

## Conference: *The Mother and History: Past and Present*

### Abstracts Date Extension to May 31st, 2009

**Thursday 2nd July 2009 – Saturday 4th July 2009**  
**The University of Queensland, St Lucia Q 4072,**  
**Brisbane, Australia**

This conference will explore, examine critique, theorise, and respond to key issues for mothers that have arisen historically. What do we know about the history of motherhood? What are the historical representations and issues? Who have created/influenced historical images of motherhood? What have been the effects on mothers and maternal issues? What evidence is extant of how mothers have responded to expectations of 'good' motherhood? How have mothers actually practiced their mothering? What research has been undertaken? How have historical issues been theorised by mothers themselves? What disciplines have influenced motherhood? We are creating history as we live. What maternal issues are being created now? What legacy will present mothering practices and representations leave for future mothers? There will also be general papers on mothering.

The standard of the many proposed papers already received is high. Papers come from both Australian and International scholars and from all levels of Academia. This conference promises to be as stimulating, informative, successful and congenial as the previous Australian conferences have been.

If you are interested in being a presenter, please send a 200 word abstract and a 50 word bio by **April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009** to: Dr Marie Porter ([m.porter2@uq.edu.au](mailto:m.porter2@uq.edu.au)) Abstracts sent after this date will be considered and included if possible.

**Time for Presentations:** 20 min papers followed by 10 min discussion time at the end of each session. If you wish to facilitate a workshop or a panel, you may have 90 mins.

**Registration** includes a light supper/afternoon tea on Thursday p.m., morning and afternoon teas and lunch on Friday and Saturday. Concession prices are available for all students and those who are in less than 50% employment.

**To register go to the Registration Link below.**

<http://www.uq.edu.au/secure/events/emsah2008/form/ers.htm?e=4&f=4>

Australian Presenters of papers must be/become members of ARM-A. Email: [jajones@qut.edu.au](mailto:jajones@qut.edu.au) Please go to the website [www.uq.edu.au/mothering](http://www.uq.edu.au/mothering) and download a membership form. Complete and send a cheque or money order to Ms Jenny Jones, Humanities Program, Queensland University of Technology, K Block, Kelvin Grove, 4059

International presenters must be/become members of ARM Email: [arm@yorku.ca](mailto:arm@yorku.ca) Website: [www.yorku.ca/crm](http://www.yorku.ca/crm).

For information on ARM-A, please see website: [www.uq.edu.au/mothering](http://www.uq.edu.au/mothering)

**Sponsors – The Centre for Research on Women, Gender, Culture and Social Change, School of EMSAH, The University of Queensland; ARM-A, Australia ARM, Canada .**

## Confirmed Keynote Speakers

### Associate Professor Gracelyn Smallwood

Associate Professor Gracelyn Smallwood was the first Indigenous person in Australia to get a Masters of Science (in Public Health). She works at Cleveland Youth Detention Centre as nurse and mentor, and at Townsville Hospital as a nurse and midwife. Gracelyn's resume is in the 2008/2009 list of successful Australian women. She has been a strong advocate for the past 45 years for Indigenous peoples. She is the mother of three and grandmother of nine. Gracelyn is the advisor to the Vice Chancellor on Indigenous affairs at James Cook University.



### The paper: **The Effect of Human Rights Violations on Indigenous Mothering**

Prior to European invasion, Indigenous family and kin groups were strong units in which the community cared and revered the young and the elders. Kinship systems unrecognisable to the invaders ensured continuity of care, and gave children an extended family of mothers, all playing the mothering role, and all looking after children equally. The onerousness and loneliness of the traditional western nuclear family did not exist.

The Europeans massacred families, and later herded children into dormitories far from their mothers. Aboriginal women were raped or otherwise abused by white men, and their brown-skinned babies were taken off them to indemnify the whites against their 'immorality' of sexual relations with people they regarded as inferior. The impact of the Stolen Generations and segregation and dormitorisation of children has had a lasting impact on present day Indigenous mothering.

Research shows that Indigenous women are more likely to have teenage pregnancies, and have more severe substance abuse issues than non-Indigenous women, leading to poorer birth and mothering outcomes. To understand these dismal statistics one must understand the very real effects of transgenerational trauma, poverty and prevailing hopelessness borne from dispossession from culture, and alienation from country and society

### Associate Professor Andrea O'Reilly

Andrea O'Reilly is Associate Professor in the School of Women's Studies at York University, Toronto, Canada. In 1998 O'Reilly founded and continues to direct the *Association for Research on Mothering*, the first and still only research association on motherhood worldwide, now with 550-plus paid members from more than twenty countries ([www.yorku.ca/arm](http://www.yorku.ca/arm)). In 1999 she founded the *Journal of the Association for Research on*

*Mothering*, the first and still only scholarly journal on Motherhood. The journal is internationally recognized as the leading research scholarly publication on motherhood.



