



**MOTHERLINES: MOTHERING, MOTHERHOOD, AND MOTHERS IN
AND THROUGH THE GENERATIONS: THEORY, NARRATIVE,
REPRESENTATION, PRACTICE, AND EXPERIENCE**

Hosted by the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community and Involvement
(www.motherhoodinitiative.org) and UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre
(<http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/>)

Galway, Ireland: July 6-9, 2017

Dangan, Upper Newcastle Road, National University of Ireland,
Galway, Ireland

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Dangan, Upper Newcastle Road, National University of Ireland,
Galway, Ireland

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2017

6:00 pm-7:30 pm

**WORDS OF WELCOME & KEYNOTE: MARY CONDREN, "IN THE
BEGINNING SHE WAS: MATERNAL, MATRIXIAL, AND
Matriarchal Trace Hauntings in the Traditions of
The Old Irish Cailleach and Her Daughter, Brigit,"
CHAired BY ANDREA O'REILLY**

7:30 pm-9:30 pm

RECEPTION

FRIDAY, JULY 7, 2017

8:30 am-9:30 am

REGISTRATION & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9:30 am-11:15 am

KEYNOTE PANEL: MOTHERS, MOTHERING & MOTHERLINES #1

CHAIR – Sheila Garrity

- Leonor Rodriguez, "How I am Going to Protect the Children? The Experiences of Mothers of Teenage Children Adjusting to Maternal Cancer"

- Bee Smith, “What My Mother Taught Me”
- Rosemary Crosse and Michelle Millar, “The Changing Identity of Mothers in Situations of Separation and Divorce”

11:15 am-11:30 am BREAK

11:30 am-1:00 pm CONCURRENT SESSION A1-A3

SESSION A1: MOTHERING EXPERIENCES

CHAIR – Lizbett Bengé

- Elizabeth Power, “Living to Tell the Tale”
- Karla Knutson, “The Breastfeeding Professor: Balancing Home and Academic Life”
- Christina Doonan, “There’s No Formula for a Good Mother: Shame and Estranged Maternal Labor”
- Marlene Pomrenke, “Mothers & Children: International Adoption, Joys & Challenges”

SESSION A2: BIRTHING, PREGNANCY & BREASTFEEDING

CHAIR – Gay Wilgus

- Bridget Boland, “The Doula”
- Sharon Bernecki DeJoy, “Muslim Mothering in Post 2016-Election America: Pregnancy Experiences”
- Sarah Brennan, “An Exploration of Infant Feeding Practices among Western African Mothers living in the Community in Ireland”

SESSION A3: MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS

CHAIR – Tatjana Takseva

- B. Lee Murray, “What Should I Ask/Tell Her?”
- Casey O’Reilly-Conlin & Andrea O’Reilly, “In Search of the Goddess: A Mother and Daughter Journey in Ireland”

1:00 pm-2:00 pm LUNCH: PROVIDED ON-SITE; SHORT FILM: “I’M NOT THE NANNY,” BY LEENA JAYASWAL (5 MIN.); FILM: ART ELICITATION. EXPLORING THE BIRTH EXPERIENCE, SUSAN HOGAN, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER (24 MIN.)

2:00 pm-3:30 pm CONCURRENT SESSION B1-B3

SESSION B1: FEMINIST MOTHERING/MOTHERING AND FEMINISM

CHAIR – Susan Hogan

- Máire Leane, “Sexualisation of Childhood Discourses and Debates – Understandings and Insights From the Perspective of Feminist Mothering”

- Tatjana Takseva, “Motherhood Studies and Feminist Theory: Intersections”
- Lorna Turnbull and Bronwyn Turnbull-Innis, “Mother and Child Perspectives on Feminism and Mothering”

SESSION B2: MOTHERS & MOTHERING: SPIRITUALITY & RITUAL #1

CHAIR – B. Lee Murray

- Cristina Santos, “(Un)Leashing the Bloody Countess: Motherhood and Superstition in Film”
- Jessica Spring, “The Mother of the Dream: Re-embodying the Serpents, the Scepter, and the Stars”

SESSION B3: MOTHER & SPATIAL PRACTICES

CHAIR – Rola Abu Zeid - O'Neill

- Sarah Benbow, “Mothering Without a Home: ‘Does This Make Me a Bad Mom?’”
- Gwen Scarbrough, “Mothering in a Foreign Land: (Re)creating Identity, Belonging and Homeplace”
- Karin White, “‘Mothers in Limbo’: Place, Space and Culture in Direct Provision”
- Tamsin Cavaliero, “‘It’s Different With the Girls’: Irish Traveller Women, Mothering and Space”

3:30 pm-3:45 pm **BREAK**

3:45 pm-5:15 pm **CONCURRENT SESSION C1-C3**

SESSION C1: MOTHER LOSS

CHAIR – Sinéad O’Malley

- Ruth Amir, “Shattered Motherhoods: Mothers of Forcibly Transferred Children in Canada, Australia, Spain, Israel, and Ireland”
- Sarah Ivens Moffett, “Mother Tongue: How Sharing Stories about Child Loss Can Help The Healing Process”
- Romyana Kudeva, “Grieving the Loss of the “Dreamed-of” Birth – Not Just Another Birth Story”

SESSION C2: BECOMING & UNBECOMING A MOTHER

CHAIR – Tatjana Takseva

- Rumbi Goredema Gorgens, “Of Daughters Born: How African Daughters Become Mothers”
- Michelle Tarnopolsky, “From Childless to Childfree: Documentarians Flipping the Narrative about Forgoing Motherhood in Italy”
- Tricia Ong, “Aisha’s Story: “Birthing” the Pregnancy Experiences of a Young Trafficked Woman in Nepal”

SESSION C3: MOTHERING & FAMILIES

CHAIR – Lorna Turnbull

- Linda R. Ennis, “In Whose Best Interest? The Kids Aren’t Doing Fine”
- Ortal Slobodin, “Intensifying Motherhood as a Mean of Identity Reconstruction in Trailing Spouses”
- Rola Abu Zeid - O’Neill, “‘Between Now and Then’ - The Case of Palestinian Grandmothers and Mothers Citizens of Israel”
- Eva Doherty Gremmert, “The Unexpected Mothering Story”

SATURDAY, JULY 8, 2016

8:30 am-9:30 am **REGISTRATION & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

9:30 am-11:15 am **KEYNOTE PANEL: MOTHERS, MOTHERING & MOTHERLINES #2**

CHAIR – Sinéad O’Malley

- Sheila Garrity, “‘I Just Knew’: Trust and Intuition in the Development of Parent-Practitioner Relationships in the Early Years Sector”
- Jo Murphy-Lawless, “Unlocking the Institutional Challenges Behind the Tragedy of Maternal Mortality”
- Marguerite Woods, “‘Keeping it Mum’: The Mothering and Custody Loss Experiences of Women Who Use Illicit Drugs”

11:15 am-11:30 am **BREAK**

11:30 am-1:00 pm **CONCURRENT SESSION D1-D3**

SESSION D1: EMPOWERING MOTHERS

CHAIR – Tricia Ong

- Sarah Coss, “Learning to Mother Over Coffee and Cake: Naming Our Informal Learning”
- Magdalena Sancho Moreno, “Ma-paternajes Para la Paz”. (Ma-fa-thering For Peace)”
- Jill Trenholm, “‘Sites of Resilience’ For Women Survivors of Sexual Violation in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo”
- Lincoln Addison, “Motherhood and Land Reform in Zimbabwe”

SESSION D2: MATERNAL EMBODIMENT & ETHICS

CHAIR – Denise Ferris

- Cheryl Lawler Lynch, “(M)other Logic - Other Love” (read by Mary Condren)
- Teija Rantala, “Embodied Encounter-Events Within Maternal”

SESSION D3: MOTHERS & MOTHERING: SPIRITUALITY & RITUAL #2

CHAIR – Cristina Santos

- Sarah Epstein, “My Jewish Sons Coming of Age: Re-Positioning the Mother in Rites of Passage”
- Clementine Morrigan, “All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed: A Queer Feminist Marian Devotion”

1:00 pm-2:00 pm

LUNCH: PROVIDED ON-SITE; MOVIE: BIRTH PROFESSIONALS MAKE ART, SUSAN HOGAN, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER (30 MIN.); ART DISPLAY BY MARTINA HYNAN

2:00 pm-3:30 pm

CONCURRENT SESSION E1-E3

SESSION E1: WRITING MOTHERLINES

CHAIR – Susanna Horng

- Laurie Kruk, “Motherlines and Maternal Narratives in My Poetry”
- Patricia Miller-Schroeder, “Reconstructing An Evolutionary Motherline”
- Lena Rebecca Richardson, “Searching for Jane O’Brian: An Autoethnography of the Quest for a Motherline”

SESSION E2: MOTHERING & MIGRATIONS

CHAIR – Sarah Coss

- Rumyana Kudeva, “Immigrant mothers - Motherhood Lessons From Strangers”
- Patti O’Malley, “Transracial Mothering in the Irish Context”
- Guida Man, “Cross-border Mothering: Transnational Migration Strategies of Chinese Immigrant Mothers in Canada”
- Eglė Kačkutė, “Mothering and Migrations: Expatriate Mothering”

SESSION E3: MOTHERS & MOTHERING IN HISTORY

CHAIR – Christina Doonan

- Melanie Murray, “Jean Armour Burns: Maternity in Late Eighteenth Century Scotland”
- Miranda Francis, “Unmarried Mothers Can Cope Perfectly Well - If They Live in a Flat”: Australian Lone Mothers 1960s to 1980s”

3:30 pm-3:45 pm

BREAK

3:45 pm-5:15 pm

CONCURRENT SESSION F1-F3

SESSION F1: REPRESENTING MOTHERS & MOTHERING IN FILM, LITERATURE & ART

CHAIR – Cristina Santos

- Giulia Champion, “Criminalized Motherhood: Euripides’ ‘Medea’ re-examined through Cherríe Moraga’s *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*”
- Andrea O’Reilly, “‘All those years, I kept him safe’: Maternal Practice as Resistance and Empowerment in Irish-Canadian Emma Donoghue’s *Room*”
- Mollie Kervick, “Claiming Her Story: “Ideal” Catholic Motherhood in Stephen Frears’s *Philomena*”
- Sarah Ivens Moffett, “The Return to the Motherland: How Women Represent Home and the Impossible Dream of a Safe Haven in Greek Art and Literature”

SESSION F2: MOTHERHOOD "OFF SCRIPT" AND OUTSIDE THE BOX

CHAIR – Gay Wilgus

- Jan Valle, “Motherhood Off-Script”
- Gay Wilgus, “Motherhood Outside the Box”
- Hana Israeli, “From Son to Daughter: Mothering a Transgender Child”
- Chantal Bayard, “How do Celebrities Perform Breastfeeding on Social Media?”

SUNDAY, JULY 9, 2017

8:30 am-9:30 am

REGISTRATION & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9:30 am-11:00 am

KEYNOTE PANEL: ANDREA O'REILLY, "THE BABY OUT WITH THE BATHWATER: THE DISAVOWAL AND DISAPPEARANCE OF MOTHERHOOD IN 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY ACADEMIC FEMINISM," CHAIRED BY TATJANA TAKSEVA

11:00 am-11:15 am

BREAK

11:15 am-12:45 pm

CONCURRENT SESSION G1-G2

SESSION G1: MOTHERS WRITING, WRITING MOTHERHOOD

CHAIR – Laurie Kruk

- Susanna Horng, “God’s Eye”
- Mariana Thomas, “‘Something is Pushing Them to the Side of Their Own Lives’: Experience of Temporality in Women’s Motherhood Writing”
- Lori Arnold, “A Mother is Born: Birth Stories as an Act of Life Writing that Reflects the Development of Identity as a Mother”
- Olivia Heal, “An Assemblage of Exploded Bits that Cohere Anyway or Motherhood: A Poetics of Interruption”

G2: MOTHERS & MOTHERING: ART & PERFORMANCE

CHAIR – Jessica Spring

- Denise Ferris, “The Space Between Us: Visually Representing Touch, Holding and Maternal Connection”
- Lizbett Bengé, “Mapping Landscapes of ReMOMberance: A Collaborative and Interactive Arts Based Inquiry”



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We have done this with only one small annual journal grant for *JMI* and one small governmental grant for Demeter Press in the last three years.

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Thank you so very much for your sustained and sustaining support!

Dr. Andrea O'Reilly,
Director, MIRCI,
Editor, *JMI*
Publisher, Demeter Press

KEYNOTE ABSTRACTS

In the Beginning She Was: Maternal, Matrixial, and Matriarchal Trace Hauntings in the Traditions of the Old Irish Cailleach and Her Daughter, Brigit

Mary Condren

Converging from many disciplines, activists, artists, and academics presently seek symbols, myths, rituals and images that enable and ennoble women's quest for integrity. At the heart of this quest is the search for empowering approaches to motherhood and the mother/daughter relationship. This session presents the Old Irish figure of the *Cailleach (KALYAK)*, also known as *Sentainne* (Old Woman), whose artefacts and stories of creation from her cosmic womb are paralleled (under various names) in many traditions, especially those of one who could be considered her daughter, Brigit: goddess, saint, and contemporary personification of wisdom.

