/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Michelle Hughes Miller

- Kaarina Kailo, “Terra Feminarum—Myth or Reality? New Evidence on Ancient Northern Mother-Cultures”
- Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth, “Matriarchal Politics and the Vision of a New Society”

SESSION B3: MOTHERING, MOTHERHOOD AND FEMINISM (ROOM 31 & 32/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Fiona Green

- Bruna Alvarez Mora, “Feminism and Motherhood in Spain”
- Fiona Joy Green, “Practicing Matricentric Feminist Mothering”
- Annika Ljung-Baruth, “A Motherly Society: Scandinavian Feminisms and the Welfare State”
- Candace Johnson, “Responsibility, Affective Solidarity, and Transnational Maternal Feminism”

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2018

8:30 am-9:00 am **REGISTRATION (ROOM 14, GROUND FLOOR) & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST (VILLA ROSSA GARDEN*)**

9:00 am-10:15 am **KEYNOTE TWO: GENEVIEVE VAUGHAN, “THINKING A MATRICENTRIC FUTURE INTO BEING,” CHAIRED BY MICHELLE TARNOPOLSKY (ROOM 12 & 13/GROUND FLOOR)**

10:15 am-10:30 am **REFRESHMENT BREAK (VILLA ROSSA GARDEN*)**

10:30 am-12:00 pm **CONCURRENT SESSION C1-C3**

SESSION C1: MATRIARCHAL POLITICS AND MYTH (ROOM ‘LA LOGGIA’/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Eva Doherty Gremmert

- Peggy Reeves Sanday, “The “Matrixial”, the “Matrilineal,” and “Me Too””
- Vicki Noble, “Female Cycle Central to Human Evolution”
- Erella Shadmi, “From Fractals of Insecurity to Full Safety: Applying the Maternal Gift Paradigm”
- Kirre Koivunen, “Women at Risk: Gift Economy's Possibilities and Matriarchal Social Systems Worldwide”

SESSION C2: MOTHERING AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (ROOM 35/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Jamie Day

- Lori Chambers and Nadia Verrelli, “Motherhood Denied: R. v. Ryan and Child Custody”
- Wachana Sermsathanasawat, “Changing Landscapes in Domestic Violence Research: A Case Study of (and by) a Thai Family”
- Nicole Hill, “When Becoming a Mother is Violent: Understanding Obstetric Violence as Violence Against Mothers”

- Catarina Barata, “The Normalization of Violence in Childbirth: Pathologization, Authoritative Knowledge and Internalized Technologies of Gender at Play in the Biomedical Context”

SESSION C3: MOTHERING AND REPRODUCTION (ROOM 31 & 32/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Myra Sabir

- Haile Eshe Cole, “The Life and Death of Black Motherhood”
- Elena Skoko, “Addressing Obstetric Violence From the Perspective of Maternal Gift Economy”
- Susan Hogan, “To What Extent are Hospital Practices, That are Iatrogenic in Nature, Implicated in Post-natal Distress?”
- Eva-Maria Müller-Markfort, “A Strong Mother Births a Healthy Baby Who Becomes a Strong Mother.... Not Any More! About the Loss of Self Confidence, Autonomy and Ability of Today’s Mothers to Bring Children Into the World”

12:00 pm–1:00 pm LUNCH: PROVIDED (VILLA ROSSA GARDEN*)

1:00 pm-2:30 pm CONCURRENT SESSION D1-D3

D1: MOTHERS, AGENCY, AND RESISTANCE (ROOM ‘LA LOGGIA’/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Katie Bodendorfer Garner

- Katie Bodendorfer Garner, “Letting Lady Luck Get the Credit: How Modern US Mothers Conceptualize Race and Class as Being “Lucky””
- Ashley Balsom, “Heave Away: Women’s Experience With Mobile Work and Family Planning in Atlantic Canada”
- Joan Garvan, “Transition to Parenthood: Critical Tipping Point on the Road to Gender Equality?”

D2: FEMINIST RESISTANCES (ROOM 35/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Kristin Marsh

- Rachel Lamdin Hunter, ‘The Customer is Always Right’: Mothers and Welfare Services”
- Avigail Erenkrantz Hotzen, “I Did Not Want to Buy Barbie dolls - A Standpoint of a Feminist Lesbian Mother, Raising a Transgender Daughter”
- Andrea Fleckinger, “Child Protection Social Work in the Context of Gender Based Violence–Which Factors Favorite or Protect Mothers From a Secondary Victimization?”
- Simone Bohn, “Promoting Men's Rights, Advancing a Matricentric Feminist Agenda. The Case of Daddy Institute in Brazil”

D3: MOTHERS, MOTHERING, FILM, AND POPULAR CULTURE (ROOM 31 & 32/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Nicole Hill

- Michelle Hughes Miller, “Hollywood’s Matricentric Feminism in Bad Moms and A Bad Moms Christmas”
- Kira Hussing, “Young Single Motherhood in Contemporary German Film”
- Lynn O’Brien Hallstein, “Beyoncé’s Second Maternal Performance: Birthing Questions for Matricentric and Intersectional Feminisms”
- Michelle Tarnopolsky, “From Childless to Childfree: Italian Documentarians Flipping the Motherhood Narrative”

2:30 pm-2:45 pm **BREAK**

2:45 pm-4:15 pm **CONCURRENT SESSION E1-E3**

E1: MOTHERS, OPPRESSION, AND RESISTANCE (ROOM ‘LA LOGGIA’/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Amy Westervelt

- Karen Lane, “What Lies Beneath: Mothering, Migration and Social Inclusion”
- Tracy-Smith Carrier (*Presenter), Andrea Lawlor, and Sarah Benbow, “Engendering Economic Stability: Exploring a Matricentric Feminist Approach to Poverty Reduction for Mothers in Ontario”
- Sinith Sittirak, “My Mother and (Me and) Trees: Revisiting My Mother’s Backyard” Knowledge through a Postcolonial Feminist Lens”

E2: MOTHERING AND ART (ROOM 35/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Astrid Joutseno

- Hadara Schefflan Katzav, “Mamartist - The Voice of the Mother in Contemporary Israeli art
- Kirsten Stromberg, “With-In Mothering”
- Meaghan Brady Nelson and Jennifer Combe, “Mothering-ArtAdemics: Intersecting Identities of Strength”

E3: MOTHERHOOD STUDIES (ROOM 31 & 32/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Lynn O’Brien Hallstein

- Tatjana Takševa, “Motherhood Studies and the Motherhood Movement in the Context of Women’s and Gender Studies”

4:15 pm-5:45 pm **WINE RECEPTION (VILLA ROSSA GARDEN*)**

FRIDAY, MAY 4, 2018

8:30 am-9:00 am **REGISTRATION (ROOM 14, GROUND FLOOR) & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST (VILLA ROSSA GARDEN*)**

9:00 am-10:00 am **KEYNOTE THREE: ANDREA O'REILLY, "THE BABY OUT WITH THE BATHWATER: THE DISAVOWAL AND DISAPPEARANCE OF MOTHERHOOD IN 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY ACADEMIC FEMINISM," CHAIRED BY PETRA BUESKENS (ROOM 12 & 13/GROUND FLOOR)**

10:00 am-10:15 am **COFFEE BREAK (VILLA ROSSA GARDEN*)**

10:15 am-11:45 am **CONCURRENT SESSION F1-F3**

SESSION F1: MATRICENTRIC NARRATIVES (ROOM 'LA LOGGIA'/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Joan Garvan

- Mariana Thomas, "Cave Research: The Rise of the Matricentric Narrative"
- Olivia Heal, "One Speaks as a Mother..."
- Ortal Slobodin, "Between the Eye and the Gaze: Maternal Shame in the Novel "We Need to Talk about Kevin""

SESSION F2: MOTHERING, PUBLIC POLICY, THE ECONOMY, AND WORK (ROOM 35/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Rachel Lamdin Hunter

- Amy Westervelt, "Putting the Policy Cart before the Culture Horse: Lessons from Japan"
- Robyn Lee, "Mothers on the Market: Economies of Human Milk Exchange"
- Kristin Marsh, "Professors as Other-Mothers: The Changing Landscape of Higher Education and Increased Burden of Care"

11:45 am-12:00 pm **COFFEE BREAK (VILLA ROSSA GARDEN*)**

12:00 pm-1:30 pm **CONCURRENT SESSION G1-G2**

SESSION G1: MOTHERS AND POPULAR CULTURE (ROOM 'LA LOGGIA'/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Maki Motapanyane

- Astrid Joutseno, "Mothering Online: Subjectivity as Technology and Practice"
- Maki Motapanyane, "Standing Up to Shut it Down: Maternal Humour and its Uses for Matricentric Feminism"

SESSION G2: MOTHERS RE-STORYING AUTISM: BEYOND THE CARE-OPPRESSION BINARY (ROOM 35/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Patty Douglas

- Patty Douglas and Katherine Runkswick-Cole, “Re-storying Mothering Stories of Autism”
- Margaret F. Gibson, “Paperwork as Spectacle: Autism and Motherhood in the First Person”
- Estée Klar-Wolfond, “Moving Inclusion: Rethinking Autism, Support and Access”

SESSION G3: FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION (ROOM 31 & 32/TOP FLOOR)

CHAIR – Susan Hogan

- Susan Hogan, “Mothers Make Contemporary Art”

*If raining, coffee/refreshment breaks, lunch, and reception will be held in “The Limonaia”

Keynote Presenter Abstracts

Modern Mothers' Dual Identities and the New Sexual Contract

Petra Bueskens

This paper examines the 'new sexual contract' in late modernity that leaves women strung out between the promise of autonomy in the public sphere and the demands of motherhood that isolate and intensify mothering work in the home. I examine the twin social discourses of emancipation and constraint developing an account of women's dual and conflicted identities (and roles) as 'individuals' and mothers. One of the difficulties with the polarised accounts of gender in late modernity – the 'rise of woman' on the one hand (Rosin, 2012) and the 'stalled revolution' on the other (England, 2010; Davis, Winslow & Maume, 2017) is that *they both capture fundamental realities* and that these realities are themselves dialectically related. Women are now free as *individuals* and it is this freedom that is motivating their choices, for example, to delay marriage and motherhood, to gain an education and develop careers; on the other hand, the same structures that enable women as 'individuals' are implicated in the difficulties women experience as *mothers* (Bueskens, 2018). This is because the pressures faced by mothers are a direct result of the rationalisation and individualisation that frees them up in the rest of society. This, I argue, is at the core of the dual role problematic, the resolution of which is the central unfinished business of feminism.

The Baby out with the Bathwater: The Disavowal and Disappearance of Motherhood in Feminism

Andrea O'Reilly

The category of mother is distinct from the category of woman and thus many of the problems mothers face—social, economic, political, cultural, psychological, and so forth—are specific to women's role and identity as mothers. Mothers are oppressed under patriarchy as women and as mothers. Indeed motherhood is the unfinished business of feminism. Consequently, mothers need a feminism of their own, one that positions mothers' concerns as the starting point for a theory and politic of empowerment. I term this new mode of feminism matricentric feminism. The paper will introduce the central principles and aims of matricentric feminism and then explore its relationship to academic feminism. The paper will argue that matricentric feminism has largely been ignored by feminist scholars and has yet to be incorporated into academic feminism. In making this claim I am not saying that there is no feminist scholarship on motherhood, but rather that matricentric feminism remains peripheral to academic feminism. The paper will argue that as feminism has grown and developed as a scholarly field, it has incorporated various theoretical models and diverse perspectives to represent the specific concerns/experiences of particular groups of women; global feminism, queer feminism, third wave feminism and womanism. In contrast, I argue, academic feminism has not likewise recognized or embraced a feminism developed from and for the specific experiences/concerns of mothers, what I have termed matricentric feminism. The paper will examine the disavowal of motherhood in twentieth century academic feminism and the disappearance of motherhood in twenty-first century academic feminism. Possible reasons for the exclusion of matricentric feminism will then be considered: they include confusing mothering with motherhood, the conflation of matricentric feminism with maternalism and gender essentialism, and the cultural ascendancy of postmaternal

thinking. Overall, the paper argues that academic feminism, in its disavowal and erasure of materiecentric feminism, has indeed thrown the baby out with bathwater.

Thinking a Matricentric Future Into Being

Genevieve Vaughan

The market merged early with Patriarchy to create a *biopathic* economy with a self-perpetuating ideology/worldview, within that we all subsist today. Creating a *Matricentric Society* will require a radical change in thinking. We need to conceive of the identity of our species in a very different way. *Gatherer - Hunter* societies provide numerous examples of non-hierarchical and cooperative living before or contemporaneously with, Patriarchy (Narvaez). Past and present matriarchal societies - *not mirror images of patriarchy* - provide such evidence as well (Goettner-Abendroth). Patriarchy has over sentimentalized and discredited mothering, but it has not understood it as the model for our place in the world: for cognitive processes, economics, language, philosophy, and an understanding of our entire species' identity. We need not only just promote matricentric feminism in academia, but to also radically reframe the disciplines of academic patriarchy in terms of mothering/being mothered. To this end I will give the examples of reframing that I have been working on particularly regarding the economy and language but involving many other subjects as well.

Thinking a matricentric future into being requires us, I believe: a) to realize that it might be possible to create a non-violent revolution in this manner. b) To see Patriarchal Capitalism as the ever-worsening problem. c) To envision the already existing alternative and bring forward its real-life positive character. d). To recognize that our species is not fundamentally patriarchal but matricentric (which will give us the hope to be able to persist). e) To generalize the maternal model to society at large (men included) giving us common guidelines for *biotropic* behavior. f) To take seriously the examples of Indigenous societies that have not yet lost their maternal center. g) And, finally, to coordinate our thinking in a collective paradigm shift and find effective ways of communicating this vision.