### **“Outlaw(ing) Motherhood: A Theory and Politic of Maternal Empowerment for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**

The emergence of an international motherhood movement and the development of Motherhood Studies as an academic discipline over the last decade have lead maternal scholars and activists to define and develop a politic and theory of maternal empowerment. Maternal activists and researchers today agree that motherhood, as it is currently perceived and practiced in patriarchal societies, is disempowering if not oppressive for a multitude of reasons ranging from the societal devaluation of motherwork, the endless tasks of privatized mothering and the impossible standards of idealized motherhood. Maternal activists and researchers likewise contest, challenge and counter patriarchal motherhood by way of a plethora of theories of and strategies for maternal empowerment. This talk “Outlaw(ing) Motherhood: A Theory and Politic of Maternal Empowerment for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” will not so much revisit these ideas and strategies as request that scholars and activists alike, rethink received or accepted notions of how and why motherhood function as oppressive institution for women. When asked, students, mothers, researchers readily describe the exhaustion, guilt, boredom, anxiety, loneliness and so forth of contemporary Western motherhood but are less forthcoming on why this is so. Yes, mothers in North America are overwhelmed, fatigued and guilt-ridden because they alone assume the responsibility for, and work of motherhood but the larger question remains: why is this so? It is my view, and the argument of this paper, that modern motherhood functions as a patriarchal institution, one that has largely been impervious to change despite forty years of feminism, because of the gender ideology that grounds it; namely gender essentialism and the resulting naturalized opposition of the public and private spheres. The paper will argue that only by unearthing and severing the ideological underpinning of patriarchal motherhood, namely gender essentialism, can we develop a politic of maternal empowerment and a practice of outlaw motherhood for the 21st century.

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#### **Brisbane**

Brisbane is Australia’s third largest city. Our winter weather (June, July, August) is ideal with mainly cool dry weather and blue skies. With an idyllic sub-tropical climate, it boasts beautiful, lush parks and gardens located on the Brisbane River. The city is just over an hour’s drive from both the Gold and Sunshine Coasts. The mountainous hinterlands provide spectacular scenery and tropical rainforests. For more information about holidaying in South East Queensland, visit [www.queenslandholidays.com.au](http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au). For more information about Brisbane, visit: [www.ourbrisbane.com](http://www.ourbrisbane.com). Brisbane is serviced by the Brisbane International

Airport with trains, buses and taxis to take you into the City or to the suburbs. For timetabling information visit [www.transinfo.qld.gov.au](http://www.transinfo.qld.gov.au)

### **Getting to Brisbane**

Brisbane International and Domestic Airports are located 15-20 minutes drive (13km) from the CBD, with most major airlines operating international services to Brisbane.

An Airtrain service links both the domestic and international terminals of Brisbane airport with central Brisbane, with stops at Bowen Hills, Brunswick Street, Central, Roma Street, South Brisbane and South Bank stations. For more information, see [www.airtrain.com.au](http://www.airtrain.com.au). Taxi ranks are located at terminals.

### **Getting to the conference**

Buses run regularly to the University of Queensland as do City Cats. For more information, visit <http://www.translink.qld.gov.au/UQ>.

### **Accommodation**

There is accommodation close to the University, as well as on campus (Check the UQ site). Transport operates regularly from Brisbane City Centre (and its numerous hotels) to the University.

For more advice on Accommodation please see

[www.BrisbaneAccommodation.tv](http://www.BrisbaneAccommodation.tv)

or

1. Use HotelsCombined.com to find and reserve the optimal accommodation with a participating source. For example Hotels.com.
2. E-mail or Fax a copy of the reservation confirmation document to our Education Support team ([educationsupport@hotelscombined.com](mailto:educationsupport@hotelscombined.com)).
3. Receive the rebate equal to 10% of the total cost of stay.

This initiative is free of any charges and you are very welcome to offer it to your attendees. Below I've included relevant URLs and you have our full permission to use them on your website(s):

Note that you will need to click on "Price" (at the top of the results) if you want to see the lowest priced hotels first.

[http://www.hotelscombined.com/Education\\_Support](http://www.hotelscombined.com/Education_Support) - Education Initiative details  
<http://www.hotelscombined.com/City/Brisbane.htm> - Basic list of hotels in Brisbane

**Please note that we have extended the cut off date for Early Bird registrations from the 30<sup>th</sup> April to the 15<sup>th</sup> May because of the difficulty we had getting the registration link up.**