In saga materials, Brigit is said to be matron of poetry, healing, and smithcraft. In her Christian *Lives* she took the Beatitude *mercy*. At a time when warring hordes run rampant across the globe, the traditions of the Cailleach and Brigit — contain *trace hauntings* (maternal, matrixial and matriarchal) of a social order that challenges patriarchal symbolic violence and offer an alternative to the political and religious altars and lethal discourses of sacrifice.

The Changing Identity of Mothers in Situations of Separation and Divorce

Rosemary Crosse and Michelle Millar

This paper explores the changing nature of maternal responsibility in situations of separation and divorce, utilising data from PhD research on Irish mother's experiences of marital breakdown.

Historically the ideology of motherhood in Irish society was very much defined by a connection to and immersion in the family; as part of a taken for granted cultural milieu. Experiences from this research show a high level of conformity to this identity. Upon separation however, analysis shows that there is a shift in the pattern of responsibility; whereby there is significant disengagement by fathers and mothers responsibilities become all encompassing.

The traditional female life course which centered on responsibility for child rearing in marriage, that was engrained by state and society is now being extended with an obligation on mothers to assume two roles that of earner and carer, post separation. Such changes reveal how the identity of mothers changes after separation, particularly in terms of the shifting rights and obligations of earning and caring responsibilities with the right to individual autonomy being disregarded.

'I Just Knew': Trust and Intuition in the Development of Parent-Practitioner Relationships in the Early Years Sector

Sheila Garrity

This presentation is based on research conducted in the Republic of Ireland exploring the relationships between mothers and early years practitioners in a rapidly shifting Irish social

context. Ireland has a limited history of engaging with formal childcare provision, with the first relevant legislation activated just two decades ago (DoHC, 1996). Irish parents arrange and pay for childcare services within a competitive market place, as the State relies heavily on the private sector to provide these services. However, the nature and the negotiation of of childcare provision, differ from a typical purchase of commercial services, as it is centred on the requirements of a young child for care, nurturance and a range of developmental needs. While this is a functional act, the purchase of care services enabling parents to engage with the labour market, it is also an emotional act, as parents transfer their basic fundamental obligation to near strangers. Research indicates improved outcomes resulting from collaborative parent-practitioner relationships within early years settings; however, the literature highlights the challenges and barriers to achieving such partnerships in day to day, lived practice. In order to develop a greater understanding of the meaning of relationships within the early years sector, the presenter sought to explore these relationships through an ethnographic research project. The research findings reveal key aspects of these significance relationships, including: the nuanced understanding of trust; the responsive/reciprocal nature of these significant relationships; the construction of services as 'communities of care' offering a sense of belonging and recognition to a range of 'members'. The focus of this presentation will be the concept of trust and its evolving nature, underpinned by an analysis of research findings from the perspective of the Ethic of Care. The impact of these findings on practice in the Early Years sector will also be discussed.

Unlocking the Institutional Challenges Behind the Tragedy of Maternal Mortality

Jo Murphy-Lawless

Maternal mortality, a rare event in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century societies of Britain and Ireland nonetheless remains a concern. It is a challenge which is responded to dramatically differently on the two islands despite the fact that the Republic of Ireland has become a participant since 2011 in the revamped UK confidential maternal death enquiry known as MBRRACE. In the UK during a period when conventional state apparatuses are engaged in a rapid downsizing and outsourcing of once key functions, the early 2000s saw Northwick Park Hospital in London put under special measures after ten maternal deaths between 2002 and 2005. Professional bodies such as the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons Glasgow have taken strong and committed interest in lowering rates of indirect maternal deaths urging clinicians to listen with care to what women are saying. By contrast, the response in Ireland has been muted and evasive leading to a campaign to have mandatory inquests for all maternal deaths. I want to explore the historical and contemporary institutional and professional processes which have led to these different levels of response and have led as well to the need for activism on behalf of families who have been directly affected.

The Baby Out With the Bathwater: The Disavowal and Disappearance of Motherhood in 20th and 21st Century Academic Feminism

Andrea O'Reilly

The paper explores matricentric feminism in relation to feminist theory and women's studies, or what may be termed academic feminism. More specifically the paper contents that

matricentric feminism has largely been ignored by feminist scholars and has yet to be incorporated into the field of 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 academic 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 first section of the paper will consider the disavowal of motherhood in twentieth century academic feminism and the second, the disappearance of motherhood in twenty-first century academic feminism. This section will then examine the place of motherhood over the last decade in the following: 1) "Introduction to Women's Studies" course syllabi, 2) articles/book reviews published in women's studies journals, 3) the content of Feminist Theory and Introduction to Women's Studies textbooks, and 4) papers presented at the National Women's Studies Association annual conference. Possible reasons for the exclusion of matricentric feminism in academic 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 has indeed thrown the baby out with bathwater.

How I am Going to Protect the Children? The Experiences of Mothers of Teenage Children Adjusting to Maternal Cancer

Leonor Rodriguez

Mothers diagnosed with cancer face a challenge that questions their identity as 'mum' to becoming 'ill mum' and finally being able to successfully accommodate both identities. Ten mothers completed semi-structured interviews analysed using Thematic Analysis. The analysis identified three themes: (i) Facing the fear of the unexpected (ii) I wanted to be a good mother, no matter what (iii) Mothering a teenager. Maternal illness is experienced as a 'biographical disruption' that impacts all aspects of maternal lives. Mothers went through a drastic change in their identity while trying to continue to be good mothers. They tried to keep family routines while dealing with side effects and illness demands until they had to realize they could not do it on their own. Maternal illness impacts on mother and adolescent relationships, where they are challenged by a process of accommodation where an initial disruption and uncertainty became an opportunity to avail of social supports and particularly for adolescents to support their mothers in ways that mothers never did not foresee.

What My Mother Taught Me

Bee Smith

"What My Mother Taught Me" explores multi-generational biography and how family story, both the approved and unauthorised versions, impacts our own personal life choices. Rebecca Solnit states: "the stories we tell about who we were and what we did shape what we can and will do." Smith, baptised Barbara Mary, was named after both of her grandmothers. Her session weaves family storytelling in with the wider social context and historic backdrop, exploring

how their experience shaped the content of her character, as well as her choices. This is distilled into three key guiding principles she learned from her lineage's stories.

'Keeping it Mum': The Mothering and Custody Loss Experiences of Women Who Use Illicit Drugs

Marguerite Woods

According to academic and other accounts, women who use illicit drugs are often portrayed in negative stereotypical terms as 'unfeminine', 'unclean' and 'immoral'. Nowhere is this more evident than when a woman is using drugs and is also a mother, when the stereotype is almost always expanded to describe a person who gives priority to her drug use rather than to her children.

This paper will discuss Irish women's experiences of motherhood and drug use and their attempts and struggles to keep their children in their care, drawing on a large qualitative research project carried out in Dublin. The experiences of women at varying stages of both their motherhood and drug-using careers reveal their aspirations to Good Mother status and chart their interactions with key actors such as their children, partners, families, drug treatment providers and social workers. In addition, the ideology of motherhood pertaining in Irish society, strongly undergirded by images of motherhood in Catholicism, is referred to throughout.

The experiences of women who succeeded in preserving their motherhood identity, role and status are related as are those of women who experienced the interruption or termination of their motherhood role, having lost some or all of their children to the care of others. These findings suggest that mothers who use drugs have an identity which is ambiguous and precarious, largely determined by their interactions with others, particularly service providers, and by efforts to perform, justify, defend and preserve their mothering role.

REGULAR PRESENTERS

Motherhood and Land Reform in Zimbabwe

Lincoln Addison

How does land reform reconfigure the meaning and practices of motherhood among women in rural Zimbabwe? Zimbabwe's land reform represents the most extensive redistribution of land to smallholders in the 21st century. Initiated in 2000 when the state decided to support black occupiers on white-owned commercial estates, this land reform program has transferred 4,500 formerly white owned estates 'representing 20 percent of the total land area in Zimbabwe to around 170,000 black smallholder households. Despite the fact that women are crucial stakeholders in rural development processes, and are central to food production, the impact of land reform on women has been overlooked in favour of political-economic outcomes. Based on ethnographic research with twenty households in Sovelele a post land reform settlement located in southeastern Zimbabwe my paper focuses on how the roles and responsibilities of motherhood may be shifting among land recipients. While this research is at an early stage, initial findings suggest that mothers who have received land exercise greater decision-making power over agriculture and household resources than their counterparts in other settings.

Shattered Motherhoods: Mothers of Forcibly Transferred Children in Canada, Australia, Spain, Israel, and Ireland

Ruth Amir

Cases of forcible transfers of children shatter not only the child's life but also the mother's, and the father's, the immediate and extended family, as well as the group to which the child belongs. The proposed paper seeks to explore representations of mother's loss of her forcibly transferred child by analyzing reports of commissions of inquiry and truth commissions that investigated forced transfers of children in Canada, Australia, Spain, Israel and Ireland in the last two decades.

The analysis will concern several reports. The 2015 report of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission documented on the impact of the Indian residential schools experience, the report by the Australian Human Rights Commission on the forced separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families; The 2008 report by the Spanish High Court Justice Baltasar Garzón on the disappearance of children of Republican mothers during the civil war and Franco's dictatorship and the recent campaign of the victims of Spain's Stolen Children; the 2001 Report by the Israeli State Commission of Inquiry into the disappearance of children of (primarily) Yemeni immigrants between 1948 and 1954; and the report by Ireland's Inter-Departmental Committee on the Magdalene Laundries.

While all these reports unfold the impact of the forcible transfer on the child, some, particularly those that focus on the experience of the child, refer only in passing to the shattered motherhood. While some of these reports acknowledge the transgenerational effects of the forcible transfer on the motherhood skills of the former children, a direct reference to the mothers' loss is absent in some of the cases. This misrecognition and the muting of the shattered motherhoods further victimizes the mothers.

A Mother is Born: Birth Stories as an Act of Life Writing that Reflects the Development of Identity as a Mother

Lori Arnold

In my paper, I argue that the act of writing these stories is an act of recording the birth of the woman as a mother rather than placing the baby as the focal point. Writing the birth stories of their children has become a recent trend in life writing by women, who publish their stories on the internet. In these stories, women often reflect upon the degree to which they feel that they had agency in the birth of their children based in part on whether or not the birth transpired as planned. As they frequently record in their birth stories, the birth of the child can greatly affect how confident a woman feels as she enters motherhood. Thus, the birth of the child is an influence on the developing identity of a woman as a mother. While scholars such as Lori Beth De Hertogh have conducted a feminist rhetorical analysis on birth stories as published on the Birth Without Fear website, my work analyzes these birth stories as examples of life writing. Drawing upon the work of Justine Dymond and Nicole Wiley in their collection, *Motherhood Memoirs*, I closely examine birth stories published on Birth Without Fear as life writing that reflects the development of the motherhood identity in a woman as discussed in *The Birth of a Mother* by Daniel Stern and Nadia Bruschiweiler-Stern.

How do Celebrities Perform Breastfeeding on Social Media?

Chantal Bayard

For the last two years, breastfeeding photographs and selfies (brelfies) have increased in popularity on social media. On Instagram only, more than 55,000 photographs come up when searching for the hashtag #brelfie. During World Breastfeeding Week 2016, the United Nations encouraged mothers to publish their brelfies in order to destigmatize breastfeeding in public spaces. World celebrities like actresses, models, television hosts and popular singers participate in this trend of making the intimate practice of breastfeeding visible on social media. In this paper, we argue that despite their good intentions, the pictures and comments of these celebrities reinforce the social norms regarding the female body, sexuality and femininity. In order to answer the question “How do celebrities perform breastfeeding selfies (brelfies) on social networks?”, we’ve chosen a qualitative methodology to analyze the pictures, comments and hashtags used by the breastfeeding mothers. In this paper, we present the preliminary results of our analysis of 51 brelfies published on the Instagram public accounts of 14 celebrities between August 2014 and August 2016.

Mothering Without a Home: ‘Does This Make Me a Bad Mom?’

Sarah Benbow

Mothers experiencing homelessness are at the intersection of incredible injustice. At that intersection, mothers are regulated, monitored, and judged based on unrealistic and unachievable notions of ‘good mothering’. Such dominant standards of mothering, perpetuated by neoliberal and patriarchal norms, chastise and stigmatize these women and blame them for their existing plight without understanding and challenging structural inequities and historical and contextual factors shaping their experiences. Drawing on a critical narrative study

conducted in Southern Ontario, Canada with mothers experiencing homelessness, this paper serves to discuss how mothers internalized dominant societal discourses and expectations that were pushed on them and the ways in which they resisted these notions. Participants expressed feelings of shame and blame for their current circumstances and shared their beliefs of feeling like subpar mothers in relation to their homelessness, addiction, and domestic violence. Others noted the blame and shame they felt from society in navigating the system. At the same time, mothers actively resisted these notions, and challenged the individual blame pushed on them, demonstrated great anger at the injustices in their lives, and collectivized their experiences. This paper will offer discussion to identify the ways in which these acts of resistance can be supported and promoted in our work with mothers who are mothering in marginalized contexts.