Regular Presenter Abstracts

Feminism and Motherhood in Spain

Bruna Alvarez Mora

The feminism movement in Spain at the end of the XXth century did not claim motherhood and mothering as a social fact (Marre, 2012 en Briggs et al., 2012). Probably because during Franco Dictatorship (1939-1975), motherhood was considered a mandate for women (Valiente, 2003). Feminist movements fought for women's education, equality in labour market, political participation, divorce (1981), access to contraceptives (1978) and abortion (1985, under three circumstances). However, motherhood, mothering and care were not included in these claims. Women claimed for not having to be mothers (Establier, 2004). Consequently, it created two dichotomous models of women: the professional-independent, autonomous, and with economic resources-, and the mother – carer, stay-at-home, sacrificed and “bad worker” (Alvarez, 2017).

Through seven in-depth interviews to feminists, academics and politicians, this paper analyzes the discourses of institutional feminism (Reverter, 2011) about motherhood. I suggest that institutional feminism works as a mechanism of reproductive governance (Morgan and Roberts, 2012)–mechanisms that produce, control, and monitor reproduction. The rejection of motherhood by public figures that represented institutional feminism consider motherhood as a private life circumstance which contributes to the lack of public policies supporting motherhood. Consequently, this situation helps us to understand low fertility rates in Spain.

Turned Away at the Door: Challenges to Entering Feminist Academia as a Mother

Victoria Bailey

In this reflective presentation I will use my own challenges of accessing academia (by ways of completion of an MA in women's studies and now a PhD in feminist focused creative writing) as a mature, immigrant, mother of three (with children from different relationships) and barriers that are specific to mothers' academic success. I will use aspects of my own experience (based on experiences with academia in Canada, the UK and Europe) to exemplify and/or introduce how these barriers and challenges can be, and are, realized, and ultimately how this limits feminist progress not only within academia but in so many other social realms that rely on, or look to, academia as a key, or sole, source of credible information, research and advice. Ultimately academia is, at root, a patriarchal system and in this presentation I will also reflect on how we can support mothers to access this traditionalist system to promote and enable their contribution to effective, systemic social change.

Heave Away: Women's Experience With Mobile Work and Family Planning in Atlantic Canada

Ashley Balsom

Mobile work is essential to life in Atlantic Canada. Many individuals rely on this work to provide for their families. Although this type of work is prevalent in this population, little is known about how mobile work has impacted family planning, fertility and the families themselves. This study will examine a large mother population from the Canadian province of

Newfoundland and Labrador and examine the impact that mobile work has had in various facets of their lives. Particularly we will explore how mobile work has influenced their family planning and infertility as well as completing comparison between mothers who are involved in a mobile work relationship, single mothers and coupled mothers who aren't involved in a mobile work relationship. In our sample of 1064 mothers we had 437 respond that they were currently in a mobile relationship. Of the mothers who were involved in a mobile relationship and experienced fertility difficulties 44% believed that mobile work impacted their family planning and 47% of mothers believed that mobile work impacted their conception process. Further analysis will be completed to understand the relationship between mobile work and its effects on families. To our knowledge, this study is unique to the province and has the potential to guide policy and programmes aimed at better supporting households of mobile workers here in Canada and elsewhere in the world. It is hoped that the results of the research can contribute to improvements in health service delivery to better adapt to the reproductive needs and maternal health services of working couples engaged in employment-related geographical mobility.

The Normalization of Violence in Childbirth: Pathologization, Authoritative Knowledge and Internalized Technologies of Gender at Play in the Biomedical Context

Catarina Barata

In a national context where home birth is commonly associated with a recent past of material privation and poor health conditions, the women who are nowadays choosing to give birth at home in Portugal are often regarded as irresponsible and criticized for unnecessarily putting their own lives and their babies' at risk (Fedele 2016). In the relatively recent process of the medicalization of childbirth that occurred in the last 40 years, the hospital, perceived as a conquest of the modern civilization, is viewed as the only appropriate place for labour and childbirth (White and Schouten 2014).

Departing from one episode in which a woman doctor who had a traumatic experience of obstetric violence in the hospital severely criticizes another woman who had a good home birth experience for her option, this paper reflects on the multiple factors that contribute to the normalization of institutional violence in childbirth, looking at three main factors. The pathologization of the female body as a defective, unstable, dangerous and untrustworthy deviation from the male body, considered the prototype of the well functioning body-machine, thus informing the perception of risk in childbirth and justifying the submission to technological interventions as a way to control the bodily processes and make them function properly (Martin 1987; Davis- Floyd 1992); issues of power relations and economic interests related to the authoritative knowledge invested in health professionals over women's agency and knowledge of their own bodies (Jordan 1978; Rothman 1982); and the internalized technologies of gender that produce and reproduce women's experiences, meanings, and their very selves in the social world, playing a major role in disciplining women and their bodies during childbirth (Foucault 1979; Martin 2002). By examining the ways in which decisions, behaviors and intimate practices are structured by social institutions, cultural conceptions and the political economy, we hope to shed some light on entrenched behaviors of structural violence against women, not rarely perpetrated by women themselves.

Speaking of Motherhood, I Need to Leave Early to Pick up my Child Today: The Role of Matricentric Feminism in Supporting Indigenous Students

Lisa Bednar

The year 2018 marks 10 years since Beverley Jacobs responded to the Government of Canada's apology for residential schools by asking that Indigenous women and mothers be respected. In this paper, I synthesize current research with my observations of the heavy loads carried by Indigenous mothers who are post-secondary students. I work closely with students in their Northern Manitoba communities, and these experiences reveal the need for us to leverage all that we know about the needs of mothers in all realms – public, private, materialist and spiritual- in order to replace the patriarchal with the matricentric. Being a student, and a mother, means continually reconciling their academic goals with the needs of their families and communities- all within the context of the cultural trauma of colonization. I present my experience of praxis – where my matricentric feminism, was met with stories and teachings from Cree, Anishnaabe and Dene students, and how this has radically transformed the way in which we are able to describe, and study, mothering, child development and family life. As a passionate, creative mother with a European settler family tree, I describe how matricentric feminism underpins my optimistic efforts to collaborate with others who envision a Canada that truly respects Indigenous motherwork.

Grandmothers Providing Childcare: Between Familism and Neoliberalism

Nitza Berkovitch (Presenter) and Shlomit Manor

We are currently witnessing a “care deficit” and a mounting demand for child-care, both of which are due to changing employment patterns and the growing numbers of working mothers with young children. Researchers have noted that grandparents often become the providers of this "service," exploring the factors that affect its "demand" and "supply." What is missing, however, is an examination of the cultural conceptions that (a) take for granted mothers' employment as the cause for the care deficit and (b) the translation of this "demand" and "supply" into normative expectations that grandparents, mainly grandmothers, will serve as care providers. Focusing on (b), we explore the cultural understanding of grandmotherhood in Israel, a highly familist society, yet one that has undergone profound processes of individualization and neo-liberalization.

Using in-depth interviews of 20 women Jewish retirees, we investigate how Israeli grandmothers negotiate the, at times, conflicting imperatives shaped by familist and individualistic ideologies. In doing so, they manage to constitute themselves as the "new grandmother," thus following the individualistic imperative of “it's me time,” while, simultaneously, to follow the "good mother" imperative, which, in the Israeli context, means they are expected to help their adult children whenever needed. Thus, neoliberal labor market practices and state policies, i.e. increasing demands on workers' time while cutting affordable child services and young family assistance, appear to be operating in tandem with and maintaining gendered moral rationalities. In other words, familism and individualism operate in opposition but they also—paradoxically—work together to enable the coexistence of a neo liberal political economy and an intimate moral economy based on love, commitment and the “good mother” ideology.

Promoting Men's Rights, Advancing a Matricentric Feminist Agenda. The case of Daddy Institute in Brazil

Simone Bohn

It is widely known that patriarchal normativity creates and constantly reinforces gender oppression, as it overburdens women in their childbearing and childrearing years. What is less explored is the extent to which it also afflicts men. But not all kinds of men: in particular, those who believe that they should have equal rights to parenting and especially to partaking in all phases of childrearing. This paper focuses on the work of the non-governmental organization called The Daddy Institute from Brazil, which argues that the institutionalization of patriarchal norms in several social spaces deprives fathers from developing socially-desirable gender-egalitarian parental skills, and ultimately from bonding with their own kids. Using extensive archival research and in-depth semi-structured interviews, this paper shows that the expansion of a bundle of men's rights is central to the advancement of a matricentric feminist agenda.

Letting Lady Luck Get the Credit: How Modern US Mothers Conceptualize Race and Class as Being "Lucky"

Katie Bodendorfer Garner

Over the past two years, I have been traveling the United States interviewing mothers about the culture of motherhood and their option regarding childcare. Most, but certainly not all, mothers identify a white, college-educated, socially progressive, and middle-class. When asked about how class and race impact their childcare choices, nearly all the women have acknowledged that these factors have played a huge role in allowing them to secure care solutions that they find acceptable, even beneficial, to their families. Many of the women stated that they are quite "lucky" when it comes to affording childcare, having a good spouse, and being employed in positions that support them as mothers. What struck me, though, is a two-pronged pushback to the term luck. First, structural forces that oppress women of color and women who are financially insecure clearly have to do with more than luck, and by claiming that they themselves have been lucky they in turn facilitate an easy dismissal of this topic. On the other hand, comments regarding luck also diminish these women's own hard work when it came to preparing for and selecting employment, finding and staying with a partner who is a financial contributor and/or supportive ally, and generally carving out a means of being a successful parent in a country that is increasingly hostile toward government programs that many families would find useful. My presentation is designed to interrogate this topic, reconcile these competing concepts and garner input from participants regarding their own concept of luck specifically as it is contextualized within frameworks of class, race, and gender in the 21st century.

Mothering-ArtAdemics: Intersecting Identities of Strength

Meaghan Brady Nelson and Jennifer Combe

Using personal narratives, as a feminist approach to producing knowledge, we describe, and validate through theoretical references, how the interdependent roles of artist, academic, and mother reinforce one another, and make them stronger within each role. This approach, while critical of societal structures that fail to support working mothers and young children, outlines the benefits of creative practice, teaching, and mothering rather than viewing the experience as a

deficit. Through interwoven personal narratives the authors reflect on their journeys becoming mothers on the tenure-track and reinventing their artmaking practices as academic mothers. Each subtopic outlines individual experiences, offering the reader two different paths toward applying for tenure while creating a family. Through our narratives we illustrate the ways in which our art practices grew when becoming mothers, due in part to time constraints, a desire to work without toxic art materials, and with conceptual shifts that address mothering in our artmaking. In conclusion, we argue for increased structural change to support successful mothering academics that ranges from increasing partner participation around domestic work to federally funded, mandated maternity and paternity leave.

Motherhood Denied: R. v. Ryan and Child Custody

Lori Chambers and Nadia Verrelli

This presentation will focus on the case of R. v. Ryan, about which we are writing a book. Nicole Doucet (then Ryan) was a victim of coercive control and called the RCMP multiple times seeking protection. Her pleas were ignored, despite a road rage conviction and other evidence that Mike Ryan was violent. In desperation, Doucet accepted an offer to have her husband killed and was caught in an undercover sting operation. Before the case could go to trial, custody of the couple's daughter was awarded to the abusive Mike Ryan. While Doucet was acquitted at trial, the Supreme Court of Canada overturned the ruling, producing a doctrinal interpretation of duress. Nonetheless, the Court took the unusual step of issuing a stay of proceedings. Further, the Court castigated the RCMP for failing to protect Ms. Doucet. An investigation of the RCMP's conduct was undertaken by the Commission for Public Complaints and the RCMP was absolved of any wrong doing. The Report invalidated Ms. Doucet's trauma and fear and rendered invisible the systemic sexism of police services. Throughout these proceedings, the fact that Doucet was trying to protect her child, who had expressed deep fear of her father, was ignored. This talk will use the evidence from this case to explore the extreme vulnerability of mothers in the context of domestic violence.

The Life and Death of Black Motherhood

Haile Eshe Cole

This presentation begins with the finding that in the United States, black women are 3 to 4 times more likely to die from pregnancy related complications and black infants are 2.5 times more likely to die before their first birthday. Based on research conducted in Austin, TX, this research situates concrete ethnographic experiences as well as other qualitative methods alongside the larger repertoire of quantitative health literature on birth disparities. It incorporates an understanding of Black women and mother's experiences historically in the United States and includes an analysis of the ways in which political processes such as segregation, policy, and social movements have larger impacts on health. It considers how state-level and national rates of maternal mortality are impacted by on-going processes of structural inequality and highlights the increased connection between racism, stress, and the concrete impacts on black women's maternal health outcomes. As ground zero in the battle for reproductive choice and access to reproductive health services, Texas is a critical location from which to analyze the intersecting politics of economic inequality and state regulation of the reproductive body in contemporary struggles for reproductive justice.