Mapping Landscapes of ReMOMberance: A Collaborative and Interactive Arts Based Inquiry

Lizbett Bengé

This submission is structured as a collaborative, performance-based research investigation. The questions driving the inquiry are: are motherlines remembered, if so, how? How is motherhood manifest in our individual bodily and aesthetic landscapes? What's important to mothers in the context of their own lives? Together, we will explore these questions through the creation of a collaborative performance piece with given parameters: on a note card, each participant will write a one word response to the prompt, "as a mother, it's important to me that...?" I will read the note cards aloud back to the group and we will use this shared vocabulary in groups of three to four to create movement sequences. The sequences must contain the following elements: 1. say 'motherhood' aloud 2. have two moments of stillness 3. must make physical contact with another person 4. have one moment of magic 5. jump three times 6. include raucous laughter 7. draw one's lineage at least three generations back 8. have a theme song The session will culminate with a group discussion/reflection on what the experience was to think as if one were a mother (activity one), what the process of identifying one's lineage entailed, how different artistic mediums facilitated different ways of knowing and understanding, and what shifts, if any, took place in one's body throughout the activities.

Muslim Mothering in Post 2016-Election America: Pregnancy Experiences

Sharon Bernecki DeJoy

The United States experiences significant racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes. Research with African-American women has determined that the racism plays a role in both structuring opportunities for health and creating stressful interpersonal interactions that affect health before, during, and beyond pregnancy. Similar studies have found that other stigmatized identities, including those related to disability or body size, can be the subject of discriminatory and substandard quality of health provider care, which inhibits women from seeking care. Although little academic research is yet available, evidence from agencies that monitor hate groups and hate crimes have documented an upswing in violence against minority groups, particularly Muslim-Americans, in the wake of the 2016 United States presidential election. Few studies have been conducted about the effects of interpersonal discrimination on Muslim-American women's pregnancy experience and outcomes. To begin to explore this

phenomenon, the researcher and an undergraduate public health student conducted focus group interviews with 22 Muslim-American women in the metropolitan Philadelphia, Pennsylvania region. Study participants were women currently experiencing pregnancy or who were recently postpartum who identified as Muslim and visibly presented as Muslim through clothing and headwear. The data were collected and analyzed using a feminist, phenomenological qualitative research method. Resulting themes illuminate the experience of women navigating pregnancy and motherhood in the post-2016 election context.

The Doula

Bridget Boland

My novel *The Doula* (Simon and Schuster, 2012), explores themes of self-identity, motherhood, and conscious and unconscious beliefs. The plot concerns a new doula who serves mothers and their children during birth time. But when tragedy occurs at her best friend's labour and delivery, the protagonist is forced to look closely into the secrets of her own lineage, particularly on her maternal side. An allegory of the heroine's journey to spiritual awakening, the novel culminates in the protagonist facing her understanding of the profound gifts and challenges of motherhood, as well as reconciling her own mother's challenges and contributions to the family dynamic.

I propose a reading from the novel, followed by a question and answer period to delve into the central themes of motherhood and the impact of prior generations' choices and beliefs on today's women, and/or an experiential workshop facilitating through visualization, meditation, gentle movement, journaling and group processing a healing and clearing of inter-generational limiting beliefs and soul wounds. This profound process transforms dysfunctional familial patterns and creates a strong, empowered legacy for future generations.

An Exploration of Infant Feeding Practices among Western African Mothers living in the Community in Ireland

Sarah Brennan

International evidence shows that migration can have a detrimental effect on breastfeeding. Since the 90's Ireland has been experiencing unprecedented inward migration and with this changing patient profiles. Traditionally these populations have strong breastfeeding cultures. However, very little is known about how Ireland's new communities experience breastfeeding in Irish community setting. This 'gap' in knowledge is problematic and reduces health care providers scope to promote, protect and support breastfeeding among immigrant mothers. This study explores infant feeding practices of Western African women living in the Letterkenny area with specific objectives to examine levers and barriers to breastfeeding practices in the Irish community context.

Methods: This is a qualitative study. A narrative approach to data collection and analysis was adopted which suited the cross-cultural nature of the research. The study participants were 9 women from West Africa (4 from Ghana; 5 from Nigeria). Each interview consisted of two sub-sessions based on Wengraf's Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM), an initial sub-session with an open-ended question aimed at inducing narrative and a second sub-session

using particular questions aimed at inducing narrative generated from the responses in sub-session one. In keeping with the principles of narrative analysis, this paper presents an in-depth analysis of 2 cases. Results: Jemma's case illustrates the ways in which 'superior' breast feeding practices may deteriorate in the Irish community setting due to mitigating socio-cultural circumstances. In contrast, Sara's case shows that breastfeeding practices can also flourish with positive breastfeeding experiences building on subsequent successful breastfeeding practices. Thematic analyse of all participants' data lead to the development of a Circles of Experiences framework for understanding how different experiences can have a positive and negative effect on the optimal practicing of Breastfeeding. Conclusion: Migration can have a detrimental effect on migrant mothers breastfeeding practices. However, breastfeeding may flourish despite challenging cultures.

'It's Different With the Girls': Irish Traveller Women, Mothering and Space

Tamsin Cavaliero

Shifting spatial practices in Ireland (Bhreachnacht 2006) shaped by changes in wider society (Bancroft 2005) have resulted in Traveller women's expanding domestic role (Smith and Greenfields 2013). From a distinctly gendered, cross-generational perspective, this research foregrounds the voices of mothers and daughters from the Irish Travelling Community located in the fictional townland of Baile Lucht Siúil in the Republic of Ireland. Using an ethnographic perspective, the presentation investigates the manner in which Traveller women negotiate different spaces, in particular, the home-school interface within the context of a rapidly changing society. Previous writers (Helleiner 2000; Okely 1983) on Gypsy Traveller women recognised that withdrawal from the workforce into the home place has led to a reduction in Traveller women's participation in the wider society, and contributes to a decrease in female pollution taboos (Okely 1975). Yet increasing engagement by Traveller women within the educational sector has had a significant impact of the way in which Traveller women's identity is understood and negotiated both within and between communities (Kiddle 1999; Levinson and Sparkes 2006). By focussing on the disjuncture between the generations, and building on ideas of Okely (1975, 1983) and Gay y Blasco (1997, 1999) the study draws attention to the importance of ritual hygiene practices observed through embodied performances as a way of preserving and maintaining group boundaries that are understood through moral performances located at the site of the body. Familial expectations centre around a performed and enacted morality relating to deportment, behaviour and dress as evidence of female sexuality become enacted as women move through different spaces.

Criminalized Motherhood: Euripides' "Medea" Re-Examined Through Cherríe Moraga's *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*

Giulia Champion

As Jennifer Jones argues in her 2003 work entitled *Medea's Daughter: Forming and Performing the Woman Who Kills*, "The woman who kills, in particular, the woman who kills a member of her own family, has not only broken the law but has also violated gender expectations. Idealized 'woman' has traditionally been constructed as self-sacrificing, passive, and nurturing; therefore, when actual women become violent, some sense must be made of their actions if the myth of feminine passivity is to be maintained." (pp. ix - x) This explains why the character of

Medea as a matricide, as it appears in Euripides' version of the myth, is a terrifying figure. Furthermore, her masculine attributes in the play, such as murdering her children with a sword or her heroic ethos throughout the drama confuse the binary conception of gender advocated by her husband Jason, standing for Corinth. Moreover, the fact that she escapes after the deed on the chariot provided by her grandfather Helios, without having to answer for the murder of her children creates an ambiguity that disturbs the reader. I want to argue that Euripides' play can be seen as a drama that questions the gendered role of women, and also that the infanticide is more than the mere crime of a scorned wife. I will do so through the comparative study of Euripides' play and its adaptation by the Mexican-American, or 'Chicana', playwright Cherríe Moraga who offers a futuristic and dystopic version of it. In her bilingual play, the author questions not only gender but also racism and heteronormativity, in order to introduce a new model of motherhood in the strongly patriarchal and masculinist society of Mexican immigrants in the US. The play also allows a Medea 'hungry for justice' to rehabilitate her reputation and question her supposedly criminalized motherhood.

Learning to Mother Over Coffee and Cake: Naming Our Informal Learning

Sarah Coss

My research is a feminist inquiry into the experiences of mothers in an informal Parent Support Group that meets through regular coffee mornings. The research explores informal learning, motherhood and social support within a framework of Freirean and Feminist thinking. The findings were drawn from focus groups and e-interviews with 17 women in total. The methods were feminist and participatory, that is, the women took part in various activities designed to stimulate conversation. The findings show that the women find motherhood challenging and isolating. To help combat this they joined a support group that allows possibilities for the sharing of knowledge and experiences. This sharing of experiences leads the women to describe feelings of normalising and validation. The women gave examples of ways in which their perspectives had changed since becoming a mother. They also described how learning to mother was different to ways they had learned previously. Rather than relying on authorised knowledge, such as books, they were relying on experiential knowledge; and the knowledge of other mothers. As a group of women many of their parenting practices were divergent from the dominant practices in Ireland. As such, despite them occupying positions of power in some areas of their life, such as economic and working life, these women gave many examples of silencing and othering. Their membership of the support group provided them with a space where they could discuss these issues in a safe and trusted space.

The Unexpected Mothering Story

Eva Doherty Gremmert

My second son Nick is a 37-year-old man who is delightful. He has special needs. The doctors would describe him as having Lennox Gastaut Syndrome. Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (LGS) is a rare and severe kind of epilepsy that starts in childhood. Children with LGS have seizures often, and they have several different kinds of seizures. This condition is hard to treat, but researchers are looking for new therapies. You can Google it if you want to know more about the syndrome.

His original diagnosis was developmental delay and static encephalopathy with a seizure disorder, as well as mental retardation, autistic tendencies, high anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder. About 7 years ago his diagnosis was changed to Lennox Gastaut Syndrome or LGS. LGS presents itself commonly with all of the other disorders that Nick has been diagnosed with. I believe that because of the various things we have helped Nick deal with over the years, the story of our journey resonates with many parents and caregivers.

There's No Formula for a Good Mother: Shame and Estranged Maternal Labor

Christina Doonan

This presentation theorizes mothers' experiences of shame as a result of feeding infant formula to their children. Drawing on interviews with formula and breastfeeding mothers, I bring together recent insights from scholarship on shame, the Marxist notion of 'estranged labour,' and feminist scholarship on reproductive labour, to demonstrate that shame causes the formula feeding mothers in this study to be estranged in their work as mothers. While internal self-reflection eventually allows formula feeding mothers to acknowledge that they dispatched their moral duty towards their children to the best of their abilities, given their circumstances, external work needs to be done to include formula feeding mothers into initiatives that support breastfeeding women.

In Whose Best Interest? The Kids Aren't Doing Fine

Linda R. Ennis

There is often some confusion what the term 'best interests of the child' actually means, especially the subtle nuances of the term in situations, which are not as obvious. How do we decide what is in the best interests of the child? Who decides? Do the parents' needs always coincide with the child's? Is it in the best interests of the child to shift to co-parenting if a parent had no interest to be one during a marriage? How can we get uninvolved parents re-invested in parenting before we decree that there should just be co-parenting because we believe in equality? In divorce, is it in the best interest of the child for the mother to lose her financial status because she lingered too long on the mommy track, in addition to losing her children to joint parenting? What is in the best interests of the child?

"The reality is stark: mothers are, in gradual steps, losing the rights, freedom and economic ability to raise their own children, within the patriarchal and capitalist project." (Olerenshaw)

My talk will not only examine the impact of the patriarchal system on mothers' oppression but the myth of how a patriarchal system can only operate at the expense of a matriarchal one. In our search for equality for all, are we disempowering ourselves, as mothers?

This presentation will reflect upon how increased father recognition may be undermining motherhood and the injustice of equalizing parenting but not work. As we try to generalize mothering into parenting, it needs to be said that parental thinking "denies the ongoing presence of gender imbalance and the fact that the actual work of parenting continues to be done largely by women" (Frye), namely mothers.

My Jewish Sons Coming of Age: Re-Positioning the Mother in Rites of Passage

Sarah Epstein

Ritual is a way of acknowledging our relationship to each other, to our culture, to our community and to our past. Ritual is also a way of reminding ourselves of what is important and who is important. I am the Jewish mother of two sons both of whom have now been bar mitzvah. I am also the sole Jewish parent and, along with my husband, we are members of a progressive Jewish community in Melbourne, Australia. Progressive Judaism is aligned with progressive politics, in particular the principles of social justice, equality and inclusiveness. The progressive Jewish bar and bat mitzvah offers a way to capture the deep movement and meaning of our lives as we transition from childhood to young adulthood. It supports the construction of identity and as a rite of passage ritual can facilitate recognition of a preferred and future self, within reach and not yet grasped. The bar/bat mitzvah process is designed to engender individuation yet adhere the individual to community and others. Patriarchal mother and son discourse in myth, theology and popular psychology marks the father as the crucial mentor and witness through a boy's transition to 'manhood'. Rites of passage are traditionally deeply gendered with separate roles ascribed to the mother and father depending on the gender of the child. The mark of gender displaces the mother in relation to her son as he moves towards 'manhood'. In this seminar I will share my experience of how the progressive bar mitzvah process binds my sons to progressive social justice values, the Jewish community and their history, while simultaneously displacing gender and establishing a deep and powerful connection with my sons. As guide, mentor and witness the mother is very present in the journey. I would like to invite participants to reflect on ideas about activating feminist motherlines.

The Space Between Us: Visually Representing Touch, Holding and Maternal Connection

Denise Ferris

My presentation reveals how, through visual representation, artists have communicated the force of the maternal connection, capturing between mother and child the intimate conjoining, its repetitive nature, as well as its physical negotiation of power and control. Touch is a physical language of exploration and connection—a language that uses body and hands to transmit the head as well as the heart. In the book *Touch, The Science of Hand, Heart and Mind*, David Linden, a neurobiologist examines the significance of touch and how vital this haptic sense is to human relationships. Linden shows how critical touch is to the developing child, and I discuss artists who have visualised this transmission of connection and restraint. Erica de Vries a photographer in a series 'Holding' (2003-2006) catalogued a mother carrying a child in various clasping positions, the omnipresent holding touch of carework. Catherine Newton a glass-maker in 'Mum's hugs' (2016) documented the physical embrace between mother and child by pressing molten glass against the body to create a shape whose form encapsulates the pressure of the hug and its breath. These documentary and abstract visual representations allow the viewer to recognise the incessant physical connection and ubiquitous interface between mother and child. The artists foreground the interface of physical connection using both representational and abstract means, revealing both the temporal insistency and the fragile beauty of that bond over time. Embodying the negotiated relationship between care and control, these representations leave us to question. Discussing the form, the mediums and their

temporal perspectives I will account for the divergent materials means by which these associated but distinct aspects of the maternal bond succeed as visual representations.

Unmarried Mothers Can Cope Perfectly Well - If They Live in a Flat”: Australian Lone Mothers 1960s to 1980s

Miranda Francis

Lone mothering is often a precarious experience. This paper explores the life histories of several Australian women who brought up children as lone mothers in suburban Melbourne between the 1960's and the 1980's. It suggests that access to secure housing was a key factor, which made it possible for women to mother outside marriage. Historian April Gallwey has shown in the British context that the relationship between the state, society and lone mothers is a complex one and the shifts this has undergone over the second part of the twentieth century have not always been linear.

Drawing on rich oral history interviews, this paper illuminates shifting mores surrounding the Australian family and particularly mother-headed families. The lived experiences, as remembered by mothers themselves, suggest that change in the Australian context has also been cyclical and complex.

Of Daughters Born: How African Daughters Become Mothers

Rumbi Goredema Gorgens

Becoming a mother changed me profoundly. This is not a surprise: I did not expect to be the same person, woman, or partner after the birth of my son. What I did not anticipate is how motherhood would change me as a daughter.

Motherhood has brought my relationship with my own mother into sharp relief and deep turmoil. We have never been further away from, or closer to each other. As a first generation black Zimbabwean living and loving in post-Apartheid South Africa, the circumstances in which I mother are very different to those my mother lived in. Given the seismic sociopolitical shifts that sub-Saharan Africa has undergone in the last 30 years, I am aware that my mother and I are not alone in this experience of distance and difference. And although the works of intersectional feminists who have written on black motherhood and its specific concerns have been useful to an extent (see Collins; Edwards), I have found a dearth of work exploring constructions of black daughterhood. Additionally, there is still very little in mainstream feminist work that addresses the particular lived realities of African women. This research paper considers the stories of 13 young African daughters who have become mothers. Through feminist narrative research, I will explore what black motherhood looks like for these daughters. This research will seek answers to the following research questions: To what extent do young African women who become mothers mother differently from their mothers? Where there are differences, are these forged by circumstance or are they intentionally constructed? Furthermore, what meaning or value is attached to the difference? Finally, how has motherhood changed their relationships with their own mothers? Through this work, I hope to add African voices to the conversation on how we construct motherhood as identity and social institution.

An Assemblage of Exploded Bits that Cohere Anyway or Motherhood: A Poetics of Interruption

Olivia Heal

In *Silences*, her seminal work about how circumstance can thwart creativity, Tillie Olsen writes that in motherhood ‘it is distraction, not meditation, that becomes habitual; interruption, not continuity; spasmodic, not constant toil. [...] Work interrupted, deferred, relinquished, makes blockage – at best, lesser accomplishment’. A recent spate of books about motherhood, written by mothers, has come to counter this claim (Maggie Nelson, Andrea Brady, Jenny Offil, Eula Biss, Sarah Manguso, Sarah Ruhl etc.) This writing is indeed, to use Olsen’s words, distracted, interrupted, spasmodic. Yes. It is bitty, lurching, contradictory, digressive, incoherent, frustrated, repetitive, particulate, and oh so deftly interrupted! What if, I will ask, work interrupted makes not lesser, but *greater* accomplishment? Drawing on my own creative practice and the work of those above, and with a particular focus on formal innovation, I seek to open a conversation that reclaims interruption. I do not propose to enact a straight transvaluation, but instead to consider that there where motherhood appears to be devoid of potential, it is simultaneously rife with it.

Art Elicitation. Exploring the Birth Experience

Susan Hogan

In The Birth Project we are exploring women’s experience of childbirth and the transition to motherhood using the arts and then presenting the research findings in films and exhibitions. Our overarching research question wishes to explore what role arts engagement might have to play in antenatal and postnatal provision, especially where post-birth trauma is being translated into bodily symptoms. The Birth Project is also interested in investigating to what extent clinically-related birth practices are implicated in iatrogenic outcomes and post-natal distress.

Furthermore, we are also concerned to investigate what is distinctive about an arts-based approach in terms of expressing narratives about birth and the transition to motherhood, so we are interested in thinking about different sorts of arts-based methods.

This film is about the art elicitation group, which comprised a group of mothers who had been traumatised by their birth experience. The group and was facilitated by a Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC, UK) registered art therapist and used a thematic approach, as this was felt to offer necessary containment for the strong feelings being expressed.

Birth Professionals Make Art

Susan Hogan

Midwifery and obstetric practices, within a stressful period of austerity for the NHS with litigation fears and pressure from the media, have an impact on the experience of all those involved: women giving birth and birthing professionals. In The Birth Project the arts are being used to interrogate this complex topic. Obstetricians, midwives, and new mothers have been given the opportunity to explore their experiences of compassion fatigue, stress, birth suffering and post-natal readjustments using the arts. These different groups have joined together in

'mutual recovery' events in which perspectives have been shared, primarily through elucidation of the art works produced, captured using documentary filmmaking. The raison d'être of this project is to create dialogue between different communities of interest and experience, to use the arts to interrogate discourses, to challenge embedded assumptions, and in this process, to stimulate mutual recovery between all those who experience and are affected by birth. We situate this endeavour in the context of an emerging practice of health humanities (Crawford et al. 2014).

A series of workshops with birth professionals, including professional doulas, who may have experienced vicarious trauma, whose traumatising experience is often overlooked, have used the arts to explore their experiences. This film narrates their concerns and reveals their artistic engagement.

God's Eye

Susanna Horng

In this short story, thirteen-year-old Iris Tsang examines her Chinese mother within a community of dodgy mothers in rural Virginia, USA. Through an outsider's lens, Iris witnesses how the sins of the mothers affect their daughters.

Art Display

Martina Hynan

"...the struggle, over women's access to and control over their reproduction is not a matter of medical and legal rights alone. It is also a matter of cultural politics that can engage with...ways that contest the medical, political and media images and practices through which these are currently framed."

Betterton, Rosemary. Intimate Distance: Women, Artists and the Body, Routledge, UK 1996. P.128.

Portraits

Between 2008 and 2014, there were inquests for eight women who died in the maternity services in Ireland, all of which ended in verdicts of death by *medical misadventure*.

The portraits are of these eight women and are part of the multimedia exhibition *Picking up the Threads: Remaking the Fabric of Care*, which has been touring Ireland since 2015.

This exhibition commemorates the lives of these eight women and also honours the women who died and whose names we do not know and who are recorded only as statistics in annual clinical reports from our maternity units and hospitals.

The exhibition is hosted by *The Elephant Collective*, a group of midwives, educators, activists, artists and other individuals who are also part of a legislative campaign to secure mandatory inquests for all maternal deaths in Ireland.

For me, the portraits do more than commemorate these eight women they are a visible reminder of an uneasy truth in our society that women die in our maternity services as a result

of errors in that system. The maternal gaze of the women in these portraits is intended as a visual reminder of the power of the gaze, the obstetric and the maternal and our need to engage with and challenge the parameters of both.

27 / Hidden in Plain Sight

“The mother is sacrificed to the begetting of the phallic order ... the giver of life is represented by a phallic Symbolic as a variously idealised lost object or abjected as a physical hole, bodily place, an alluring and suffocating entombment which does not contribute other than through its negation or abjection, to the constitution of human subjectivity”

Griselda Pollock, ‘Mother Trouble: The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation to Bracha Ettinger’s Elaboration of Matrixial Ethics/Aesthetics’, *Studies in the Maternal* 1, no. 1 (2009): 6

“For the years 2011 – 2013, a total of 27 maternal deaths, occurring during or within 42 days of pregnancy end, were identified by MDE (Maternal Death Enquiry) Ireland.”

MATERNAL MORTALITY IN IRELAND: 2011-2013 <https://www.ucc.ie/en/mde/>

27 / Hidden in Plain Sight is a mixed media artwork created in response to this staggering statistic from the Maternal Death Enquiry Report. The experience of childbirth is effectively hidden in plain sight, the plain sight of the obstetric, legal, social and cultural gazes that are nurtured within our maternity systems. The evolution of this way of seeing childbirth has relied heavily on the collaboration between art and medicine to create a fragmented, compartmentalized mechanistic vision of the birthing body that concurrently erases the experience of childbirth itself.

This work strives to highlight the existing dominant gaze while also suggesting a restorative, more holistic vision of the birthing body, reuniting the fragments and moving towards an/other way of seeing the experiences of the birthing body.

From Son to Daughter: Mothering a Transgender Child

Hana Israeli

In this presentation, I will explore some of the theories about motherhood through my experience as a mother of a transgender daughter. Using the Autoethnography approach, I will analyze my personal experience in order to gain some wider understandings.

Mothering a transgender daughter has set for me some powerful challenges. Since gender is still perceived as a major and permanent component of the human identity, the transition of my child from male to female undermined my perceptions, knowledge, and feelings about her and about me as a mother.

Psychoanalytic theories and the psychiatric community tended to pathologize transgender individuals and their parents, especially their mothers. In contemporary psychoanalytic gender

theory, gender is referred to as a fluid spectrum, rather than a determined dichotomy. However, in practice most people do not accept gender fluidity. As a mother of a transgender child, I became aware of societal transphobia and also of my own internalized one.

Referring to the concepts of maternal ambivalence, Ruddick's *Maternal Thinking*, and Winnicott's *True Self*, I will discuss my evolving process of transformation, in which I managed to accompany and accept my daughter in expressing her authentic self.

Mother Tongue: How Sharing Stories about Child Loss Can Help The Healing Process

Sarah Ivens Moffett

Five years ago I went through an experience that left me profoundly depressed. At 35 years old, I lost a much-wanted first pregnancy at 14 weeks. Devastated, I found that escaping into the stories of other women was the only thing that could get me out of bed in the morning. When I leapt into their lives, my current trauma was encircled into their centuries of pain, longing and disappointment and I felt understood.

During the darkest, freshest moments of their despair, they felt the urge to write and when I couldn't articulate my grief to my family, and I sat mute to the concerns of my husband, pen and paper became my only tools of communication and survival.

This spring, as part of my doctorate, which has a focus on Public Arts and Letters, I was encouraged to do community service. I knew instantly what I had to do. I set up a writing workshop for women who had lost pregnancies or children and one Sunday per month, twelve of us met with a common goal: to share, inspire, help and learn.

A fear of anyone who has been through a psychological trauma is that they are unique and no one can help, but writing allows us to unload the burden and reading it allows us to form healthy connections. This kind of visible introspection can offer a lifeline to victims of misfortune and heartbreak, and form an invaluable and social collective whole, leading to recovery and resistance.

I would love to present on the trauma and healing found in these workshops, about this inter-generational, inter-social, inter-racial community of mothers that was formed, and to share some of the work created there.

The Return to the Motherland: How Women Represent Home and the Impossible Dream of a Safe Haven in Greek Art and Literature

Sarah Ivens Moffett

Representations of women in Ancient Greek culture appear to divide females into two distinct, equally undesirable roles. Perhaps because of the fear and lack of understanding around a woman's unique ability to seduce and reproduce, there was an eagerness, in art and literature, to dismiss them into opposing, unflattering caricatures. One group was characterized as hysterical monsters, competitive goddesses or vicious seducers with disloyal hearts "fickle, manipulative, uncontrollable, as we see in Hera, Zeus's wife and the Goddess of childbirth. The

other was made up of objects to be controlled” a malleable prize, a spoil of war, a sometimes willing wife or servant to her master’s needs, like Achilles’ play thing Briseis.

Yet to dismiss women and their role in Ancient Greek culture, and especially Homeric poems, into these two unflattering stereotypes is to lose sight of the role that women played as the symbolic home of all hope and happiness. The mother, specifically, I would argue, is a powerful representation of the warrior’s Holy Grail: it is not, in fact, valor or riches or adoration the brave, young warrior is searching for, but it is to return home again to the bosom of his mother, to his motherland. In quiet moments, away from the battle cries and bravado, the hero doesn’t need armor and victory, he wants to be with his mother and to feel safe.