Divine Mommy: Women Supporting Women Under the Transformative Energy of the Divine Feminine

Jamie Day

Being a mother and being a woman is hard. No one can deny that. But, we don't have to go through it alone and we don't have to be so serious about it! Support and transformation can also be found in laughter, interaction, connection, understanding, and acceptance. When we can come together, woman to woman, and explore different aspects of what it is like to be a woman and mother with meaningful practices, support, understanding, and love; introspection, growth, and intergenerational healing can occur. Divine Mommy is a dedicated women's circle with a curriculum focused on bringing women together to tap into intuition, maternal wisdom and matrifocal perspectives. The group channels the Divine Feminine energy to 'mother the mothers' and invoke the Goddess within by balancing the Sacred Masculine and Sacred Feminine, reawakening ancient feminine wisdom, and creating a safe space for women to heal internal wounds and traumas as well as the external bonds between women. During this presentation, participants will connect, step into the present moment, explore their own behavioral manifestations and understandings of interdependence vs. independence, experience childlike whimsy and joy, become familiar with the Divine Mommy Program, and recognize the need for women to support women in a nonhierarchical environment of shared insights, recognitions, and affection. The Divine Mommy program has been presented in the United States as weekly workshops, retreat weekends, day-long immersions, and individual sessions with mothers from diverse ethnic, economic and experiential backgrounds. Participant feedback universally states that women feel more supported, empowered, connected, and ultimately better equipped to endure challenges in life and in parenting.

Re-storying Mothering Stories of Autism

Patty Douglas and Katherine Runswick-Cole

This paper frames the panel and the two papers that follow, which are part of Enacting Critical Disability Communities in Education, a two-year international Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council-funded multimedia storytelling project, located in Toronto, Canada, focused on autism and inclusion in schools and more broadly. Through the making of short first-person films, the project explores how multimedia storytelling might enhance inclusion by making spaces for a proliferation of representations of autism—beyond the dominant biomedical model of autism as a brain-based deficit and family tragedy. In this paper, we consider how the films made by mothers and siblings in particular re-story these dominant tropes, and trouble, disrupt, and expand who is counted as 'fully human' (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2014) within families and wider communities. This also opens new ways to understand and bridge tensions between disability rights and feminist approaches to mothering and care. The stories we share are stories of love. They are also stories punctuated by the multiple oppressions inflicted on people who attract the label of autism and, indeed, those who love them. Our hope is that the proliferation of a multiplicity of stories about 'autism' and mothering might begin to loosen the grip of the biomedical story that continues to cast people labelled with autism as 'less than' other human beings, and mothers as the source of remedy. Instead these stories celebrate us—mothers, siblings and individuals who have attracted the label of 'autism'—in all our uniqueness.

A Mother's Story

Hayley Edwardson

What is so overwhelming is the force I have subconsciously used to forget the girl I used to be or even the girl I might have one day become. This is something I didn't realise until I stumbled across the book, *The Vulnerable Observer* by Ruth Behar (1996). I was really enjoying the book and it was one of the first books I had read that focused on anthropology and ethnography. I froze as I turned to page 134 and read the words, "The woman who forgets the girl she harbours inside herself runs the risk of meeting her again". I think I have.

Giving myself permission to allow my girl self to emerge is both frightening and exciting. How could I have ignored such an intrinsic part of who I am? Trying to unravel my own past experiences and understanding how they have influenced who I am today, the woman I am today and the mother I am today, has been challenging due to some painful times and events. However, I am all too aware that without those experiences I would not be who I am today. Sharing our own stories and listening to others is how we can change the world.

Child Protection Social Work in the Context of Gender Based Violence—Which Factors Favorite or Protect Mothers From a Secondary Victimization?

Andrea Fleckinger

The qualitative field study carried out in 2017 in social services in South Tirol – Northern Italy, focuses on the analysis of the relation between mothers surviving gender based violence and child protection social workers, taking into account the risk of secondary victimization dynamics. The issue emerged is based on ten years of working experience as social worker in a women's shelter, where I several times was in the situation to mediate the difficult relation between child protection social worker and the help seeking mother. The results of different international researches - for ex. Canada (Bourassa, Lavergne, Damant, Lessard, Turcotte (2008); Freymond (2003); Lapierre (2008); Melchiorre, Vis (2013), the USA (Johnson, Sullivan (2008); Lapierre, Coté (2011), Australia (Belinda, Frazer (2006), Europe (Garcia (2014); Keeling, Wormer (2012); Crawford, Liebling-Kalifani, Hill (2009), show, that just as gender based violence knows the same dynamics all over societies, which are organized according to patriarchal values, also the common problematic responses of child protection workers are very similar, despite the big geographic distances and cultural differences. The results of the modern matriarchal studies (Göttner-Abendroth (2011), served as reference point for the contextualization of the interviews within the current patriarchal society system, (Shqungin, Allen, Loomis, Dello Stritto (2012); Keeling, Wormer (2012); Strasser (2001) focusing also on the attributions given to motherhood and the possible consequences for mothers who survived gender-based violence. (Federici (2015); Strasser (2011); Macdonald p.411-434 - in Gronick, Meyers (2009); Banditer (1991); v. Braun (1988). The study describes how secondary victimization occurs and shows that mothers who survived gender based violence are confronted with a double risk of secondary victimization, once related to the fact that they are mothers and second related to their ability of behaving as expected of a victim. Furthermore, I tried to identify suggestions for developing more supportive practices.

Mothers and the Play of Meaning in Time and Place

Joan Garvan

The Australian secretariat Economic Security4Women in 2010 estimated the value of care to the economy to be worth \$762.5 billion (\$112.4 billion paid care and \$650.1 billion imputed value of unpaid care) and sociologists agree that the work that women (most often) do within families, holds families together.* The Bourdieusian notion of capitals (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) provides a framework for thinking about how women forfeit their economic standing and their health and well-being for what they believe to be the long term interests of their child/ren. It is this transfer, however, that takes place within the symbolic, a realm of meanings and the substance of my paper will be on this realm. Drawing from my doctoral research for Maternal Ambivalence in Contemporary Australia: Navigating Equity and Care I will embark on a conversation between the social theorists Pierre Bourdieu and Cornelius Castoriadis related to the agency of women as mothers, in time and place - so as to flesh out these dynamics and understand this play of meaning. * Hoenig, S.A., and Page. A.R.E., (2012). Counting on Care Work in Australia. Report prepared by AECgroup Limited for economic Security4Women, Australia.

Transition to Parenthood: Critical Tipping Point on the Road to Gender Equality?

Joan Garvan

An international body of research on the Transition to Parenthood (TtoP) shows high levels of depression, high levels marital dissatisfaction, and significant issues related to identity for women as new mothers. The birth of an infant is an event of social and cultural significance that has been highly medicalized. An extensive eight nation project conducted by the European Commission identified the TtoP as a 'critical tipping point on the road to gender equality'. Most couples aspire to a form of gender equal or egalitarian family and yet after the birth of an infant there are continuing trends towards gender roles; our institutional framework is failing to keep pace with cultural change.

Inspired by the research on the baby brain there is an international — 1000 Days — movement emphasising the importance of optimal conditions for infants from conception and the first two years of life. This is encouraging but central to these campaigns there needs to be an emphasis on twenty-first century health services and family support. Babies are born into a network of relationships and the mother-baby connection is foundational. The needs of infants and babies are not separate from those of their mothers and families; the Transition to Parenthood takes place within a social and cultural context.

This paper charts my progress as an advocate for holistic health and early years services in Australia. I have encountered multiple barriers and found surprising allies but over time I can see a way forward. The research is compelling and there is some light at the end of the tunnel but we are certainly not there yet.

Paperwork as spectacle: Autism and motherhood in the first person

Margaret F. Gibson

How do we tell stories as scholars and mothers of autistic children without becoming “the story”? So much has been said and done in the name of mothers that autistic advocates and critical scholars condemn. At the same time, the voices of mothers are often themselves tokenized into narratives of suffering and battle, easily pushed to the side by professionals and academics alike. Paperwork, a digital story I created with this project, emerged from my conviction that mothers’ stories offer needed critiques of dominant narratives, that they can “queer” the angle at which embodiment and kinship are viewed. As a first-person video, Paperwork slants the viewer’s focus away from the presumed spectacle of autism (and, indeed, the possible spectacle of queer motherhood), to everyday, un-spectacular, professional documents. Through visual and narrative means, this video strives to narrate both maternal and autistic personhood beyond and in counterpoint to institutional categories and constraints. In this paper, I discuss the tensions that such projects navigate, and outline the resources that maternal feminist critiques offer to trouble i) a dominant story of autism as tragedy and ii) the division between art/experience and intellect/ research.

Millennial Mothers in Norwegian Literature

Melissa Gjellstad

This paper considers trends in Norwegian literature at the millennium shift and analyzes artistic representations of the Nordic gender equity movement in parenting. The Norwegian Parliament legislated paternal leave in the early 1990s, and the resulting debate and cultural change permeated literary works of the time. What was so compelling about the focus on the family and parenting in this literature? My larger research project assesses developments in gender theory, in literary theory, and in contemporary fiction during that decade to answer that question, and traces the transformation into the 2000s to examine the longer term ramifications of these policy changes as expressed in fiction of that era. However, in this presentation, I extract the portion of the investigation that distills representations of the mothers, and discuss trends in how the mothers claimed a voice in a selection of novels. Norwegian authors who debuted in the 1990s created female narrators and characters who spoke uniquely as mothers, calling attention to the challenges of mothering, pushing the boundaries of the hegemonic norms of motherhood, questioning their identities as mothers, and unsettling readers. How did the inclusion of mothering affect key novels by Hanne Ørstavik, Anne Oterholm, and Trude Marstein? Was this form of literary expression a reboot for motherhood in Nordic feminism, and did a strain of matricentric feminism evolve from this period as a result of the literary influence?

Matriarchal Politics and the Vision of a New Society

Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth

Matriarchal politics is based on modern Matriarchal Studies; its intention is to create egalitarian, peaceful societies on a local and global scale. How this goal can be achieved, is shown to us by still extant matriarchal societies, whose traditions go back to millennia. Their economical, political, societal and spiritual patterns are of the utmost interest; they demonstrate how societies can be created and maintained free of violence, based on gender-balance and friendly reciprocity

and collaboration. This will be explored in detail: For new matriarchal microstructures, for new matriarchal macrostructures, and for new matriarchal global structures. These microstructures refer to family, clan, and village; the macrostructures to city and region; and the global structures to association of regions, and to forming of global structures for global problems. What is the role of women in this vision of new matriarchal societies? And what will be the role of men in a matriarchal future? How does the collaboration of genders look like to bring this vision on the way to really egalitarian societies on the local, regional and global scale? These and other questions will be answered on the basis of the rich knowledge presented in modern Matriarchal Studies. At last, some practical ideas will be given how this vision can be implemented by empowering women in economic, social, political and cultural respect.

Pregnancy and Birth in the Ivory Tower

Erin Graybill Ellis

An in-depth qualitative study of the lived experiences of women who experienced pregnancy and birth while enrolled in graduate school will be presented using Berlant's (2011) "cruel optimism". The primary goal of this study was to understand the subjective experiences of pregnant graduate students and how accommodations for pregnancy and birth related absences are handled. To accomplish this goal, the following questions guided my research: How did graduate departments handle pregnancy related absences for doctor visits, emergencies, and maternity leave? In what ways was the student facilitated or hindered by their graduate program's reaction to their pregnancy related absences? What formal or informal policies are in place at the student's university to guide decisions about pregnancy related absences for graduate students? There are rarely formal policies set in place for pregnancy during graduate school and this leads to departments making decisions on a case-by-case basis. Such a tactic leads to inequality and unfairness across universities and departments (Ellis 2014; Ellis and Gullion 2015). Further, while faculty mothers would likely qualify for maternity leave or the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), most graduate students are employed by their departments on a part-time basis and do not work enough hours to qualify for FMLA. Title IX is supposed to protect pregnant students from discrimination as far as their coursework goes (Mason, Wolfinger, and Goulden 2013; Mason and Younger 2014), but is generally not applied to protect graduate students' employment at the university. Pregnant graduate students who work at their university are in a gray area where they do not receive the benefits of faculty members but also do not fully receive the protections of students. This study explores how a lack of formal policies impacts graduate student mothers and how universities can better support graduate student mothers.

Practicing Matricentric Feminist Mothering

Fiona Joy Green

The practice of feminist mothering is central to matricentric feminism. Mothering and feminism are equally defining dimensions in the lives of feminist mothers, who recognize that while they are oppressed and dis-empowered as women and as mothers by the patriarchal institution of motherhood, they and their children can also be empowered through the conscious and active praxis of feminist mothering. By placing their needs and concerns as feminists and mothers at the centre of their political practice of parenting, feminist mothers engage in and offer others a practice of matricentric feminism that incorporates theory, activism, and politics. This

presentation reflects on the lessons about matricentric feminism within "Practicing Feminist Mothering" (Green, 2011), where in-depth interviews of sixteen feminist mothers and their adult children, one of whom is now a mother, were conducted from 1995 to 2007. While the interviews took place over a decade ago, the insights offered provide a rich understanding of the tensions within feminism surrounding issues of mothering and the reproduction of feminism itself. The conscious and political action of feminist mothering, which is based on the particular identity and work as feminist mothers oriented towards changing society through their parenting, provides a powerful perspective on mothering as a central aspect of feminism.

Empowering Mothers of Special Needs Children

Eva Doherty Gremmert

Mothers in past generations fought to end discrimination against their children with special needs. Even as late as the 1960's, after giving birth to a child that was "retarded," the advice and often only choice given to mothers, was to place the child in an institution and forget about them. In the US in 1975 Public Law 94-142 changed the landscape in special education, requiring each state to provide a free and appropriate education program for all handicapped children from ages 3 to 21. This law was forged in the fires of the United States Civil Rights movements of the 1960's. The act was amended in 1990 to change verbiage and some language about inclusion. Now mothers are empowered with resources to learn how to care for their children with special needs. In addition to government agencies, there are resources available: Such as Internet websites, social media groups, parent education and published books. Professional white papers and studies are easily procured. Mothers and medical professionals have learned to work cooperatively. Mothers are now an integral part of the team working together to map out a multi-faceted treatment plan for their child to adopt in the difficult circumstances.