I make my argument for the power of these mothers in myth, for these maternal narratives and storytelling with examples from Homer's Iliad and Odyssey and from art found on grave markers and vases from this period.

I’m Not the Nanny

Leena Jayaswal

I’m Not the Nanny (TRT 1:00) Video Art My son was conceived in the haze of the first Obama election. We fell hook, line and sinker believing that CHANGE was possible. Our country elected its first bi-racial president, although to the world he was seen only as black. Micro-aggressions occurred almost daily after the birth of my child. People would stare while I walked down the street holding his hand, or strangers and relatives would tell me to have another child- one that looked more Indian. I’m Not the Nanny explores the banal day-to day activities, the ones that make you feel most like a parent, as a small resistances to those narratives.

Mothering and Migrations: Expatriate Mothering

Eglė Kačkutė

In her study *Narratives of Mothering* published in 2009 Gill Rye identifies a new phenomenon in contemporary French women’s writing she calls “mothers’ own narratives of mothering” (Rye 2009:15). They are “literary texts where the mother is herself either the first person narrative subject or, in third-person narratives, the figure whose point of view is paramount” (Ibid. 17). In an edited volume *From the Personal to the Political: Toward a New Theory of Maternal Narrative* published the same year, Andrea O’Reilly pinpoints a similar phenomenon, which she calls a “matrifocal” narrative and defines as a narrative in which “a mother plays a role of cultural and social significance, and in which motherhood is thematically elaborated and valued, and structurally central to the plot” (Podnieks and O’Reilly 2010:3). Narratives of migrant, exiled or expatriate mothers are part of this trend in contemporary women’s writing. The last few years saw the publication of several fictional texts focussing on the experience of expatriate mothering. They include the collection of short stories resulting from a French writing group run by Sandrine Aragon called *Expatriées* (2013) and Janice Y. K. Lee’s novel *The Expatriates* (2016). Expatriate family life and mothering tend to be side-lined by migration and motherhood scholarship due to the privileged status of the social group. However, it has been suggested that expatriate mothers can indeed be the most socially and emotionally isolated and vulnerable members of society (Dahinden 2009) suffering from the inequalities mothers

face in their first world home countries even more than their counterparts at home. This paper will tease out the different aspects of expatriate mothering as represented in the two aforementioned books and discuss them in the light of the latest research in migration motherhood studies.

Claiming Her Story: “Ideal” Catholic Motherhood in Stephen Frears’s *Philomena*

Mollie Kervick

Recent attention to national scandals regarding infanticide and abuse within state-run institutions has brought the topic of motherhood into the forefront of Irish consciousness. Through the lens of ideological criticism and feminist and maternal theory, in this paper I consider the following question: In *Philomena*, how does Frears present and then challenge the leading factors—social institutions, dominant religious belief, patriarchal power—that constructed the “myth” of ideal 1950’s Irish Catholic motherhood and mothering? The heavy deployment of Catholic iconography and symbolism in the film reinforces the conception of ideal womanhood and simultaneously ideal motherhood that permeated 1950s Ireland. I argue that *Philomena* calls attention to the oppressive effects of the binding relationship between Catholicism, motherhood, and sexuality in 1950’s Ireland. While *Philomena* reveals the problematic construction of 1950s Irish Catholic motherhood, I also suggest the film reveals that *Philomena*’s tumultuous journey and her ability to forgive the very institution that caused her hardship, forces of national blame no longer need to be a source of paralysis for women. They can be used to break free from the constricting patriarchal constructions of womanhood and motherhood. *Philomena* tells the story of one mother whose child was ripped away from her at the hands of the Catholic Church, but as the film notes just before the credits, “Thousands more adopted Irish children and their ‘shamed’ mothers are still trying to find each other.” Their story remains untold. I argue that as more mothers tell their own versions of this story, the socially-sanctioned space of motherhood will continue to grow and all Irish women, mothers or not, will gain the agency that all members of Irish society inherently deserve.

The Breastfeeding Professor: Balancing Home and Academic Life

Christina Knutson

Recent scholarship by Mary Ann Mason, Nicholas H. Wolfinger, and Marc Goulden outlines the effects of raising a family on academics’ lives during graduate studies, temporary positions, tenure-track appointments, and after tenure. My presentation would be an auto-ethnographic study exploring my experiences late in this life course, as I negotiated working as a tenured professor while breastfeeding an infant. My project will detail how an academic position offered many privileges but also contributed to a context that suppressed my personal needs. My supportive institution afforded me privacy, flexibility, and a mostly autonomous schedule; however, I was inconvenienced by losing time during the day to the demands of breastfeeding, which led to rescheduling of grading, preparation, and meetings to evenings, and as the partner with a ‘flexible’ schedule, daycare transportation and illness-related care fell to me. I faced class-based cultural expectations to be, in Linda M. Blum’s terms, ‘a breastfeeding-wage-earning Supermom’ who prioritizes the needs of her child, partner, and career, yet still must take seemingly effortless care of her body and psyche. The narrative portions of my

presentation will be contextualized by recent research theorizing breastfeeding, motherhood, and feminism in the contemporary United States, examining how cultural expectations derive from the ideologies of motherhood described as ‘exclusive’ by Blum, ‘intensive’ by Sharon Hays, and ‘total’ by Joan B. Wolf. The project also will draw upon Lindal Buchanan’s Woman/Mother rhetorical continuum to illustrate the connotations of decisions academic women make as they balance family and work.

Motherlines and Maternal Narratives in My Poetry

Laurie Kruk

For the 2017 international MIRCI ‘Motherlines’ conference, I would like to propose a poetry reading, drawing upon my collected works to date (Theories of the World, Loving the Alien, My Mother Did Not Tell Stories) as well as some new poems. This reading would develop the theme of mothering across the lifecourse, as I share poems that engage with my own mother, grandmothers and mother-in-law (Charlie and Elsie, In Windsor Ontario, on Baba’s 85th Birthday, Easter at Barclay House,) as well as poems that dramatize my own role as a feminist mother of two daughters who are now teenagers (The Mother in the Mirror, With the Beach Girls, Amazons, at 11, Big History). As Ireland is also a ‘motherland’ for me—my maternal grandmother, Elsie Hill, emigrated to Canada from Ireland as a young woman at the beginning of the Twentieth century—I will gesture towards women’s relationship with place and space. I will thus make an argument for a new look, in the border-crossing Twenty-First century, at the familiar trope of mother earth (Turtle Island, Beaver Burial, The River Wife, Riparian).

Grieving the Loss of the “Dreamed-of” Birth – Not Just Another Birth Story

Rumyana Kudeva

Women inevitably create a vision of their “dreamed-of birth” which represents their beliefs about birth and their role in the process, and the ways in which they would be supported throughout childbirth.

However these expectations are often subverted by the authoritative knowledge and practices of the Western maternity care system or by the unpredictable nature of the birth itself. The pregnant woman repeatedly becomes the object of the “medicalized gaze” of a technocratic medical system that places her in the passive role of “compliant patient,” being “delivered” by professionals and robbed of her inner power and embodied knowledge of giving birth. Coming out of the childbirth experience with feelings of being uncared for, silenced, and even abused can cause serious long term psychological reactions in women postpartum and for the length of their lives.

Many of these women are left unacknowledged and unsupported by professionals who unwittingly contribute to the disenfranchisement of their grief. Furthermore their grief remains invisible if they continue to appear capable and productive in their lives.

This phenomenological study explores how a sample of nine women whose actual birth experience violated their “dreamed-of” birth coped with associated feelings of loss and unacknowledged grief. Employing Kenneth Doka’s concept of disenfranchised loss and grief as

the theoretical framework, I conducted informal conversational in-depth interviews and employed a heuristic approach in order to explore women's lived experience of postpartum grief. I convey here women's stories and create space for them to re-claim their voices and agency.

Immigrant Mothers - Motherhood Lessons From Strangers

Rumyana Kudeva

In a world without borders where people are increasingly mobile, women often become mothers without having their own mothers nearby to guide them and pass on the intergenerational wisdom of child-rearing. Reinventing their Selves, as new mothers, and new residents of the places they chose to call home, they face the liberating but also lonely destiny of becoming mothers without the close supervision of their own mothers and grandmothers. The old saying that it takes a village to raise a child, has even more weight in immigrant mothers' lives who may lack such support in their immediate social network. The words of advice coming from perfect strangers met in the store, in the park, or at the child's daycare become the village, which can offer wisdom about child-rearing and acculturating young immigrant mothers to the country ways of parenting. This talk will present different motherhood narratives portraying the ways in which immigrant mothers navigate their foreign country lives to define their mothering without the immediate support of their mothers. I will explore the ways in which women negotiate boundaries between their own culture and the new cultural norms they mother their children by. And lastly, I will share my own personal experience of becoming a mother while being a resident alien in United States of America.

(M)other Logic - Other Love

Cheryl Lawler Lynch

The founding logic of Western culture as it was imagined in pre-Socratic Greek thought is based upon a false binary in which the living world is severed from the conceptual. This turn away from the experiential sense world can be understood as a "developmental illness" (Steiner, 1985 (1963)) and a "wrong turn" (Irigaray, 2013). This bifurcation of consciousness is also reflected in the framework of ancient Greek religion emerging around the same time. Chthonic religion with its cyclic logic, in which birth-growth-death was seen as one, repeating cycle, was supplanted by the Ouranic mode which instituted a logic of contraries/opposites (Wheelwright, 1997).

The maternal-feminine was associated with the Chthonic, cyclic, living world and became that against which masculine consciousness affirmed a – faulty – individuation/separation based upon a disavowal of the corporeal aspect of their own being.

I will begin with the dilemma this faulty logic entails, both for the maternal-feminine, and for the foundationless masculine consciousness derived from it. I ask, what would a(M)other logic entail? I argue that the movement toward a(M)other logic must deploy a third space or middle way, as a bridge between the sensible and the intelligible that will allow the maternal-feminine to be elaborated on its own terms, and that will make it possible for masculine consciousness

to re-integrate their embodiment with their logic as the bi-unity that it truly is, rather than giving it over to false notions of what I refer to as the “masculine-feminine.”

Finally, I ask, what would a(M)other logic mean for our capacity to love one another? Given that in the master logic, love is conceptualized as the opposite/contrary of hate, what happens if love is freed from that logic and allowed to flourish on its own terms and not against hate?

Sexualisation of Childhood Discourses and Debates – Understandings and Insights From the Perspective of Feminist Mothering

Máire Leane

The sexualisation of children and in particular girls, has been problematized in most Western countries (Rush and La Nauze 2006; APA, 2007; Buckingham, et. al., 2009, 2010; Papadopoulos, 2010; Bailey, 2011, Renold, 2013. However the literature on girls and sexualisation is largely silent on the role of mothers, whose voices are in the main absent from sexualisation discourses. Based on data from a 2013 research project, which involved individual and couple interviews and focus group discussions with 79 parents (predominantly mothers) on the topic of the ‘commercialisation’ and ‘sexualisation’ of children in Irish society , this paper will explore mothering and childhood sexualisation. Key questions include: What constructions / understandings of sexualisation do mothers engage when discussing their children’s sexualities and their own parenting? Do they invoke multiple or possibly conflicting constructions of childhood sexuality and if so how do they navigate these various constructions? How do such constructions or understandings inform and shape their mothering practices and strategies? Do mothers draw on different understandings of sexualisation and possibly sexuality, to make sense of the sexualities of their sons and daughters? Is there evidence of gender differentiated parenting discourses and practices? And finally what can theories of feminist mothering contribute to the sexualisation debate and to mothering practices and strategies?

Cross-Border Mothering: Transnational Migration Strategies of Chinese Immigrant Mothers in Canada

Guida Man

Based on empirical data from a SSHRC funded research project, this paper examines the migration experience of highly educated Chinese immigrant women to Canada who were professionals in their home country. In particular, the paper investigates how these immigrant women utilized transnational migration strategies to accomplish the work of mothering. It argues that the work of mothers is a gendered process, mediated by institutional policies and practices, as well as the individual woman’s agency. It demonstrates that within the Chinese transnational household, gender ideology influences the work of mothering and the transnational strategies deployed to accomplish this task. Immigrant families have been utilizing transnational practices to maintain family relationships, and to accomplish social reproduction, not only in contemporary society, and also in historical periods. For example, between 1886 and 1947, many poor Chinese men worked as indentured laborers in Canada, while their wives and children remained in China due to racialized Canadian immigration policy which barred them from entering the country. As a result, separate spheres of

production and reproduction evolved in these families. In the context of the current climate of globalization and neoliberalism, some immigrant families experience unemployment and underemployment, and downward mobility. The difficulties in procuring affordable childcare services and in juggling the contradictory demands of paid work, household work have prompted some immigrant families to resolve to transnational strategies to accomplish the work of mothering, such as sending children back to their home country to be cared for by family members. [The data for this paper is derived from a project entitled “Transnational Migration Trajectories of Immigrant Women Professionals in Canada: Strategies of Work and Family”, supported by a SSHRC research grant to Guida Man as Principal Investigator, and Tania Das Gupta, Kiran Mirchandani, and Roxana Ng as Co-investigators.]