One Speaks as a Mother...

Olivia Heal

In feminist theory one speaks as a woman, although the subject "woman" is not a monolithic essence, defined once and for all, but rather a site of multiple, complex, and potentially contradictory sets of experiences, determined by overlapping variables such as class, race, age, lifestyle and sexual preference. One speaks as a woman in order to empower women, to activate sociosymbolic changes in their condition: this is a radically antiessentialist position.' Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*. This paper takes Braidotti's thoughts on embodied feminist subjectivity as a starting point from which to consider what it is to speak, or to write, as a mother. To inhabit a maternal 'I', is not, I will posit, an essentialist, backward-looking position, but an empowered and a potentially empowering praxis. Drawing from contemporary mother-writing (Nelson, Offill, Manguso, Brady), I will explore how writers forge maternal subjectivity... not forge, for 'mother' is no longer cast in iron, nor stone... how writers fashion an 'I' that is fissured, fragmented, that inhabits multiple subject positions simultaneously, that is shapechanging, ambivalent, even polyvalent, an 'I' that is conflicting, sometimes incoherent, an 'I' that eschews fixedness. As such, I will argue, these texts write back to previous discourses on motherhood while also resisting reification, and refusing to reconstruct a new good mother. To occupy a maternal 'I' offers a means of revising and rewriting maternal subjectivity, as such it becomes an act of agency: to speak, to write as a mother becomes a deliberately feminist praxis.

When Becoming a Mother is Violent: Understanding Obstetric Violence as Violence Against Mothers

Nicole Hill

Obstetric violence, that is, the mistreatment or abuse of pregnant or birthing individuals by their health care providers, institutions, or systems, is a topic of growing concern around the globe among health care organizations, healthcare providers, birthing families and individuals, as well as advocates. As research has begun to problematize and de-normalize obstetric violence, it has been framed as a distinct type of institutionalized gendered violence (against women). This paper approaches the topic of obstetric violence through the lens of matricentric feminism, theorizing how it constitutes not just violence against women (typically), but violence against mothers. I will discuss the implications for an understanding of obstetric violence as violence against mothers including how these implications may impact efforts to address incidents of violence on individual levels, as well as broader systemic levels.

Mothers Make Contemporary Art

Susan Hogan

The Birth Project is investigating the role that arts engagement could play in ante-natal and post-natal care. Moreover, what an arts-based approach offers in examining birth experiences and the transition to motherhood is a further subject of enquiry. Art groups are a valuable resource for women to make sense of, and understand their birthing experiences, as they potentially build self-awareness and self-confidence through the sharing of experience in the process of art making. Talking about and interrogating their experiences allows women to develop enhanced self-acceptance and self-compassion. Whilst verbal support groups might work well for some women, inchoate emotions can be captured in art in ways that are fundamentally different to that of a language-based approach. The use of art materials was important for some of the participants in terms of self-expression, revealing their feelings, or allowing their feelings to emerge and this is captured in the film footage. The transformational quality of art making was emphasised by a number of participants, and well as their increased sense of volition: their capacity to make a creative act happen and to take risks in the process was liberating, exciting and life-enhancing. Making time and space for personal reflection in a moment of transition was also noted as enriching. This is a film screening of Mothers Make Contemporary Art (30 mins) with discussants. This film follows the journey of a cohort of women learning to make installation art as a medium to explore their experience of birth and motherhood.

To What Extent are Hospital Practices, That are Iatrogenic in Nature, Implicated in Post-natal Distress?

Susan Hogan

This paper attempts to answer two of the key project research questions: To what extent are hospital practices, that are iatrogenic in nature, implicated in post-natal distress? To what extent is ‘mutual recovery’ possible through engagement with the arts, and if so, to establish what form this may take? Background. The Birth Project is investigating the role that arts engagement could play in ante-natal and post-natal care. Moreover, what an arts-based approach offers in examining birth experiences and the transition to motherhood is a further subject of enquiry. Art

groups are a valuable resource for women to make sense of, and understand their birthing experiences, as they potentially build self-awareness and self-confidence through the sharing of experience in the process of art making. Talking about and interrogating their experiences allows women to develop enhanced self-acceptance and self-compassion. Whilst verbal support groups might work well for some women, inchoate emotions can be captured in art in ways that are fundamentally different to that of a language-based approach. The use of art materials was important for some of the participants in terms of self-expression, revealing their feelings, or allowing their feelings to emerge and this is captured in the film footage. The transformational quality of art making was emphasised by a number of participants, and well as their increased sense of volition: their capacity to make a creative act happen and to take risks in the process was liberating, exciting and life-enhancing. Making time and space for personal reflection in a moment of transition was also noted as enriching.

I Did Not Want to Buy Barbie dolls - A Standpoint of a Feminist Lesbian Mother, Raising a Transgender Daughter

Avigail Erenkrantz Hotzen

I wish to present an autoethnographic discussion on feminist mothering of a transgender child. Through this case study, I will review writings on feminist practices in general and feminist mothering practices in particular. I will address several theories, such as Sara Ruddick's theory on the three demands of maternal practice, Andrea O'Reilly's understanding of feminist mothering and Sara Ahmed's analysis of feminist practice and feminist subjectivity. In addition, I will reflect upon questions and conflicts that arise in feminist mothering practice in the context of contemporary feminism, transgender and queer studies. The position of a feminist lesbian mother, having a transgender daughter (MTF) can be understood as an intersection of numerous identities. As Crenshaw (1989) reminds us, when talking about intersectionality, one plus one equals much more than two. I argue that this intersection can imply a new frame to the crucial debates between queer, feminists and Transgender theoretical approaches in the academic and activist sphere. Through this standpoint, I will analyze questions about the limits of feminist influence, questions about the place of the genderfluid experience in feminist discourses, and an examination of the various reactions this intersectional identity triggers in feminist and non-feminist circles.

Hollywood's Matricentric Feminism in Bad Moms and A Bad Moms Christmas

Michelle Hughes Miller

The 2016 film, "Bad Moms" and its 2017 sequel, "A Bad Moms Christmas" reflect a comedic, formalized, Hollywood treatment of the hyper-surveilled culture within which mothers (in this case, those who are elite and predominantly white) mother. Yet embedded within these films are also complex arguments about the nature of motherwork, the importance of maternal identity, expectations of good mothering and, most important, the processes whereby mothers might assert agency within this highly regulated and ideologically constrained world. In this presentation I consider the regulatory experience and context of mothering within "mom culture," including the strategies portrayed in the films which the mothers use to manage and control deviance and compliance. Tying concepts of agency, identity, and resistance to Andrea O'Reilly's concept of matricentric feminism, I consider the extent to which these films represent

a Hollywood-version of mother-centered feminism. To what extent do the films portray a mother-centric understanding of patriarchal motherhood and their own lives? Using critical feminist film analysis I argue that the “Bad Moms” films portray a tension between self- and other-expectations of good mothering within the context of surveilled maternal demands, even as they comedically and problematically assert elements of a Hollywood version of matricentric feminism.

Young Single Motherhood in Contemporary German Film

Kira Hussing

This paper will show how young single motherhood is represented in German contemporary film by means of the feature films *Lucy* by Henner Winckler (2006) and *Breaking Horizons* by Pola Schirin Beck (2012) as well as the documentaries *Fourteen* and *Eighteen* by Cornelia Grünberg (2012, 2014). This presentation will further develop E. Ann Kaplan’s American categorisation of motherhood which she introduced in the last chapter of her book *Motherhood and Representation* (1992). Since Kaplan refers to the time period of the 1980s and 1990s, her categorisation needs to be adjusted for a contemporary European/German context. This film analysis will show how mise-en-scène, editing choices and the narrative of the movies portray the young single mother as socially segregated from her peers, facing pressure and prejudices from her environment, while sometimes experiencing pregnancy as an opportunity. The mother is not represented in combination with both sex and work. My paper will show how the young single mother is understood within German cinema and culture. Furthermore, this paper will highlight the challenges of transforming policies in Germany regarding crèche places and the attempt to integrate young single mothers into the job market.

Responsibility, Affective Solidarity, and Transnational Maternal Feminism

Candace Johnson

Maternal health has become a global priority. Despite previous evidence that maternal health struggled to find a place on the global policy agenda (Shiffman and Smith 2007), it is now clear that the promotion of health for mothers and children is a staple of both government and private donor commitments. On an intuitive level, it makes sense to focus on maternal health and survival in the Global South. Death related to pregnancy or childbirth is a disheartening example of needless suffering. But beyond the initial impulse to reduce suffering, what motivates action for addressing injustice in the form of distributional inequities for maternal and reproductive health? In *Responsibility for Justice* (2011), Iris Young makes a case for responsibility across borders. Such responsibility, which applies equally in all contexts and without regard for citizenship, is motivated by the impulse to address injustice, wherever it occurs. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is 1. To interrogate Young’s social connections model as a way to answer the research question; 2. To consider the intellectual and practical possibilities of adding the concept of affective solidarity, a transformative politics of emotion, to Young’s model. The idea that solidarity is generated neither from human universality nor from particular identities, but from an emotional capacity, provides for new conceptual and practical possibilities for political action across borders; and 3. To develop a theory of maternal citizenship that addresses both the uniqueness and ubiquitousness of “the maternal” as a condition of belonging to various political communities.

Feminist Futures of Mothering Online

Astrid Joutseno

In this paper, I will investigate mechanisms of the personal as materially and culturally significant in the context of mommyblogging. As the Internet allows for a change in the temporality and scope of communicating while mothering, I ask what happens to the maternal subject. I am curious about the relationality between digital maternal subjectivity and material subjectivity. I suggest that it is at this intersection where something crucial is happening to concepts of maternal subjectivity. My research focuses on the interplay of reading and writing — expression and experience. I answer to the call of new materialist thinking and Elizabeth Grosz, who has suggested that feminists need to move away from personal narrative and subjectivity to investigating materiality in conjunction with physics for example. I claim that digital mothering and the expression proliferating online about motherhood, is already movement towards a new and multi-faceted understanding and experience of mothering – one worth analyzing and creating new theory for. This paper develops the theoretical perspective of my PhD *Digital Mothers: Expression and Experience on Mommyblogs*. With the help of feminist theory and within the frame of digital mothering, I imagine possible answers to the question: what happens after infinite fragmentation and endless difference?

Terra Feminarum—Myth or Reality? New Evidence on Ancient Northern Mother-cultures

Kaarina Kailo

The aim of my paper is to present the new evidence I have gathered regarding the myth of an ancient land of women—Terra Feminarum. Tacitus and more recent historians have situated it somewhere in the North from current Finland to Estonia or more mysterious locations. My comparative study of Northern (Nordic and Finno-Ugric) myths, centered on mother goddesses or totemistic animal mothers, has yielded new evidence of powerful mother-led societies in the pre-patriarchal North. Archeomythology, linguistic evidence and geographical place names, grave findings as well as comparative woman-centered mythology suggest that indeed, women held powerful positions across the Arctic and the Northern hemisphere. The evidence points also to the strong historic presence of female deities of life and death from the Golden Woman to Amazon-type ferocious female figures. The recurrent negative portrayals of these figures as cannibalistic, “hero-drowning” or greedy suggest that patriarchy reverted the social meaning, valence and gender of the most powerful divinities systematically demonizing what originally were their life-oriented and rebirth-related roles. I focus on Finnish and Norse/Nordic evidence with some references to neighboring Indigenous people

Moving Inclusion: Rethinking Autism, Support and Access

Estée Klar-Wolfond

Autism is conceived as a pathological problem in need of intervention and cure (Douglas, 2015, Klar, 2007, Lawson, 2007, McGuire, 2016). Autism “support” and accommodation is located within remedial practices, promoting independence and normative functioning as a condition that must be met prior to inclusion. This typically takes the form of Applied Behavioural and Early Intervention practices, which segregate autistic individuals from their peers beginning as early as infancy, subjecting them to intensive therapeutic interactions aiming to achieve so-called

“normal” behaviour and language. This presentation is developed from an ongoing arts-based collaboration between Estée and Adam/mother and son to enact a non-hierarchical shape of relationship in intra-ethnography. Our digital story made with Project Revision conveys the meta-narratives that “shape” the autistic person as unaware and non-relational. We propose this as a presupposition that shapes a biomedical, reductionist approach to autism as a “problem,” juxtaposing it with what Adam says about his movement and experience. Adam, a non-speaking autistic person who types, writes: “Thinking is a feeling in a body that is always moving.” Adam’s way of thinking-feeling resonates, challenging the early interventions that attempted to stop his movement. Recent autistic self-advocacy acknowledges the significance of support – that understands autistic movement and difference – and the relationships that are required to facilitate them (Klar, Baggs, Biklen, Donnellan & Leary, Erevelles, Kleiwer, Savarese, Sequenzia, Manning, Mukhopadyhay, Walker, Yergeau). We argue that mutual support, here enacted rhythmically and collaboratively, shapes an ethics of relation for non-hierarchical, inclusive pedagogies.

Women at Risk: Gift Economy's Possibilities and Matriarchal Social Systems Worldwide Kirre Koivunen

Inequalities between women and men globally remain strong, and women face multiple forms of discrimination because of their gender. Many cultural and social practices make possible this unequal treatment. The documentary is historically important because it collects together the theory, research and experiences about the gift-based, woman-appreciating cultures that offer humanity hope. The goal is to create a documentary film that focuses on tribal people who are applying the matrilineal societal system, and also live in a kind of gift economy. At the same time, the documentary is a story about women who are in a particularly vulnerable position (women-at-risk), and also about two different tribes, Khasis (India) and Owambos (Namibia); they embrace the matriarchal social system. Public hierarchy or repressions of the nature or weaker people do not belong into matriarchal way where everyone is children of the Mother Nature. The authority of mother doesn't base on her power of commanding but on her public respect. It is important in our times to contrast the patriarchal and matriarchal cultures as a matter of the very survival of our planet’s conditions of life, dignity and survival.