Reconstructing An Evolutionary Motherline

Patricia Miller-Schroeder

The conference paper I’m proposing is a creative narrative about reconstructing my evolutionary motherline. The concept of a motherline linking generations of mothers and daughters through a female lineage of shared knowledge and experiences, extending backwards through time, fascinates me. However, my own motherline has been difficult to uncover. My mother was born in Canada, shortly after her mother immigrated from Eastern Europe in 1907 fleeing poverty, violence and oppression. She was silenced as a girl and seldom talked about her own mother. As a young woman I barely knew my extended female kin and was only left with dim, silent memories of my mother and grandmothers but few stories. I became pregnant in my thirties when I was a graduate student in biological anthropology, studying human and primate evolution and behaviour. Without really recognizing what I was doing, I began to construct an evolutionary motherline connecting me to generations of mothers and daughters back into prehistory and across species boundaries. In this paper I braid together creative reconstructions from different parts of my lost motherline, based on research into my direct family history and what is known and hypothesized from the archeological and fossil record. I’ll explore the lives of ancestral mothers lost in the mists of prehistory, whose bones still grace the caves of the Carpathian Mountains, where thousands of years later their evolutionary motherline pulsed through the peasant women who lived in the same area, and eventually traveled to the prairies of Canada.

All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed: A Queer Feminist Marian Devotion

Clementine Morrigan

Revisioning Our Lady of Mercy requires a willingness to engage with her creatively. It requires a willingness to look beyond the official narratives of the Church, to the lived practice of Marian devotion. In order to access Mary’s queer, feminist potential we must be willing to listen to her in her many forms, as Our Lady of Sorrows, as the Queen of Heaven, and as the Holy Virgin, Mother of God. We must be willing to think metaphorically and imaginatively, and to hold contradiction with grace. This paper considers a the possibility of a queer, feminist Marian Devotion.

What Should I Ask/Tell Her?

B. Lee Murray

My mom is an amazing woman, soon to be 92 and living on her own independently. Her mind is active and her body is not as active as she would like it to be but she is independent and busy. She is a strong woman emotionally and has many stories to tell, both sad and happy. She talks about death and dying but never dwells on it. She wants to stick around because she does not want to miss anything. I visit her often and every time I leave I wonder if I will see her again and I know she often has the same feeling. I have asked myself over and over...what should I ask her? What do I need to know? What stories has she not told me? What will I regret not asking her about her life and experiences when she is gone? I have agonized over this many times and then one day I realized, it is not what I should ask but what I should tell her. I use auto-ethnography to reflect and tell the story of how I made that shift and how much it has meant to each of us. I have found the space to remember growing up and share stories with my mom about what I remember, what I know and what I think and feel about having her for my mother. A new space is now created and a new narrative. Part of this narrative restructures the mother-daughter bond and they way we (re)construct and (co)construct our stories.

Jean Armour Burns: Maternity in Late Eighteenth Century Scotland

Melanie Murray

I propose to present excerpts from my book *Should Auld Acquaintance: Discovering the Woman Behind Robert Burns* which will be published in January 2017 by Nightwood Editions. This work of creative nonfiction portrays the trials of motherhood in late eighteenth century Scotland from the point of view of Jean Armour, the wife of the famous poet. The book is based on a framework of facts and uses imaginative speculation to make the facts breathe with life. It portrays the experiences a young woman giving birth to two sets of twins out of wedlock, being denounced in the kirk as a fornicator and kicked out of her family home. Jean Armour's story shines light on the painful dilemma that many unwed mothers faced in that era of having to give up their babies. This biographical account also explores Jean's willingness to take in the children Burns had with other women and raise them as her own. Readers are taken into the heart of a grieving mother as Jean suffered the anguish of burying six of her children. It helps us understand the ordeal of a woman going into labour with her ninth child on the day her husband is being buried, and the challenges of raising six young children on her own after Burns died in poverty at age thirty-six. I am a narrating presence in the book as I travel to all the settings and homes that Jean Armour inhabited. Delving into my protagonist's inner life, I come to realize my connections with this eighteenth-century Scottish woman; though her maternal experiences are bound by her particular time and place, they are also universal.

Transracial Mothering in the Irish Context

Patti O'Malley

Over the last two decades, the demographic composition of the Irish state has been transformed by large-scale immigration. In particular, the multiracial family formation and the social phenomenon of mixed 'race'(i.e. white Irish/black African) children have emerged as features of the familial landscape. This family constellation may encounter unique challenges in

terms of negotiating the black/white divide and its traditional impermeability. However, from its inception, Irish state nation-building has been shaped by exclusionary ideologies which have attempted to construct a version of Irishness that highlights both religious and ethnic homogeneity underpinned by an assumed whiteness (Fanning 2012). It is fair to say, therefore, that racialised discourses of inclusion and exclusion are deeply interwoven into the very fabric of Irish society and its institutions (Ni Laoire et al 2011) and, as such, have positioned the mixed 'race' Irish citizen as other and as manifesting incompatibility with an authentic Irish identity (Morrison 2003). In this paper, I locate my analysis of racialization within the intimate space of the mother/child dyad, as I consider how the white Irish mother negotiates the dynamics of racialised belonging on behalf of her mixed 'race' child(ren), when both are positioned differently vis-à-vis legitimate Irishness. Through the experiential narratives of twelve women, complex racialised lives emerge which unsettle dominant conceptualisations of Irishness and have implications for re-articulations of belonging in contemporary Ireland.

All Those Years, I Kept Him Safe”: Maternal Practice as Resistance and Empowerment in Irish-Canadian Emma Donoghue’s *Room*

Andrea O’Reilly

Philosopher Sara Ruddick argues in *Maternal Thinking* that maternal practice is characterized by three demands: preservation, growth, and social acceptance. “To be a mother,” Ruddick argues, “is to be committed to meeting these demands by works of preservative love, nurturance, and training” (1989, 17). The first duty of mothers is to protect and preserve their children: “to keep safe whatever is vulnerable and valuable in a child” while the second demand requires mothers to nurture the child’s emotional and intellectual growth. The third demand of training and social acceptability of children, Ruddick emphasizes, “is made not by children’s needs but by the social groups of which a mother is a member. Social groups require that mothers shape their children’s growth in “acceptable” ways. What counts as acceptable varies enormously within and among groups and cultures”. The paper examines how the mother in *Room* performs the three demands maternal practice in both captivity and freedom and considers how her strategies of preservation and care –in particular her commitment to keep her son with her in *Room* and her act of extended breastfeeding— are reconstructed as ‘bad’ mothering upon freedom as the first is read as maternal selfishness and the second as a violation of social acceptability. The paper argues that only when the mother reclaims what Ruddick terms the maternal authenticity of her maternal practice in *Room* is she and her son able to reclaim their connection and achieve empowerment in doing so.

Aisha’s Story: “Birthing” the Pregnancy Experiences of a Young Trafficked Woman in Nepal

Tricia Ong

In Nepal, women who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation are one of the most highly-disadvantaged and marginalized populations to reproductive health due to stigmas they face, such as, for example, engaging in sex work. Limited quantitative reproductive health research reports on biological and psychological issues of (small numbers of) young girls who have been returned from trafficking into brothels in India. However, no qualitative reproductive health research has been conducted with them or any of Nepal’s other (internally or externally) sex-

trafficked women. This study breaks new ground. It has taken bold initiatives to reach a hidden population of these marginalized women – young women who have been trafficked into the sex industry in Nepal - to find out how they perceive their reproductive bodies, what their hopes and fears are around reproduction, and how these factors influence reproductive decision-making. From this information, a set of recommendations is being developed to improve reproductive health support and reproductive health education for young trafficked women in Nepal. Framed by a human rights and development lens, and inspired by Ethnographic and (adapted) Participatory Action and Research (PAR) Methods, this study boldly employed a new research method – the Clay Embodiment Research Method (CERM) – designed by the author for this cultural context. The CERM is a multi-method approach that is comprised of Participant Observation, a Series of 7 Participatory (Clay Embodiment) Workshops and a Group Interview using Photoethnography. Using photographs of claywork from the research, this paper showcases how ‘Aisha’ (pseudonym) - a ‘non-school’ educated, married woman - has learned about her reproductive body and reproduction. In addition, it illuminates some of the issues that have become ‘inscribed’ on her body through her pregnancy and birthing experiences and how they have then factored into her reproductive decision-making and her choices for continued motherhood.

In Search of the Goddess: A Mother and Daughter Journey in Ireland

Casey O’Reilly-Conlin & Andrea O’Reilly

In her introduction to *The Serpent and the Goddess: Women, Religion and Power in Celtic Ireland*, Mary Condren writes: I hope this [the book] will empower other women to explore [their herstory], uncovering the past for the sake of their future” (xviii). In this paper we share our mother-daughter journey in Ireland from the summer of 2015 and our search for the Goddess of our Irish herstory. With photos and narrative vignettes from our journey, we discuss some of the transformative moments and encounters on our ancestral pilgrimage including Sheela-na-gigs in the Irish museum, the Goddess Macha of Navan Fort, Saint Bridget’s cursing stones among the cattle, Saint Moninna on the hill, holy wells in sacred groves, and the relationship between the Goddess, animals and the land.

Mothers & Children: International Adoption, Joys & Challenges

Marlene Pomrenke

This presentation will summarize several research studies completed over the past several years that examined how children adopted from China settled into Canadian life. Through the stories of those involved the research showed the resilience of both the children and families involved in this journey. My discussion will be in the form of an autoethnography. Both my own experiences as a mother who has adopted a child from China as well as research completed with a community of parents in similar situations brings a strong focused narrative to this area of exploration. The results of this research found that many of the parents were concerned about the future as their bi-cultural children began to develop their own individual identities and wanted to know more about their Chinese families and what happened when they were young children waiting for adoption. Most parents reported that they were preparing themselves and had developed some protective factors and/or supports for dealing with the kinds of questions their children might ask as they grow into adolescence. The parents stated

that having a network of other families who had adopted from abroad was critical as their children reached developmental milestones and sometimes, issues regarding identity and belonging. My presentation will highlight what concerns the parents had and what they thought about the future as they considered the inevitable questions that their children would have as they grew older. It will also incorporate strategies for these parents and children as they move forward in their lives. As well, my experiences are highlighted as I give personal examples of the challenges of intercountry adoption and how to incorporate the resiliency of the child and family while addressing the uniqueness of this phenomenon.

Living to Tell the Tale

Elizabeth Power

My paper explores the impact of domestic violence on mothering based on a 3-year project sponsored by the Equality for Women Measure. 2003- 2005. *Living to Tell the Tale* was a compilation by 12 women exploring the impact of domestic violence in their lives. In a courageous and honest reflection, issues such as miscarriage due to physical violence directed at women during pregnancy, women forced to sacrifice her child or children in order to protect herself or to escape the violence, enforced pregnancy because of rape were some of the experiences that arose. In addition, women reported a profound loss of confidence in their ability to mother and her emotional resources were compromised in caring for her children because of repeated degradation. As a result of this work, a series of educational support programmes were developed by Domestic Violence Response, which include *Parenting in the Aftermath of Domestic Violence* and *Estrangement and Loss as a result of domestic violence*. My paper explores the methodology used to elicit information on mothering in this research and will inform the audience of its findings as well as the ongoing impacts of educational support programmes that emerged from this research.

Embodied Encounter-Events Within Maternal

Teija Rantala

This is attuning in encounters (Ettinger 2006), in which maternal is co-produced. The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate maternal as a collective production through mo(ve)ment in autobiographic images. The images demonstrate the density of the particular event and its encounters, and its embodied expressions that convey the simultaneous mo(ve)ment between separation and connection.

Searching for Jane O'Brian: An Autoethnography of the Quest for a Motherline

Lena Rebecca Richardson

This is an autoethnographic exploration of my search for a relationship with my earliest-known maternal ancestor, Jane O'Brian. She died, probably after a childbirth, in Coldwater Michigan in 1854, and her death fragmented the family, sending her nine children around the country to live with relatives and friends. My own great-great grandmother Emeretta was twelve. In a family that I experience as haunted by mother-loss and disconnection in succeeding generations, this presentation uses poetic narrative to explore the complexities of trying to reconstruct history in search of a motherline. The presentation explores the use of

Bert Hellinger's Family Constellations to work to cultivate an emotional relationship with the history of my maternal ancestors, meditating with genealogical records, and the role of song to stir the cells of embodied memory. With an awareness of the recent research in epigenetics and intergenerational memory, this presentation highlights the intimacy and deep relationality I have with these ancestors through my body while also exploring the experience of a void and aching gap of embedded maternal roots. As I explore my quest for a motherline, I reflect on the intriguing and troubling call of the past in the search for love and belonging.