‘The Customer is Always Right’: Mothers and Welfare Services Rachel Lamdin Hunter

In this paper, the semi-fictional story of a lone mother seeking an emergency benefit foregrounds my investigation of mothers’ dealings with government agencies and the caseworkers who front them. In New Zealand as in other places, austerity measures, budget cuts, and worsening inequality, are forcing more mothers to request meagre government assistance. Many such customers are treated with derision and hostility by agencies, media, and public commentators – a function of austerity but also, mothers’ precarious positioning under patriarchal systems of provision and support. I suggest new possibilities for mothers, based on a re-visioning of stories of the agencies and their caseworkers that are supposed to help families. Ante narrative storytelling methods, coupled with theories of cultural safety in practice, offer possible new episodes and outcomes for mothers.

What Lies Beneath: Mothering, Migration and Social Inclusion

Karen Lane

New settler societies, such as Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the US, rely on migration to achieve economic growth; they simultaneously face, issues around social integration and social cohesion. Australia has, approached the problem via a series of models variously called, Accommodation, Assimilation, and Multiculturalism. In a neo-liberal shift, in a more recent iteration, Selective Multiculturalism posits successful, resettlement as the recruitment of as many newcomers as possible into the, ‘three E’s’ (English-language competency; Education for work skills, and cultural integration; and Employment). At the end of five years, it is assumed all migrants and refugees will have achieved language proficiency, work-ready skills and a hybrid cultural identity. This assumption is, largely fallacious. A large representative national survey found that after seven years only a minority developed English language proficiency, few found work and many continued to suffer mental distress, housing problems, and separation from family. Ironically, and surprisingly, most remained, positive about the future. This inductive, qualitative study undertaken via, interviews of 46 participants from diverse ethnic groups, government, agencies and providers of services in metropolitan Melbourne and regional, Victoria inquired into what lies beneath positive aspirations of migrants, and refugees despite self-reported on-going challenges. Like the denial of, the value of women’s carework in economic accounting and GDP, governments have overlooked the carework of mothers in resettlement of families and, communities via use of monolithic categories such as ‘worker’, ‘parent’ and ‘citizen’ deny. Not only is carework not factored in, as productive work in itself. Mothers are doubly punished for carework by, losing access to free language services and literacy that enable full, participation in the host society and the acquisition of inclusive Western, social identities such ‘citizen’ and ‘skilled worker.’

Mothers on the Market: Economies of Human Milk Exchange

Robyn Lee

The exchange of human milk destabilizes the boundaries between love and work and between the public and private realms. This paper will explore how the gift/commodity dichotomy breaks down, as economics cannot be fully separated out even from not for profit milk exchange. I will draw on feminist political economy to explore human milk exchange, demonstrating the inadequacy of distinctions between productive and reproductive labour that have been long critiqued by the socialist feminist tradition. There is a long history of feminist efforts to value domestic and reproductive labour under capitalism. Drawing on the work of Silvia Federici and the Italian Wages for Housework movement of the 1970s, along with Luce Irigaray and Gayle Rubin’s readings of Marx, this paper will interrogate how the labour involved in expressing and exchanging milk might be recognized as valuable.

A Motherly Society: Scandinavian Feminisms and the Welfare State

Annika Ljung-Baruth

In this paper, I will address motherhood from a Scandinavian perspective. I, am especially interested in looking at three Swedish feminists – Ellen, Key (1849-1926), Elin Wägner (1882-1949), and Alva Myrdal (1902-1986). My paper will address ways in which these women

influenced the cultural, landscape of Sweden in the late 19th and early to mid-20th century, and lay, the foundation for the Swedish “folkhem” (the Swedish welfare state)., More specifically, I will argue that the reverence and respect for motherhood established in the works of these women later became foundational for the Swedish welfare state (the “folkhem”). The lives of Wägner, Key, and Myrdal spanned different time-periods, although they also overlapped. At times engaging in debate and dialogue, they had very, different and sometimes conflicting ideas about women’s roles in society, and their roles as mothers. My aim, however, will be to show how the works of these women, in spite of, or maybe because of, differences and contradictions contributed to the Scandinavian culture of sexual equality, in general, and to a culture of reverence and respect for motherhood in, particular. As a key polemic figure in the late 1800’s, Ellen Key, established the concept of “samhällsmoderlighet” (a motherly society),, and thus extended the meaning of motherhood to include social institutions, and economic systems. A few decades later, the author Elin Wägner, developed a theory of matriarchy in her pivotal work *Alarm Clock* (1941),, and the same year, politician Alva Myrdal significantly contributed to the, creation of new government policies promoting the welfare of children and, mothers in her book *Nation and Family* (1941). My paper is part of my, ongoing book project on Scandinavian feminism.

Professors as Other-Mothers: The Changing Landscape of Higher Education and Increased Burden of Care

Kristin Marsh

In this paper, I explore the changing demographic landscape of U.S. higher education, with particular focus on a heightened burden of care work facing white women faculty, faculty of color, and publicly-identified LGBTQ faculty. Women have long carried an overload of care work in universities, volunteering and being tapped for heavy service loads and approaching their teaching and mentoring with intensive one-on-one relationships with students. A difficult and contentious division of labor among faculty in the past, with much discourse around the choices we make, this paper explores whether we are approaching a tipping point for faculty other-mothers, with lasting consequences for professional and personal well-being. U.S. colleges and universities face sharp competition for students, coinciding with intentionally stated imperatives of diversity, access, and equity in university mission statements and statements of community values. Indeed, our student body demographics are changing, with ever greater diversity in terms of race, class, nationality, religion, differing abilities, sexuality, gender identity and expression, and so on. More students are first-generation college students; and more are commuters and/or coming from a community college background. In the classroom and—especially—outside of the classroom, the multiple stresses facing students coincide with an emergent mental health crisis on college campuses. The question is whether there is a care-work crisis for faculty serving as Other-Mothers to their students. How do women faculty experience their roles as other-mothers? Further, how are universities responding to the increasing needs of our students and workload issues facing faculty?

Standing Up to Shut it Down: Maternal Humour and its Uses for Matricentric Feminism

Maki Motapanyane

This paper engages matricentric feminism through the landscape of the arts and popular culture. Specifically, the analysis here is focused on the material of mom stand-up comics on the subject of motherhood and mothering. In the seminal book, *Matricentric Feminism: Theory, Activism, and Practice*, acclaimed motherhood scholar, Andrea O'Reilly, aptly refers to motherhood as the "unfinished business of feminism". In this vein, I contend that maternal humour – the humour of mothers that is focused on the culture of motherhood and the practice of mothering - is a key prism through which to investigate the substance of O'Reilly's timely observation. What I propose to present forms part of my in-progress book on mom stand-up comics in the U.S. and Canada. For this conference, I will centre the work of a select few mom stand-up comics in order to highlight a set of patterns that, both as a symbolic system and discourse, are of great utility for matricentric feminism and theory.

“A Strong Mother Births a Healthy Baby Who Becomes a Strong Mother.... Not Any More! About the Loss of Self Confidence, Autonomy and Ability of Today's Mothers to Bring Children Into the World”

Eva-Maria Müller-Markfort

It was in the late nineteen-fifties that I met for the first time in my life pregnant and birthing women during my education as a nurse. I marvelled at the quietness and selfassuredness of the birthing mothers and learned that that was the way that babies were being born and that mothers seemed to be well equipped to endure the pain and discomfort- the price for the lovely baby they were holding in their arms, smiling and serene, afterwards. I decided that I must become a midwife to be part of this something much greater than I could possibly fathom which I had witnessed.

Looking *and* feeling back now I have difficulties in realising the abyss that separates birthing in those days compared with what happens these days-and has happened for many years now- in the average western hospital setting.

My question was then, some time ago: what has happened in these years to make women/mothers so frightened about being pregnant and having a baby? Why is it that they seem to be so distant towards their unborn child, almost estranged. Why is it that their first concern is about which pain relieving drug the clinic will offer? Why do they need the promise that they will not have to suffer „unnecessary pain“? But, at the same time, proclaim with conviction that they want a „natural birth“, and, of course, no, they will *not* have a caesarian, no, all natural, a natural birth for their baby.

We all know the end of that story: until recently 30% and more of the children came into the world by means of a surgical intervention, so- they were not really born! This makes a huge difference, as I will point out later. Mothers suffer in the aftermath more or less silently, fall into post partum depression. “Cry baby“ ambulances opened all over the country as a first help for parents who are desperate and disappointed about their broken dreams, and cannot hear that child crying all the time any more.

In my presentation I will explain, in the light of the findings of the pioneers of prenatal psychology, what the causes may be of this evolutionary misrouted development, what the consequences will be for our society, and by what means and methods a turnabout could be induced to make women strong and self-conscious again, and proud of their achievement.

Female Cycle Central to Human Evolution

Vicki Noble

The human female menstrual cycle has been blatantly overlooked by science as anything other than secondary in relation to what is considered the “normal” or universal expression of the human endocrine system modeled on the male. In scientific research until very recently, female subjects were not even considered or included in experimental work, precisely because the menstrual cycle added a variability that made scientific experiments more difficult to control. We know now that this male bias has led to inadequate diagnoses and harmful medicines given to women that are based on experiments done on male animals and the human male; it has also been the basis for encouraging young women in the United States to take shots that eradicate the menstrual cycle altogether. In my theory, the menstrual cycle is not only taken into consideration, but is perceived as the very root of human evolution and the basis for matriarchal social organization. Menstruation is one of the central causal features of the so-called “human leap” from the other primates (alongside of such things as eye-hand coordination, tool-making, etc.). Using feminist physical anthropology, contemporary endocrinology, archaeology, primatology, matriarchal studies, and contemporary DNA research, I hope to show that the long human female menstrual lineage—the collective of mothers educating and initiating the daughters in the sacred blood mysteries at holy power places around the world—goes back at least as far as our beginnings as full humans in Africa 200,000 years ago, expressing itself artistically during the Paleolithic period in Europe, developing into civilization during the Neolithic, and continuing in remote and rural areas even today.

Beyoncé’s Second Maternal Performance: Birthing Questions for Matrilineal and Intersectional Feminisms

Lynn O’Brien Hallstein

Given that matrilineal feminism is explicitly matrilineal in its perspective and emphasis, while also being multi-theoretical in its focus, mediated representations of maternity—maternal performance in popular culture—raise important questions for matrilineal feminism in relation to the intersectional focus on intersecting vectors, particularly theoretical questions about how matrilineal feminism does and does not work within intersectional frameworks. In this paper, I analyze popular culture superstar and musician Beyoncé’s second pregnancy to explore how matrilineal and intersectional feminisms work (or not) together. I do so to argue, unlike her first pregnancy, Beyoncé’s second maternal performance—her record-breaking Instagram pregnancy announcement, her “pregnant” Grammy performance, and her Instagram birth reveal of her twins—mobilized Beyoncé’s pregnancy and maternal body as vehicles to explore maternal empowerment, while also raising, I argue, important theoretical questions about the points of connection and challenges between intersectional and matrilineal feminisms.

‘Have Your Cake and Eat It Too’: Challenging and Changing Normative Gender Roles Through Partnerships

Andrea O’Reilly

In this paper I examine the normative wife role and the wifework expected and demanded of women in traditional marriage and consider how matrifocal family structures in downplaying the wife role allow for gender fluidity and equity that make possible true partnerships between men and women in heterosexual relationships. I conclude the paper with a discussion of my own relationship with my partner to show how our lived partnership challenged and changed normative gender roles to make possible my career success.

M(othering) and Violence on Sacred Ground

Adwoa N. Onuora

This paper examines institutional/systemic violence using women who mother in the context of a Caribbean post-secondary institution as a category of analysis. Drawing upon a broad definition of violence, it locates the marginalization, alienation and exclusion faced by academic mothers as gendered micro-aggressions, and draws a connection between systemic/institutionalized violence and violence against women. I contend that the gendered subtle and (in)direct exclusions faced by women in general and mothers in particular in the academy are a form of institutionalized violence that further cements gender-based violence. Using personal/anecdotal experiences, I examine the impact of messages of exclusion, locating them as violence against women particularly because they result in the restriction of agency and pose a threat to the economic security of women who choose to parent in the academy. The paper ends with suggestions for programs that can be put in place to create a more enabling environment that addresses these needs of academic mothers on campus.

"I Have Kept You Inside From the Beginning": Marie Clements's *Maternities*

Sheila Rabillard and Karen Bamford

We offer a matri-centric feminist reading of three works by Métis playwright Marie Clements: *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* (2000), *Tombs of the Vanishing Indian* (2012), and *Missing* (opera, première November 2017). Our analysis is intersectional, acknowledging the layering of identities and marginalization through the categories of woman, mother, class, and racialized Indigenous “other.” We consider motherhood not as defined within the modern western nuclear family, but instead including allo-mothers (grandmothers, aunts, caregivers) whose participation in maternity is depicted by Indigenous playwrights Rendon, Moses, and Nolan as well as Clements. In *Unnatural and Accidental Women* motherhood is central to the experience of many of the murdered women who give the play its title. Clements here represents maternity as simultaneously confining and empowering, and reclaims for her characters what Collins has termed “motherwork” as a source of strength and mode of activism (Udel, Smith, Haugo). In *Tombs* Clements confronts the coerced sterilization of Indigenous women, a common practice in the 1970s in Canada and the US. The plot focuses on Jessie, a doctor in 1973 Los Angeles, who discovers that her partner has sterilized Indigenous women without their consent – among them her own sister. Scenes from the 1800s and the 1950s expose the common drive to erase Indigenous cultures and peoples that underlies compulsory relocation, assimilation, state

intervention in family structures, and stolen maternities. The title *Missing* announces that Clements's opera intervenes in the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada, returning to the subject of *Unnatural*; emblematic roles for "Native Mother" and "Native Girl" make mothers prominent among the missing and those who seek the missing. Considered together, these three works by Clements challenge us as matri-centric feminist critics to engage with the fraught intersectionality of Indigenous maternity and to comprehend the political significance of motherwork.

The "Matrixial", the "Matrilineal," and "Me Too"

Peggy Reeves Sanday

As a Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, during summer holidays, I conducted an anthropological study of the matrilineal/matriarchal Minangkabau of West Sumatra, Indonesia, beginning in 1981 and lasting until 2007. During this time I became aware of the acquaintance rape problem on college campuses and wrote a book on the subject, which was published in 1990. In the early 20th century, I published a book on what I learned in West Sumatra, entitled *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy*. In my presentation I will compare the two societies by talking about how growing up female in the US can be a frightening experience compared to growing up in West Sumatra, where women play a central role in daily and ceremonial life. In my paper I want to introduce the concept of the "matrixial," as theorized by artist/philosopher/psychologist Bracha Ettinger. This is a complex concept which refers to womb-based and early psychic memories of mothering which promote feelings of love and safety in the growing child and adolescent. Comparing the two societies, I will talk about how growing up female in the US can be a frightening experience compared to growing up in West Sumatra.

The Mother Controls the Nature of Perception & Perception Controls Everything

Myra Sabir

The emotional quality of early attachment relationships shapes the child's perception (the internal working model or IWM) of the self, others, and the world. This perception becomes the prism through which all events are interpreted and all reality is defined. "Every situation we meet with in life is constructed in terms of the representational models we have of the world about us and of ourselves. ...plans of action are conceived and executed through those models." Similarly, the IWM directs "not only feelings and behavior but also attention, memory, and cognition. The IWM is continuously engaged; operating as what are called 'hot' structures that are dynamic, emotionally charged, and impactful. It continually projects and extends into the environment and cannot be contained silently or inactively inside one's own mind. Finally, all of this occurs automatically and largely outside awareness. Subconscious values and thought patterns drive visible behaviors. Patterns of negatively or positively charged early childhood attachment experiences go so far as to establish patterns of expectation in the brain, influencing perception holistically. If we don't right the respect, care, and support of mothers, we are doomed.

Mamartist - The Voice of the Mother in Contemporary Israeli Art

Hadara Scheflan-Katzav

What is the contribution of female artists who are also mothers to contemporary art? What is the contribution of the mothering experience to the creative mother? These questions become relevant in our time, when more and more female artists are creating art while they also function as mothers (Unlike the past in which marriage or motherhood often ended the female artist's career). Although the maternal image was very common in art history, the mother herself was never perceived as a subject but always as an object. In this situation, where the mother is assumed transparent, a figure given to automatic rendering through social/cultural symbolization by someone who is not the mother herself – it has been hard to find the maternal subjectivity in representations of the mother. We need a matricentric perspective to produce a theory that sees great importance in the artistic creation of mothers and their influence on the entire culture. Such a theory refuses the mother's transparency and strives to present her as a productive subject with fantasies, anxieties, and desires of her own - which are expressed in art and are worthy of being considered important. This study examines the relationship between maternal subjectivity and female creativity through the creation of contemporary Israeli artists. I will present 3 contemporary Israeli artists who represent various issues related to the universal and Israeli mother experience. Such as: relationship to the body after birth, mother-daughter relations, postpartum depression, motherhood and migration, mothers and the army, Holocaust survivor parents and more.

From Sacred to Feminist Motherhood: A Survey of the Modern Turkish Novel

Ürün Şen-Sönmez and Beyhan Uygun Aytemiz

Maternity has been one of the most important areas of debate and research of feminist theory. With the rise of the feminist theory maternity is for the first time recognized as a social identity and an individually experienced period as different from motherhood. Discussions on maternity has also begun in Turkey with the rise of the feminist movement in the 1980s. Beforehand, there was the myth of sacred motherhood constructed by natinalist thought and Islamic ethics; and the myth of sacred motherhood constructed in the texts of the first half of the 20th century owes much to nationalism. Islam and Islamic ethics should also be taken into consideration due to their distinguishing effect on the social construction of motherhood. Nationalism creates a functional and sacred motherhood myth, besides Islamic ethics does not let the sacredness of motherhood be questioned. In Islamic teaching women are taken into consideration only when they are identified as mothers since “heaven lies under the feet of mothers” as the Prophet Muhammed puts it. Motherhood is deprived of its sacredness and indisputableness with the rise of socialist feminist literature in Turkey. The concept of motherhood, which is questioned in the works of Sevgi Soysal and Leyla Erbil after the 1960s and 1970s, is discussed in a different context after the 1980 coup when it became impossible to produce socialist texts. From then on, motherhood has become a questionable concept in the novels of Tezer Ozlu, Adalet Agaoglu, Duygu Asena, İnci Aral, Perihan Magden, Elif Safak, Sebnem Isiguzel; in these novels it is not represented as sacred as a social identity. Besides, in autobiographical texts such as Duygu Asena's motherhood is taken into consideration as an individually experienced period. Therefore, the years between 1960 to 1980s was the latent period and 1980s are when motherhood was discussed and “reconstructed” from a feminist perspective. It is due to the rise of feminist movement in Turkey

that motherhood has become a subject of debate. The paper aims to discuss how motherhood is defined, discussed, and represented in the works of the above-mentioned “feminist and not feminist” woman writers.

“Changing Landscapes in Domestic Violence Research: A Case Study of (and by) a Thai Family”

Wachana Sermsathanasawat

Feminist methodologies treat “experience-based narratives” of women as “acts of story telling” rather than to search for ‘truth’ in the stories. It also allows stories of non-mainstream women to emerge in a broader and more diverse ways. In response, my study places emphasis on domestic violence, which I experienced and directly and indirectly affected by. It reveals “my mother’s stories” (who was affected by violence from my father, the man she loved the most.). First she wished to preserve my family and to require my respect to my father, who instigated violence. I resisted, refused and returned my father’s violence with my violence. I even became violent to my mother who I perceived as too weak to resist. Then I developed my conception to an understanding of my father—a “perpetrators” and my mother, who was not just a passive victim. Autobiographical methodologies open a space to see how my mother can manage violence through ‘telling’ her stories and how injustice and inequalities in male-female relationship in Thai society operated through family ideology. Being a good father/mother/wife/child oppressed men and women in Thailand alike. It also reflected learning processes and self-understanding from my being ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ in the study.

From Fractals of Insecurity to Full Safety: Applying the Maternal Gift Paradigm

Erella Shadmi

The male-dominated discourse on security in Israel and elsewhere views war and conflicts as irresolvable facts of life, embraces the war culture and ignores the meanings and implications of existing socio-political order, especially patriarchy, capitalism, liberalism and stateism. As women's experience of violence shows, femicide is a product of a long series of violent acts – the same way genocide is a result of a series of massacres. Both femicide and genocide, which can be viewed as fractals, grow out of a certain consciousness – a sense of power and supremacy, de-humanization of the other. New critical approaches to deal with this complexity – such as Human, Security, Security as Emancipation, Cosmopolitan Security, Peacemaking Criminology – fall short in coping with this complexity as security is not the problem; rather, it is the result of an order that has to be transformed entirely. Women's experiences with feminist struggle reveal how difficult, in fact, so far unsuccessful is the effort to transform society, consciousness, and paradigm. More and more people understand this situation and begin to organize new ways of leaving and working – including, eco-villages, urban kibbutzim, cooperatives and so on. These initiatives reflect a shift to a new paradigm and a value system, based on concepts such as community, linking, belonging, care and sharing and in this way strengthen the security of all of us (my security/liberty depends on your security/liberty). I wish further to suggest that they are drawn from mothering, the maternal gift economy and the matriarchal legacy and, further, that these structural phenomena and the maternal paradigm reflect the post-post-modernist era (especially Hypo Modernism), that I view as the feminist-indigenous era, and, therefore, are here to stay with us.

My Mother and (Me and) Trees: Revisiting My Mother's Backyard Knowledge through a Postcolonial Feminist Lens

Sinith Sittirak

My presentation will critique the politics of knowledge production in the Thai women's movement through the study of the life and work of my own mother. The analysis applies the combined frameworks of postcolonial feminism and feminist research practice with a focus on women's life narratives and reflexivity in order to deconstruct the dominant process of knowledge production and create a more inclusive knowledge about women in a Thai context. Additionally, it is an appropriate time to 're-visit' (the 20th year of) *Daughters of Development: Women and the Changing Environment*, published by Zed Books (1998), where I utilized my own mother's oral environmental history to critique the hegemony of the western development paradigm. This ground-breaking process of '(re-)discovering' my own mother's knowledge has helped me in the process of de-colonizing myself and thinking beyond the conventional epistemological boundaries where marginal subaltern voices need to be included.

Addressing Obstetric Violence From the Perspective of Maternal Gift Economy

Elena Skoko

The term "obstetric violence" has been chosen by South American mother activists within the feminist movement to denote a form of gender violence, legally codified for the first time in Venezuela in 2007. It stands for "the appropriation of women's body and reproductive processes by health personnel, which is expressed by a dehumanising treatment, an abuse of medicalisation and pathologisation of natural processes, resulting in a loss of autonomy and ability to decide freely about their bodies and sexuality, negatively impacting their quality of life." Despite this legal precedent, in the rest of the world the term was not used until recent times, where associations of mothers have promoted it through self-funded advocacy and research, producing significant scientific data in order to gain access to institutional and public discourse. We can say that "obstetric violence" is part of the "Science of Mothers" that is fuelled by matricentric feminism pertaining to a generation of women who feel that this topic has truly remained an unfinished business of feminism. Mothers have embraced the scientific language, combining it with artistic, political and juridical actions in order to change the state of the art on maternal healthcare. Seen through the maternal gift economy framework, as presented by Genevieve Vaughan, we can better understand how the "Science of Mothers" has impacted different countries and how mothers' network addressing this subject works transversely from grassroots to the highest national and international institutional levels.

Between the Eye and the Gaze: Maternal Shame in the Novel *We Need to Talk about Kevin* Ortal Slobodin

This paper seeks to understand the power of maternal shame in mothers' lived experiences. It explores how shame operates in the interplay between the socio-cultural, gendered ideals of motherhood and mothers' internalized representations of these ideals. By using Lionel Shriver's (2005) novel "We need to talk about Kevin", I illustrate the intrinsic link between contemporary ideals of motherhood, the power of shame, and the invisibility of maternal experiences.

Specifically, I suggest that shame is the primary mechanism through which negative maternal emotions (e.g., ambivalence, resentment, rage), are transformed into unbearable, hidden, and forbidden experiences. Empathy, or “seeing through the other’s eyes, is argued to be the most powerful antidote to maternal shame. While shame is developed through a judging gaze, empathy is developed through connected gazes, each acknowledging the other’s subjectivity. Three main bodies of literature are integrated in the current discussion of maternal shame; (a) the socio-political discourse of shame and the powerful role of shame in regulating maternal investment in a changing world; (b) feminist psychoanalytic writing on idealized motherhood and the way it is associated with maternal shame, and (c) philosophical accounts of shame, which associate shame with the broader traditional discussion of vision.

Engendering Economic Stability: Exploring a Matricentric Feminist Approach to Poverty Reduction for Mothers in Ontario

Tracy-Smith Carrier (Presenter), Sarah Benbow, and Andrea Lawlor

While the literature on the nexus of poverty and motherhood is substantial, there is a dearth of scholarship exploring the intersection of basic income, poverty, and mothering. This presentation explores a matricentric feminist approach to poverty reduction, recognizing that women, and mothers specifically, tend to be disadvantaged under current patriarchal social and economic relations. Indeed, this clustering of disadvantage (arising from occupying multiple axes of identity subject to oppression, including women, mothers, and so forth) exposes mothers to increasingly harmful economic outcomes. Yet, the impact of arguably more equitable social policies, such as a basic income, which could provide mothers with the security of an income floor, remains unclear. This presentation considers the implications of basic income on mothers by exploring the merits and limitations of this (more dignified) approach to income assistance, including the social policy arenas that remain to be addressed in the advent of widespread basic income implementation. As such, we consider the impacts of basic income on mothers in relation to access to affordable and secure housing, quality child care, as well as the ramifications of this approach for violence against women, and the overall health and well-being of families. Applying a matricentric feminist lens, we address how mothers, with varied intersections of race/ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation and geography, experience the oppression of low-income differently, and as such, any discussion on the consequences of basic income should highlight the diverse social locations of the populations considered. We conclude with recommendations on how the province, in partnering with the federal government, might introduce a robust basic income policy that would better meet the needs of mothers in this province, and across Canada.