Ma-paternajes Para la Paz". (Ma-fa-thering For Peace)

Magdalena Sancho Moreno

My research arises from the reflection on a personal transformation process that begins when I become a mother, when I become aware of the violence that surrounds such delicate and crucial moments as the gestation, birth and upbringing of a new person. As a woman, mother and peace researcher, I believe it is necessary to reflect on these moments and processes, since I truly believe that our way of being and our view of the world has much to do with the way we have been welcomed and introduced to it. My research is focused on the social construction of motherhood, specially on the subversion of the hetero-patriarchal model of motherhood. My hypothesis is that the transgression of this model can help us build cultures for peace: conscious and subversive ways of mothering can lead to a more inclusive way of life, with values like empathy, sensibility, recognition, empowerment, communication, cooperation, responsibility and solidarity, all necessary for the construction of cultures for peace. In my investigation I combine theory and participatory research, through which I intend to make visible and place value on different mothering experiences that can be somehow considered subversive—in the sense that they don't follow the dictates of the patriarchal model that perpetuates gender inequality—, focusing on the values, beliefs, convictions and knowledge behind these experiences. Basically, what I have called "ma-paternajes" is about the search for different ways of being women, men, mothers, fathers daughters and sons. It is about visualizing and highlighting the importance of relations and care. It is about deconstructing the heteronormative conception of patriarchal motherhood and reconstructing new ways of mothering, ways that can bring us closer to the construction of cultures for peace.

"(Un)Leashing the Bloody Countess: Motherhood and Superstition in Film"

Cristina Santos

The 16th century Hungarian Countess Elizabeth Bathory—aka the Bloody Countess—has been the subject of much weaving and inter-weaving of history, fiction and popular culture. Her characterization as evil has been predominantly linked to her sexual deviance, not only in her suspected lesbianism and her marital infidelities but to her overall deviation from the proscribed role for women in her society and culture—not to mention accusations of vampirism, witchcraft and murder. Elizabeth Bathory/s story, from childhood to young wife then to motherhood and widowhood embodies the dissection of an evil woman that revolves around the socio-political and cultural prefiguration of female sexuality and the cost of living outside those norms. It incorporates the psycho-social development from girlhood to womanhood to motherhood and the internal and external struggles associated with these changes for an aristocrat. What most stands out in Bathory's case, outside the many rumours, are her specific

circumstances, supported superstitious and folkloric beliefs regarding witches. That is, Bathory was: (1) a woman who dared to question and live outside the status quo, even for her social class; (2) she was known for her melancholic nature; (3) she predominantly lived without direct male supervision, even while her husband was alive (he was absent for extended periods of time due to his participation in the wars against the Turks); and, (4) the most sensationalized character in literature and popular culture: she was thought of as a psychotic woman because she was sexually uninhibited during a time when uncontrolled female sexuality was linked to witches. As such, this paper intends to explore and highlight the complex hybridization of history and fiction in the mythologization of Elizabeth as both the good and evil mother figure.

Mothering in a Foreign Land: (Re)creating Identity, Belonging and Homeplace

Gwen Scarbrough

Mothering in relation to migration studies is an emerging topic and has been examined in terms of transnational motherhood (Millman 2013); migrant maternal practices (Gedalof 2009); migrant women adapting to both host culture and motherhood (Erel 2011; Liamputtong 2001, 2003; Rodriguez 2010); immigrant mothers from minority populations (Liamputtong 2001; 2003); identity formation in immigrant mothers (Tummala-Nara 2004); and cultural, racial and gendered identities of mothers in immigrant communities (Shi 2016). In this work I explore issues relating to diasporic mothering identities as women negotiate living and mothering in a culture different from their own and the ways in which mothers establish a sense belonging and connectedness to both their native homeplace and adapted homeland. Through the use of a spatial lens, this research invites women from migrant populations who have settled in Ireland from abroad to share their experiences of mothering at a distance from their culture of origin in order to examine the relationship between place, identity and the process of mothering. Furthermore, this research examines how the process of adapting to a new culture while simultaneously undergoing the transformation of motherhood influences the creation and recreation of new homeplaces in which women nurture and care for their children.

Intensifying Motherhood as a Mean of Identity Reconstruction in Trailing Spouses

Ortal Slobodin

Job-related relocation is predominantly husband-centered for married couples, suggesting that women are those who often deal with the double impact of forsaking their own career and coping with the daily life in a new culture. However, the negative effect of relocation is much more prominent in trailing mothers than in trailing wives without children. This phenomenological study explores how maternal practices and perspectives are shaped in the expatriation process and examines their role in reconstructing the sense of identity and agency in trailing women. This study included depth interviews with 12 trailing mothers in Netherlands and in the United States. Given the different importance of resources and proximity for families with children and without children, only women who moved with one or more dependent children under age 18 were included. Interviews were performed face-to-face or by video-chat. The study used an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Women's descriptions of their new life abroad suggest that they regain a sense of control and efficacy

through gender-role responsibilities such as child rising and household duties. Specifically, they described increased, sometimes disproportionate, investment of time and efforts in academic, social, and emotional aspects of their children's life. Mothers in this study felt that this intensification reflected a joint impact of children's increased needs, a reduction in spouse involvement in the household, and their own sensitivity to their children. Given the loss of professional identity and the accompanying feelings of powerlessness, it is arguable that such intensification of maternal roles provides an alternative venue for reconstructing the sense of agency, coherence, and self-esteem of trailing spouses. For women, this strategy is probably the most immediate, legitimate, and reinforcing mechanism of finding meaning.

The Mother of the Dream: Re-embodiment of the Serpents, the Scepter, and the Stars

Jessica Spring

There is a need to re-author spiritual history and to re-member the regenerative life-giving maternal-feminine. Opening to an imminent paradigm shift towards biocentric cultures of integral interdependence beyond domination involves a re-centering of the mother. Uncovering the depth and breadth of the buried mother-line emboldens a moving beyond dualistic ideologies and anthropocentric world views to live into a more-than-human feminism inclusive of all of nature. This project elaborates on a concept of feminist corporeal spirituality and its potential to externalize the longstanding war against women and mothers by reclaiming the mother of the dream. Eclipsing Olympian archetypes, I approach the power of the secret that accompanies the underground Asclepian healing temples of Ancient Greece. I trace the origins of the all-healer Asclepius to a pre-Greek gynomorphic deity personifying the union of microcosm and macrocosm, illuminating deeper origins of the caduceus. Honoring the Gaian mother embodying all aspects of birth, life, death, and re-birth, I empower the bodily narratives and dreams of women and mothers as sacred sites convoking expansive inquiry about social and environmental justice. Considering how the process of attending to dreams has often been expropriated by androcentric world views, I ask what dreams might come when feminine power beyond the realm of anima is openly welcomed. I offer evocative examples of the transformative potential of dream consciousness to sustain feminist leadership and activism as I ground them in evidence of matrilineal societies and divine feminine spirituality throughout history. I offer my personal narrative of maternal knowing, arrived at through mother-daughter separation, adoption, and lone parenting, as I demonstrate a generative process of creating new maternal-feminine myths to align personal and collective healing with a deep ecological future that may still have a chance to come into being.

Motherhood Studies and Feminist Theory: Intersections

Tatjana Takseva

From the early days of the women's movement, the study of motherhood has had an uneasy, ambivalent relationship to feminism and feminist theory. Ranging from radical feminist rejection of motherhood on the perceived basis of its inherent oppression of women, and the view that "motherhood has everything to do with a history in which women remain powerless by reproducing the world of men" (Allen 316), to more moderate accounts of that ambivalence that caution against the "recent positive feminist focus on motherhood" that romanticizes motherhood by drawing heavily on sexist stereotypes (hooks 135), feminist thought traverses

with difficulty the complex terrain that links motherhood and maternal activity to feminist concerns. However, the emergence of motherhood studies as an interdisciplinary, autonomous and independent scholarly discipline over the last decade, and the increasing theorizing of maternal subjectivity and experience within that field, is beginning to make more visible the complex intersections that exist between the two areas of study.

Using as a methodological framework the four salient themes pertaining to the discipline of motherhood studies in the new millennium—experience, identity, policy, and agency – identified recently by Andrea O’Reilly in *21st Century Motherhood* (2010), I will trace the continuities, overlaps and intersections between motherhood studies and feminism within a theoretical context informed by foundational feminist concepts such as analysis and critique of patriarchy, social responsibility and human rights.

From Childless to Childfree: Documentarians Flipping the Narrative about Forgoing Motherhood 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 are, 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.

‘Something is Pushing Them to the Side of Their Own Lives’: Experience of Temporality in Women’s Motherhood Writing

Mariana Thomas

‘I used to exist against the continuity of time. Then I became the baby’s continuity, a background of ongoing time for him to live against (Manguso, 53).’ A universal yet personal question: how does the act of mothering affect women’s experience of time? This paper will go beyond existing research into the emerging form of maternal memoir, specifically looking at how writers situate their relationship to maternal temporality through the act of writing. Baraitser asserts that the act of interruption ruptures the mother’s sense of temporality. She describes motherhood as ‘periods of time, no longer governed by circadian rhythms, like one long cinematic take (that) act to obliterate the passing of time from what is to come, to what is, to what has been (Baraitser, 66).’ The pregnant Manguso ends her habitual diary keeping, which had served as a way to remember and document her existence; motherhood destroys

the illusion of her control over the passing of time. Maternal time is perpetually present, circular, always interrupted by the infant, altered from its pre-natal state as linear, ongoing, and changeable. Mothering is dictated by an ancient, immovable timeline: the progression of pregnancy and the stages of infant development. Maternal memoirists Cusk, Albert, and Wolf, complain of the incompatibility between the parameters of time in modern medicine and the pregnant woman's body, they feel exiled from their own birthing experiences. The adjustment to the chaotic, yet repetitive experience of maternal time results in a feeling of exclusion from anything that exists within 'organised' time - paid work or socialising - 'the idea of an idea' seems an impossible luxury (Wolf, 178). Maternal memoirs allow writers to structure their temporal experiences; the organisation of chapters and the telling of mothering stories serve to heal their experience of time as chaotic. Bibliography: Albert, Elisa, *After Birth*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, 2015) Baraitser, Lisa, *Maternal Encounters: The Ethics of Interruption* (Hove: Routledge, 2009) Cusk, Rachel, *A Life's Work: On Becoming a Mother*, (London: Fourth Estate, 2001) Manguso, Sarah, *Ongoingness: The End of a Diary* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2015).

'Sites of Resilience' For Women Survivors of Sexual Violation in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

Jill Trenholm

This study is part of an ethnographic focus on the phenomena of war rape in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The aim was to explore how women survivors of sexual violence navigated and negotiated surviving in the stigmatized, margins of an already impoverished existence. The paper departs from a previous study in which women expressed multiple losses and profound dispossession of identity and subsequent marginalization often with a child born of rape in tow. The findings are based on eleven qualitative in-depth interviews with rural women of reproductive age recruited from a variety of organizations supporting women after sexual violation. Thematic analysis and Payne's theoretical framework concerning sites of resilience guided the analysis. Results indicated how the women made proactive decisions and exhibited resilience in severely compromised environments embedded in a larger oppressive complexity with the child born of rape. Their faith in God, limited health interventions that challenge understandings around sexuality and mental health, indigenous healing, and strategic alliances for example, aid organizations or survival sex, supported these women/mothers to manage their daily existence in the margins. These survival strategies are identified as sites of resilience and provide vital contextual knowledge for planning effective interventions. The findings suggest that strengthening collaboration between existing networks such as the church, health care services and indigenous healing practices would extend the reach of health services, offering sustainable holistic care, serving the needs of not only the violated individual but the entire traumatized community, whose function as a supportive collective is essential.

Mother and Child Perspectives on Feminism and Mothering

Lorna Turnbull & Bronwyn Turnbull-Innis

We are a mother-child pair who would like to submit two separate but linked academic papers. Lorna Turnbull, the mother, has been working on the legal regulation of mothering and

carework for nearly three decades. Bronwyn Turnbull-Innis, her eldest child, is completing a BA Honours in Psychology and for their thesis project is looking at how perceptions of sacrifice in parenting behaviour affect judgments about the quality of the parent according to the parent's gender. After the academic presentations the pair will offer a short reflection on the path that brought them to present together at this conference, and on mothering and mothers in and through the generations from the perspectives of a mother and her child. Bronwyn proposes to present the results of an online study that was distributed through online parenting communities. The study presents different scenarios where the gender of the parent and the level of sacrifice in the parent's behavior is varied. Previous research has demonstrated that parents are judged more positively if their behaviour is perceived to be more self-sacrificing, and this study will further explore this phenomenon and delve into the gendered dimensions of these perceptions. Lorna will review a series of Canadian court decisions where the kind of stereotyped beliefs illustrated by Bronwyn's research have influenced the judges. In particular, Lorna will be looking at decisions that have impacted on mothers' claims to equality as protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. She will make the argument that evidence is required to counteract the stereotypical beliefs that influence the judges and present a more nuanced portrayal of mothers, supporting equality claims. Bronwyn (University of Winnipeg) has long been concerned with gender issues and with human thriving. They have significant work and life experiences and are working towards being a clinical psychologist.

Motherhood Off-Script

Jan Valle

From the standpoint of a childless mother (who experienced the loss of twins followed by the death of an infant son with Trisomy 13), this panelist shares narrative research with mothers of children with disabilities who explore motherhood off script within the Culture of Perfection that is American motherhood. Two overarching themes will be discussed: The Private Mother (inner thoughts and feelings about mothering a child with disabilities) and The Public Mother (outward responses to others comments and behaviors about how she mothers her child with a disability).