With-In Mothering

Kirsten Stromberg

Mary Kelly with her work *Post Partum Document* helped pave the way for contemporary artists to speak directly from and within the experience of motherhood in contrast to the European art tradition, which spoke about motherhood. This tradition historically emphasizes the ideal and though important, it leaves out much of the complex realities of being with and inside mothering; the pain, the intimacy, the loss, the love and the very difficult socio-economic realities of maintaining an art practice in this position. Today, despite Mary Kelly’s and other artists’ valiant

efforts, motherhood is still a taboo subject in contemporary art. Mothers are shockingly hidden from the contemporary art model as much of the requirements of being an artist today involve late night openings, child un-friendly residencies, traveling talks, sparse financial assistance- not to mention the unspoken consensus that the topic itself is just not ‘cutting edge’ enough for serious art consideration. In a field which prides itself in being ‘free’ and ‘outside’ bourgeois norms, it has become ‘free’ from any serious regulation and privileges the individual who is not tied down by bedtimes, babysitters, multiple jobs and preparing lunches for school the next day. I would like to do a series of work about the erasure of the experience of mothering in European art as well as highlight the ‘in between’ moments of daily mothering. I will do this through painting interventions on found images of artworks in the European tradition whose subject is motherhood. The painting interventions might entirely erase the image, shift a color, highlight a moment or superimpose another image altogether. I will collect hundreds of these reproductions in order to create an ‘archive of everyday resistance’ to its ideological representation and to discuss the complex and subtle aspects of being on the ground, from and with-in mothering.

From Childless to Childfree: Documentarians Flipping the Motherhood Narrative in Italy
Michelle Tarnopolsky

One in five women in Italy are now childless, but unlike their male counterparts, they remain shrouded in stigma, whether their condition is voluntary or not. Italian women feel immense pressure from family, religion, society and government institutions to fulfill what is still widely considered their duty. The health ministry’s disastrous 2016 Fertility Day campaign only succeeded in further stigmatizing and alienating Italian women who forgo motherhood. In recent years, however, documentarians have started to change the narrative about what it means to be childless in Italy. Online, in print and on film, they are sharing the stories of women who, like them, have chosen to be childfree. By examining common themes, generational differences and ties to feminist movements past and present, this paper will focus on three documentary films and two books produced in the last eight years in Italy that are finally helping to break the cultural silence that has long shrouded the experience of women who make this conscious choice. While their reasons are as diverse as the women themselves, what unites them is the fierce belief in their right to self-determination and autonomy, and a rejection of the deeply rooted cultural notion that all women are potential mothers. *Motherhood Studies and the Motherhood Movement in the Context of Women’s and Gender Studies*

Motherhood Studies and the Motherhood Movement in the Context of Women’s and Gender Studies

Tatjana Takševa

The emergence and ongoing development of motherhood studies as a vibrant scholarly discipline over the last two decades, and the emergence of the political motherhood movement by and on behalf of mothers at the beginning of the twenty-first century, constitute a significant academic, social and cultural development that curiously remains on the sidelines of women and gender studies inquiry. The 2013 volume *Gender and Women Studies in Canada: Critical Terrain* (Women’s Press), for example, conceptualized as a comprehensive survey and an introduction to “a field that is at the forefront of critical thinking about inequalities and social justice,” and aiming to offer “a broad selection of writings from a range of authors and perspectives” (xvii),

contains 69 chapters, only one of which briefly engages the topic of motherhood but only from the limited perspective of mother blame in the context of psychoanalysis.

This omission troubling for several reasons. The first one is the fact that diverse scholarship on motherhood has been steadily produced since the late 1990s, to the point that it now constitutes motherhood studies, an area of scholarly inquiry with a growing body of theoretical and methodological principles. The field has its own journal, the *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement*, launched in 1998, as well as a publishing press, Demeter Press, founded in 2005 as the first feminist press on motherhood that has since published a hundred titles.

Alongside these developments, a variety of efforts aimed at raising awareness about mothers' needs and interests as well as the place of the family as a social and political unit in neo-liberal discourses have emerged in Canada and the US, to such an extent that speaking collectively, they have been acknowledged to constitute a movement with a political orientation. While varied and diverse, what unites all these initiatives is their orientation toward equity, equality and social justice, all of which squarely align with foundational feminist and WGS beliefs.

Lastly, my surprise is to some extent based on simple statistics: according to recent census information, there are 2 billion mothers in the world, of whom 85.4 million live in the US, while 4.1 million live with children under the age of 18 in Canada. The numbers themselves raise troubling questions: where are women as mothers and their diverse experiences located and represented within the field of women and gender studies? How is it that current trends in the field are said to be based on "the concept and practice of intersectionality, gendering and queering of women's studies, indigenizing and decolonizing women's studies, and globalizing, internationalizing and transnationalizing women's studies" (Hobbs and Rice xix), but yet the globally pervasive and historically persistent and diverse experience of motherhood in relation to women's identity appears to exist largely outside those trends?

What has become evident, therefore, is not only that recent scholarship in women and gender studies by and large bypasses and/or ignores the issue of motherhood, but also that motherhood studies and maternal theory are seldom, if ever, systematically explored with respect to the connections between motherhood as an institution and a theory, and feminist thought. These omissions have serious intellectual and institutional implications. They call into the question some of the fundamental premises of WGS regarding issues of representation, inclusion and social and gender justice, and raise further troubling questions, such as whose women's studies is being called upon, or passed on, where and by whom? (cf. Braithwaite, et.al 31).

The purpose of my talk is to interrogate this absence by arguing that the reasons for it are to be found in the historically uneasy and often antagonistic relationship between motherhood and the goals of the women's liberation movement, and thus feminism. This fraught relationship persists in mainstream feminism and many recent developments within WGS, notwithstanding Adrienne Rich's 1976 frank and largely celebratory feminist account of motherhood as an institution and an experience in *Of Woman Born*, and the subsequent emergence of motherhood studies. I argue that although women and gender studies are no longer always synonymous with feminism, one of the dominant discursive lenses for examining women's experience in the various disciplines

that fall under the WGS umbrella remains the importance of and battle for female access to individualism, in conjunction with the pursuit of full equality with men. In their dominant iterations within the field, both individualism and full equality imply and indeed, “require that women be liberated from the consequences of their bodies, notably the ability to bear children” (Fox-Genovese 1982, 133; 1999, 21), as well as the resulting social and personal enmeshing that arise out of the maternal role. I will set this critique against the theory of matrocentric feminism and recent developments in feminist love studies that advance a relational understanding of identity and individuality. My aim will be to situate motherhood studies within the WGS field by illustrating the historical as well as contemporary and theoretical continuities among studies of the maternal, feminisms, women’s rights and social constructions of gender.

Cave Research: The Rise of the Matricentric Narrative

Mariana Thomas

Women’s contemporary stories of mothering: what began as a few women shouting into silence is rapidly becoming saturated with voices. A reviewer of Rivka Galchen’s recent memoir declared that the ‘publishing industry has been in thrall to motherhood memoirs for years now,’ suggesting that women writers have established a new tradition of matricentric narrative (O’Reilly). This paper will interrogate the rise and evolution of these ‘post-feminist’ confessional texts, as produced within a cultural landscape of individualism and personal responsibility. It will examine the mother writers’ ambivalent relationship with an inherited feminist politics. In narratives that illustrate a desire by these writers to redress the paucity of representations of mothering, in an approach that may once have been accused of essentialism but which is now being reconsidered as a site of the empowerment and reconstruction of the maternal subject. The paper will work under the proposition that mothers need a feminism of their own (O’Reilly, Baraitser, Kawash); that historically feminists have often dismissed the importance of motherwork, equating it with Rich’s ‘institution of motherhood’. It will examine how these writers are developing a matricentric narrative of their own, with common characteristics of form illuminating the experiential, visceral encounter with mothering, which has long existed in the shadow of the institution.

Family (and) Intrigues: Coping With/Through Mothering

Veeksha Vagmita

A polyphonic narrative of women’s lives and experiences, *Listening Now* foregrounds the oppression and intensity of motherhood as well as the sustenance afforded by co-mothering relationships and female bonding. Through accounts of women with varying dispositions, Indian-American writer Anjana Appachana examines the particularities of the characters’ situations and temperaments as much as the “shared” narrative of family intrigues. Caught in a web of relationships, the characters reveal deep-seated resentments, the shattered dreams of their youth, and a gnawing feeling of ambivalence towards their own children. “Inauthenticity”, associated with mothering in difficult conditions (Adrienne Rich and Sara Ruddick have elaborated on it), serves not only as a defence but is wielded as a weapon by calculating and resourceful women in the novel. The effects are corrosive for “children” and adults alike. In contrast, the task of nurturing seems to save the central character, Padma, an unmarried woman raising a child. The other women form a protective circle around the vulnerable mother-daughter

pair. I would like to focus on the mutually sustaining relationships between these women, who channel their mothering skills to “hold” one another and pit the force of their “sisterhood” against patriarchal norms.

Putting the Policy Cart before the Culture Horse: Lessons from Japan

Amy Westervelt

In many books and essays about how to better support mothers in modern society, and particularly in the U.S., we often look to Scandinavia for inspiration, or to the Dutch, or the French. Rarely do we think through the cultural and economic shifts needed for socialist democratic policies to work in patriarchal capitalist societies. Japan, in its ongoing effort to encourage reproduction and stall the decline of its birthrate, is a living laboratory in which to study how cultural and political change work—or don't work—together. The Japanese government has instituted many Scandinavian- and European-inspired policies over the past decade: paid parental leave, an emphasis on paternity leave, protection of women's jobs post-maternity leave, subsidized daycare, flex time work arrangements, payments to families, and even various cultural propaganda initiatives aimed at highlighting the importance of involved fathers. Researchers have long since determined that the lack of involvement from fathers is a key factor in why Japanese women often opt not to have children; yet, despite a number of sweeping policies aimed at increasing paternal involvement, the data still shows a gap between context and conduct. While about a third of Japanese fathers say they want to take advantage of these policies, only 3% actually do. The country has hit a similar wall with getting women back into the workplace after having children, despite subsidizing daycare and instituting policies aimed at removing the pervasive "mommy track" mindset of managers. In this paper, based on my forthcoming book *Rise of the Matriarchy* (Fall 2018, Seal/Hachette), I will apply lessons learned in Japan to the context of America, where working family advocates are pushing for similar policies, but little to no effort is being made on the slower, tougher work of changing cultural values.

Keynote Presenter Bios

Dr. **Petra Bueskens** is an honorary fellow at the University of Melbourne, a psychotherapist in private practice and a freelance columnist at New Matilda. Her research and writing focuses on motherhood, feminism, psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, and social and political theory. Petra's edited book *Mothering and Psychoanalysis: Clinical, Sociological and Feminist Perspectives* was published by Demeter Press in 2014. She has two forthcoming books: *Modern Motherhood and Women's Dual Identities: Rewriting the Sexual Contract* (Routledge, 2018) and *Nancy Chodorow and The Reproduction of Mothering: 40 years on* (Demeter Press, 2018). Email: petra.bueskens@unimelb.edu.au Twitter: @PetraBueskens

Genevieve Vaughan (b. Texas 1939) created the all-women multicultural Foundation for a Compassionate Society (1987-2005) and initiated a network: International Feminists for a Gift Economy (2001- present). Her books are *For-Giving, a Feminist Criticism of Exchange* (1997), *Homo Donans* (2006) *The Gift in the Heart of Language* (2015) and several anthologies www.gift-economy.com.

Andrea O'Reilly, PhD, is Professor in the School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at York University. O'Reilly is founder and director of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement, founder and editor-in-chief of the Journal of the Motherhood Initiative, and founder and publisher of Demeter Press. She is co-editor/editor of 20 books including *Mothers, Mothering and Motherhood Across Cultural Differences: A Reader* (2014) and *Academic Motherhood in a Post Second Wave Context: Challenges, Strategies, Possibilities* (2012). O'Reilly is author of *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart* (2004) and *Rocking the Cradle: Thoughts on Motherhood, Feminism, and the Possibility of Empowered Mothering* (2006) and *Matricentric Feminism: Theory, Activism, and Practice* (2016). She is editor of the first Encyclopedia (3 Volumes, 705 entries) on Motherhood (2010). She is a recipient of the CAUT Sarah Shorten Award for outstanding achievements in the promotion of the advancement of women in Canadian universities and colleges, is twice the recipient of York University's "Professor of the Year Award" for teaching excellence and in 2014 was the first inductee into the Museum of Motherhood Hall of Fame.

Regular Presenter Bios

Bruna Alvarez, PhD, is an Anthropologist, and a postdoctoral researcher at AFIN Research Group – UAB (Spain), doing research on how parents talk about children's origins, including adoption, ART, and sexual intercourse. At the same time she is working as a counsellor in reproductive decisions and infertility.

Victoria Bailey has an MA in Women's Studies, an English BA (Hons) degree, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Creative Writing. Victoria also works as a freelance writer and has written for a variety of feminist/women focused magazines and anthologies.

Ashley Balsom is a masters candidate at Memorial University of Newfoundland in Canada. She is affiliated with the Family Resilience Laboratory and works there with Psy.D. Candidate

Shannon Bedford under the supervision of Dr. Julie Gosselin. Ms. Balsom is interested in fertility and mobility and its impact on motherhood.

Karen Bamford (Professor, Mount Allison University) has published on Clements, and with Rabillard edited a collection of essays on motherhood in contemporary drama.

Catarina Barata is an anthropologist and visual artist based in Portugal. A PhD candidate in Anthropology at the Social Sciences Institute of the University of Lisbon, Portugal (ICS-UL), her research focuses on obstetric violence, childbirth activism, and the transformative power of the arts.

An instructor in Women's and Gender Studies, and Family Studies since 2004, **Lisa Bednar** excels in promoting the expectation to think critically about women's lives. Lisa works to encourage students by sharing the support she has received from her own mentors. Outside the classroom, feminist mothering and creative endeavors keep Lisa busy.

Nitza Berkovitch is a senior lecturer at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Ben Gurion University (Israel). She teaches and writes on: gender, care work, neoliberalism, human rights, globalization, transnational women's movements, and civil society. Nitza is the author of *From Motherhood to Citizenship: Women's Rights and International Organizations*.

Katie Bodendorfer Garner, PhD has focused on issues concerning carework and motherhood for almost a decade. She currently runs consciousness-raising workshops for mothers. Dr. Garner is working on a book covering nearly 100 interviews with women around the U.S. Her articles can be found at www.drkatiebgarner.com.

Simone Bohn is Associate Professor of Political Science at York University. Her current SSHRC-funded research focuses on the advances and shortcomings for the Brazilian women's movement that stemmed from its strategic partnership with the central government during the Workers' Party's tenure in office.

Meaghan Brady Nelson is a mother, artist, and assistant professor at Middle Tennessee State University. Research and service centers around the ways collaborative artmaking experiences and critical visual literary can inspire social consciousness and social responsibility, along with her multi-layered identity of becoming a Mothering-ArtAdemic. She collaboratively created, and sustains, the Kids Arts Festival of Tennessee.

Dr. **Lori Chambers** is a Professor of Women's Studies at Lakehead University where she teaches feminist theory, and courses about women and the law.

Haile Eshe Cole is a visiting assistant professor at Amherst, College and received her PhD. in Cultural Anthropology and African Diaspora studies at The University of Texas at Austin. Her current research focuses on the intersections of blackness, motherhood, and reproductive health disparities.

Jennifer Combe is a mother, artist, and assistant professor of art at The University of Montana where she teaches foundations and art education methods courses. Her artwork addresses contemporary motherhood and children's development. She is invested in teacher education programs that integrate community arts and teaching from a social theory perspective.

Jamie Day is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Registered Drama Therapist, and Creator and Facilitator of the Divine Mommy Programs for women. Jamie, also a professional actress and singer, is a member of the Screen Actor's Guild and Actor's Equity Association with over two decades of professional experience.

Patty Douglas is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. She uses critical, interpretive and arts-based approaches in disability studies to work toward more liberatory pedagogies and care practices. Her current research and book project explore new meanings of autism beyond deficit and toward community <http://enactingautisminclusion.ca/>.

Hayley Edwardson is a Public Health Lecturer at the University of East London. She recently began her PhD at Canterbury Christ Church University entitled, *The Mothers' Story - Feminist Mothering from the Marginalised 'Outlaws'*. This research intends to understand the lived experience of mothers and mothering. Previous research includes Calais refugees, Somali Mothers, and Photovoice.

Avigail Erenkrantz Hotzen: MA student at the Gender studies program at Ben-Gurion University in Israel, a mother of three and a feminist LGBTQ activist. I am Currently writing my theses on Feminist Mothering in Israel, based on empiric Quotative research. My background is interdisciplinary, based on Gender Studies, General Literature and Critical-education.

Andrea Fleckinger: Bachelor's degree in Social Work, Master's degree in Innovation and Research for Social Work and Social Education. Since 2017 PhD- student in General Pedagogy, Social Pedagogy, General Education and Subject Didactics at the Free University of Bozen. Ten years of work experience as a social worker in a woman's shelter.

Joan Garvan's thesis Maternal Ambivalence in Contemporary Australia: Navigating Equity and Care is in Sociology and Gender. She has a homepage at: www.maternalhealthandwellbeing.com, offered online professional development courses, and worked as an advocate for improved early years services. Joan worked as a tutor on Gender and Development and lectured in Sociology.

Margaret F. Gibson is a Visiting Assistant Professor at the School of Social Work at York University. Her research interests include disability studies, parenting, LGBTQ+ communities, and how notions of difference are produced and resisted by service users and providers. She edited a book collection entitled *Queering Motherhood: Narrative and Theoretical Perspectives* (Demeter Press, 2014).

Melissa Gjellstad, Ph.D., is the Norwegian professor at University of North Dakota. Since 2014, Melissa has additionally taught Norwegian literature at University of Oslo International Summer School. Melissa's research delves into contemporary Scandinavian literature and gender studies,

centering on mothers and fathers in contemporary fiction. She has also translated non-fiction and poetry.

Heidi Goettner-Abendroth has published extensively on matriarchal society and culture, and through her lifelong research on matriarchal societies has become a founder of Modern Matriarchal Studies. She lectured in Europe and abroad, and her main work “Matriarchal Societies. Studies on Indigenous Cultures across the Globe” has been published in German, English, Italian, and Spanish. She has been visiting professor at the University of Montreal in Canada, and at the University of Innsbruck in Austria. In 1986, she founded the “International Academy HAGIA for Matriarchal Studies and Matriarchal Spirituality” in Germany, and since then has been its director. In 2003, she organized and guided the “1st World Congress on Matriarchal Studies” in Luxembourg; in 2005, the “2nd World Congress on Matriarchal Studies” in San Marcos, Texas; and in 2011, a major conference on Matriarchal Studies and Politics in Switzerland.

Erin Graybill Ellis is a doctoral student at Texas Woman's University and mother of five. Her research has focused on the intersection of motherhood and academia and how the competing and often incompatible expectations of motherhood and academia harm graduate student mothers.

Dr. Fiona Joy Green is a feminist mother and Professor of Women's and Gender Studies who believes in the power of revolutionary feminist motherwork in both raising children and contributing to feminist theorizing and praxis. She's the sole author and co-editor of 4 books addressing feminist parenting and maternal pedagogies.

Eva Doherty Gremmert is an author, a businesswoman, a public speaker and a professional genealogist. Her website www.evagremmert.com includes her blog, her books and contact information. Eva and her husband, Arden, have been married for over 40 years, raised four amazing children, and have ten beautiful grandchildren.

Olivia Heal is a PhD Candidate at the University of East Anglia. Looking at contemporary mother-writing Olivia's work deliberates how the practice and experience of mothering informs and affects the literature produced.

Nicole Hill is a PhD student in sociology at the University of Alberta, Canada. She lives in Edmonton, Alberta with her partner and two children. Nicole's academic interests include gender, health, feminisms, and culture.

Professor **Susan Hogan's** latest work has been concerned with women's perceptions of ageing explored via arts-based methods (with Sheffield University) and women's transition to motherhood, most recently in collaboration with The Institute of Mental Health, Nottingham, focusing on the birth experience (The Birth Project, AHRC grant ref. AH/K003364).

Michelle Hughes Miller is Associate Professor in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of South Florida. She researches constructions of motherhood within law and policy and violence against women. In 2017 she co-edited *Bad Mothers: Regulations, Representations,*

and Resistance (Demeter) and *Addressing Violence Against Women on College Campuses* (Temple).

Kira Hussing is a PhD candidate and IRC Scholar in the Media and German department at Maynooth University, Ireland. Her research project is Motherhood in Contemporary German and Irish Cinema since 1990. She holds a B.A. in Film Studies and an M.A. in Media Dramaturgy from Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany.

Candace Johnson is Professor of political science at the University of Guelph, Canada. Professor Johnson has expertise in the areas of political theory, feminist theory, maternal health policy, and reproductive rights. Her publications include *Maternal Transition* (Routledge 2016) and *Human and Environmental Justice in Guatemala* (University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

Astrid Joutseno is a doctoral student at Helsinki University, in the doctoral program of Gender Culture and Society. She is writing her PhD on Mommyblogs, expressing while experiencing and reading while caring. She is a professional songwriter and a performer by the name Astrid Swan.

Adj. Professor **Kaarina Kailo** has held positions as women's and cultural studies professor or researcher at Oulu University, Finland, and at Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Canada. She has published numerous articles, books, and anthologies on Northern wo/men, indigeneity, gift economies, ecomythology and globalization. She is municipal counselor in the City of Oulu. www.kaarinakailo.info.

Estée Klar-Wolfond is PhD Student in Critical Disability Studies at York University where she specializes in autism pedagogy, movement and relation in artistic collaborative practice. She is also the Founder/Director of *The Autism Acceptance Project* since 2005, and the Executive Director of *The A School*, a community school for social justice in education. She has a non-speaking autistic son, Adam, who communicates by typing and who often presents with Estée.

Kirre Koivunen is a freelance photojournalist and media educator. Her journalistic work is focused on reports based on social justice, social documentary photography and video productions. Koivunen also does international human rights work, with “women-at-risk” –cases, which are also related partially to her journalistic work.

Rachel Lamdin Hunter teaches child and maternal health, cultural safety, and research methods, in the Centre for Health and Social Practice, at Waikato Institute of Technology, Hamilton, New Zealand. Rachel's PhD, a storytelling project with an autoethnographic weave, is titled: “She watches over her household: Mothers, children, and wellbeing in motherled households.”

Karen Lane has researched and written about women and mothering for the past twenty-five years, first in the context of the politics and sociology of maternity care and more recently in

relation to the carework of mothering in successful resettlement of migrants and refugees in Australia.

Robyn Lee is an Assistant Professor in the department of sociology at the University of Alberta. Her research interests include social theory, gender, sexuality, embodiment, and ethics. Her forthcoming monograph is entitled *The Ethics and Politics of Breastfeeding: Power, Pleasure, Poetics*.

Annika Ljung-Baruth: Senior Lecturer in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies and Senior Lecturer in English, specializes in 20th century literature, philosophy, and feminist theory. Research areas include the field of ecofeminism and the development of feminism as a component of public policy and culture in Scandinavian societies.

Kristin Marsh, Ph.D. is the Program Director of Women's & Gender Studies and Associate Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, VA.

Maki Motapanyane is an Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Mount Royal University. She has published on the topics of feminist theory and methodology, racialized humour, Hip-Hop culture, motherhood and organizational diversity. She is an avid follower of the arts, and a busy mother of two.

Although a native German, **Eva-Maria Müller-Markfort** completed a three years education as a nurse and thereafter got a degree as Nurse-Midwife at Brussels Free University in 1961. Working in Belgium, France, and Saudi Arabia, where her two children were born, enriched her knowledge about other cultures in general and the situation of women and mothers in particular. Homebirthing back in Germany for 25 years until recently, she took on further education mainly on the psychological level to change the influence of the medicalised controlling system of prenatal care, and ensure a better maternal and fetal birthing outcome. Co-founder and first President of the German Professional Association for Homebirth (DFH), she engages herself to keep the old art of midwifery alive by teaching young colleagues about the psychic part of pregnancy and birthing.

Vicki Noble is an artist, healer, writer, teacher, a foremother of the Goddess movement, known for having co-created the round *Motherpeace* deck (1981). Her decades of independent feminist research are articulated in her books, *Motherpeace* (1983), *Shakti Woman* (1991), and *The Double Goddess* (2003). She teaches internationally with books published in Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, German, and French.

Lynn O'Brien Hallstein is an Associate Professor of Rhetoric in the College of General Studies and an Affiliated Faculty of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program at Boston University. She is the author of several books and has published a variety of journal articles and book chapters.

Andrea O'Reilly, PhD, is Professor in the School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at York University. O'Reilly is founder and director of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement, founder and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the Motherhood*

Initiative, and founder and publisher of Demeter Press. She is co-editor/editor of 20 books including *Mothers, Mothering and Motherhood Across Cultural Differences: A Reader* (2014) and *Academic Motherhood in a Post Second Wave Context: Challenges, Strategies, Possibilities* (2012). O'Reilly is author of *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart* (2004) and *Rocking the Cradle: Thoughts on Motherhood, Feminism, and the Possibility of Empowered Mothering* (2006) and *Matricentric Feminism: Theory, Activism, and Practice* (2016). She is editor of the first Encyclopedia (3 Volumes, 705 entries) on Motherhood (2010). She is a recipient of the CAUT Sarah Shorten Award for outstanding achievements in the promotion of the advancement of women in Canadian universities and colleges, is twice the recipient of York University's "Professor of the Year Award" for teaching excellence and in 2014 was the first inductee into the Museum of Motherhood Hall of Fame.

Adwoa Ntozake Onuora is a Lecturer at the University of The West Indies, Mona Campus where she teaches courses on subjects related to masculinity and femininity, sexism, racism, classism, ableism, and homophobia. She has rich experience in research, advocacy, and community development, and is deeply committed to the principles of anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and anti-oppression. She is the author of *Anansesem: Telling Stories and Storytelling African Maternal Pedagogies*.

Sheila Rabillard (Associate Professor, University of Victoria) has published multiple articles on motherhood in contemporary British and North American theatre and is writing a book on the subject.

Peggy Reeves Sanday is Emerita Professor of Anthropology at the Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. Books and articles can be found on-line under Peggy Reeves Sanday.

Katherine Runswick-Cole, PhD, is Professor and Chair in Education, Sheffield University, England. Katherine is also the mother of two young adults, one of whom has attracted the label of autism. She is one of the editors of *Re-thinking Autism: disability, identity & diagnosis*, which seeks to trouble biomedical models of autism and to explore the impact of autism as a cultural category, or social construct, that has very 'real' impacts on the lives of people who attract the label and on their families and allies.

Myra Sabir received her PhD in human development and family studies from Cornell University in 2004. She is currently an assistant professor in the department of human development at Binghamton University. She is a narrative psychologist specializing in attachment repair through narrative intervention.

Art scholar and curator, Dr. **Hadara Scheffan Katzav**, is the head of the Art department at the Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv and a lecturer in the Department of Interior Design, the College of Management. Her research interests focus on motherhood in art, critical theory, and feminist Psychoanalysis.

Asst. Professor Dr. **Ürün Şen-Sönmez** and Asst. Professor Dr. **Beyhan Uygun-Aytemiz** are currently members of The Department of Turkish Language and Literature at Arel University.

Their areas of research include contemporary Turkish novels and short stories, literary theory, gender studies, nationalism, orientalism, and occidentalism.

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*Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for
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