'Mothers in Limbo': Place, Space and Culture in Direct Provision

Karin White

This paper explores the experiences of mothers seeking protection, living in a Direct Provision setting in Ireland. The women describe their space and place as a limbo, with intangible futures and little control over their fate.

Living with trauma, loss, displacement, without supportive kin network, dealing with new cultures and culturally constructed ideas of 'good mothering' and 'good childhoods', the women and children additionally endure a life in poverty, and restricted and confined living conditions.

Examining ideas of being a good mother, attachment and methods of disciplining children, we find that methods used by many African mothers are often at variance with Irish culture

and/or law. Kavapalu (1993), for example, shows that physical discipline in Tonga is seen as a positive form of teaching and showing love and care, while Le Vine and Norman (2001) provide studies detailing huge variations in ideas about attachment and the ways in which mothers promote values such as independence.

Furthermore, we ask if and how mothers maintain and/or modify their own original culture and cultural values, and how they manage to do this under surveillance and in fear of their children's safety, living in one room per family and having the use of limited economic resources.

We agree with Le Vine's findings that child-rearing practices are cross-culturally adaptive processes, which make sense within their own environment and enable children to grow up as capable adults who understand the norms and rules of their society.

Consequently, the women who assisted with the research are mothering their children to become functional adults in both societies, native and Irish societies, in addition to a third space: the Direct Provision setting – a temporary limbo.

Motherhood Outside the Box

Gay Wilgus

Various media formats, including cinema, literature and visual art proffer divergent representations of motherhood, ranging from the merely observational to the vehemently pejorative. Featuring importantly among these are visions of motherhood that veer far from the beaten path with reference to established, traditional images of what motherhood and mothering should entail. Such images include conflictual (literary) portrayals in which mothers abandon or resent their children, and bring the intolerable destructive power of the mother-daughter bond to the page (Wehling-Giorgi, forthcoming).

'Between Now and Then' - The Case of Palestinian Grandmothers and Mothers Citizens of Israel

Rola Abu Zeid - O'Neill

Throughout the history of Palestine in the twentieth century, women have played an active part to deal with wars and upheavals, personal losses and exile, and with social, educational and economic changes. The Nakba's (Palestinian Catastrophe of 1948) memories and stories are combined with fear, loss, violence, humiliation and insecure feelings. Palestinian mothers in Israel take an active role to keep the continuation of the Palestinian identity and the traditional structures by passing their memories to the next generations. One of the reasons is that they were forced to stay at home, especially till 1966, so they took the domestic roles and the preservers of cultural, religious and national continuity. They were expected to maintain continuity of Palestinian values, and to pass on traditions and values that reproduced their own subordinate status. The Palestinian mothers in Israel has many of personal and diverse experiences within the context of the social and political changes that have taken place in their lives for over sixty-eight years, and they put a duty for themselves to pass these memories and reflections to the second and third generations of Palestinian internally displaced women.

When Nizar Hassan, a Palestinian film director, said that his mother was his motivating rationale for telling political stories, he remembered his childhood: My clearest meeting with Palestinian history as a story, a narrative, and not as a collage of isolated incidents, I owe to my mother. The mothers and grandmothers' narratives about their experiences, loss and memory adds to our understanding of the identity of Palestinians who remained in Israel, and describes the ways in which they chose to describe their relations to the state of Israel.

KEYNOTE PRESENTER BIOS

Mary Condren, Th.D. teaches at the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies, Trinity College Dublin. She is director of Woman Spirit Ireland; an Honorary Fellow at the University of Winchester, England; and an Adjunct Professor at Brescia University College, London, Ontario.

Her doctoral thesis, completed under the *Gender, Religion and Culture* program at Harvard University, was entitled *the Role of Sacrifice in the Construction of a Gender Social Order and Gendered System of Legitimation*. She has continued to teach, research and write on these issues, and especially on the role of religion in perpetuating political conflict. Some of her articles can be found at this URL: <http://tcd.academia.edu/MaryCondren>.

As a counter to the worldwide hegemony of blood sacrificial discourse in both religion and politics, she is also actively involved in recuperating indigenous spiritualities of the *WISE Islands*: (Wales, Ireland, Scotland and England), especially focussing on the figure of Brigit, and her predecessor, the *Cailleach*, and is currently working on completing work outlining the potential of focussing on the prophetic impulse (found in most religions) on the cry for *mercy not sacrifice*.

Her book, *The Serpent and the Goddess: Women, Religion and Power in Celtic Ireland* was published by Harper Collins, San Francisco in 1989, and New Island Books, Dublin in 2002, and she is currently preparing her next manuscript for publication.

Rosemary Crosse holds a Doctorate in Sociology and a BA in Political Science, Sociology and Psychology from NUI Galway. Her research interests centre on family support and parenting with a particular interest in those parenting alone. Reflecting these interests, Rosemary's doctoral thesis is a qualitative study exploring Irish mother's experiences of marital dissolution, with a specific focus on the effectiveness of Irish family policy and the value of service provision in this area.

Sheila Garrity is a Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies at NUI Galway. She coordinates the BA in Early Childhood Studies

Michelle Millar, BA, MA, PhD (Limerick), is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Political Science and Sociology NUI Galway and a Research Fellow at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre. Michelle has been teaching undergraduate Arts and Nursing students in policy and public administration and postgraduate students in Social Work, Family Support and Community Development since 1998. Michelle's research interest focuses on labour market activation and those parenting alone as well as social inclusion and parenting. Michelle has many book chapters, published reports and 20 peer reviewed Journal Articles published in journals such as *Social Policy & Administration*, *Social Science & Medicine*, *Disability & Society*, *Public Administration*, the *Irish Medical Journal* and the *International Journal of Qualitative Research Methodology*.

Jo Murphy-Lawless is a sociologist who has written extensively on the politics of birth. She is a member of the cross-national Birth Project Group whose book *Untangling the*

Maternity Crisis: Action for Change is due out later this year. She has taught midwifery students for the past 11 years.

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.

Leonor Rodriguez is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre NUI Galway. Her research is focused on mixed methods designs to evaluate Meitheal, a prevention and early intervention model of family support nationwide. She has experience in health and clinical psychology working with families, children and young people that experience chronic illness.

Bee Smith, self-styled Crone from Corroogue, was born in the USA, but has lived in England and Ireland most of her life. She is a poet and writer, published in USA, UK and Irish journals and across the blogosphere. She leads goddess spirituality tours to sacred sites in NW Ireland.

Marguerite Woods, PhD is Team Leader at the Rialto Community Drug Team and Lecturer at the Institute of Integrative Counselling & Psychotherapy in Dublin. Her research interests include women's experiences of motherhood and drug use, living with HIV, sex work, trauma-informed care, and life after incarceration.

Regular Presenter Bios

Lincoln Addison is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Memorial University. His research focuses on the gendered and economic consequences of changing food systems in Africa, including research on export-oriented horticulture in South Africa, redistributive land reform in Zimbabwe, and genetically modified staple crops in Uganda.

Ruth Amir is Senior Lecturer at the Departments of Political Science and Multi-Disciplinary Social Science at Yezreel Valley College. Her research concerns the intersection of law, history, politics and society in the context of transitional justice, and genocide research with a special focus on children and women.

Lori Arnold is a Ph.D. student in English at Texas A&M University, where she studies composition and rhetoric. Her primary research interests are rhetoric of pregnancy, birth, and motherhood as well as composition and pedagogy.

Chantal Bayard is a sociologist and Phd student at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS) in Montreal. She edited a collective work entitled "Advocating for Breast-feeding in Quebec: a critical perspective" (2014, Les Éditions du remue-ménage). She worked for the *International Journal Enfances Familles Générations*, directed by professor Laurence Charton. Her thesis focuses on the experiences and practices of social media by mothers.

Sarah Benbow is a Registered Nurse and a Professor in the School of Nursing at Fanshawe College in London Ontario, Canada. Her clinical and research areas of expertise include mental health, social justice, social exclusion, criminalized women, psychiatric survivors, and homelessness, with a particular focus on mothering at the margins.

Lizbett Benge is a doctoral student in Gender Studies at Arizona State University. Her art, activism, and scholarship are concerned with deconstructing the child welfare system, presenting counter-narratives of motherhood, and exploring the affective and cosmic elements of embodiment. Lizbett is a playwright, performer, doula, and foster care alumna.

Sharon Bernecki DeJoy is a mother, a certified professional midwife, and a public health professional and faculty member. Her research interests focus on the effects of the intersection of various forms of discrimination on the health of women and children.

Bridget Boland: Author of the novel *The Doula*, Simon and Schuster, 2012. My writing has won numerous awards including an Illinois Arts Council grant in 2015. I'm a former attorney, a doula and shaman. I also offer healing energy transformation programs and services for writers. I'm mom too Liam, age 8.

Sarah Brennan: Graduating from Medicine at University College Dublin in 1998 and with attainment of her surgical membership in 2001 and membership with the Irish College of GPs in 2008, Sarah now works as a lecturer in NUI Galway's Donegal Medical Academy, as a GP and is a mother of five boys. Wonderful and enlightening personal experiences of birthing and breastfeeding have helped Sarah develop an interest in pregnancy and birthing practices that

cultivate breastfeeding and oxytocin production leading to optimised dyad wellbeing and infant neurodevelopment. She has widely presented research exploring infant feeding experiences of African mothers living in Ireland which has been a super source of inspiration in driving her to be active in promoting, supporting and protection breastfeeding practices. Sarah is a member of the Donegal Breastfeeding Forum since 2014 and was involved in preparing a HSE Excellence Awards submission "Donegal Breastfeeding Forum, From Need to Action". She is actively involved in developing an Undergraduate Breastfeeding Education Module and developing research to help increase institutional and governmental interest in creating a culture that ensures breastfeeding.

She also has a deep interest in mindfulness, and due to this interest and interaction with the Mindful Way @ NUI Galway and interest in pastoral care for medical students, Sarah has been involved in the conception, development and delivery of the Special Study Module in Mindfulness during academic year 2016/17. This novel module was presented at the recent UNESCO rediscovering empathy conference as educational intervention that increases empathy and at the recent Mindful Journeys Symposium in NUI Galway. As part of the mindful module delivery she introduces students to the concept of compassion, empathy and resilience generation from a perinatal neuroscience perspective highlighting the need for Mindful Mothering to help develop positive attachment between mother and baby dyad – ensuring their wellbeing and generation of empathy, compassion, and resilience for optimal socioemotional development and biological functioning.

Tamsin Cavaliero lectures at I.T. Sligo in Social Care Practice and Early Childhood Care and Education. Prior to taking up her lecturing post she worked with the Travelling Community in the North West of Ireland in a variety of posts in the Youth work and Education sectors.

Giulia Champion: I have participated in a graduate conference in June 2015 at the University of Leiden, and I wish to keep sharing my research topics in the Academic context, in order to gain experience and to partake in scholarly discussions hoping that together we can bring forth change.

Sarah Coss: I am a mother of three, an Adult Educator for over 15 years with DDLETB and Maynooth University and an active member of CuidiÁ. In 2016 I was awarded 1st Class Honours and the Freire Research Award for my MEd entitled "Learning to Mother over Coffee and Cake."

Eva Doherty Gremmert is a renaissance woman. She is a talented, published author, a successful business woman, a sought-after public speaker and a professional genealogist.

Her first work of fiction, *A Cottage in Donegal. Mary Doherty's Story*, was self-published in 2011 and has sold over 3,000 copies. It is an entertaining and evocative read. The book is from Mary's perspective.

Her current project is a memoir detailing her journey raising her son Nick who was born in 1979 with multiple disabilities, and is scheduled to be published early in 2018. Beginning this year, Eva

has been publishing a blog on her website with short vignettes of her life experiences and lessons learned from parenting Nick.

She owns a tax preparation and business development firm, founded in 1981.

She's assisted many non-profits over the years, including serving as the O'Dochartaigh Clann Worldwide Reunion Committee Coordinator since 2001. She is a founding member of the Irish Genealogical and Historical Society and currently is on the board of directors.

Eva has researched and published five books on her family history and hosts two major genealogy research websites.

She and her husband, Arden, have been married for 40 years. They spend their time between their homes in Carnation, WA and Carndonagh, Co. Donegal, Ireland. They have raised four amazing children and have ten beautiful grandchildren.

Christina Doonan is assistant professor in the Departments of Gender Studies and Political Science at Memorial University. She is a political theorist and focuses on caring labour, human rights, humanitarianism and philosophy of law. She is currently researching infant feeding practices in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Linda Ennis is a psychoanalytic therapist, a family mediator, an author, and lecturer. Most recently, she has published her edited collection, "Intensive Mothering: The Cultural Contradictions of Modern Motherhood" and is in the process of publishing "After the Happily Ever: Empowering Women and Mothers in Relationships."

Sarah Epstein lectures in social work at Deakin University, Australia. Sarah's doctorate explored feminist mothers' experiences of raising sons. Her research interests involve examining the intersection between feminism and masculinity. Sarah teaches in the areas of human rights, social justice and violence against women. She lives in Melbourne with her partner and two sons.

Denise Ferris is an educator and art practitioner, and Head of the Australian National University School of Art.

Miranda Francis is a doctoral candidate in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. Her dissertation is an oral history of mothering in suburban Melbourne post 1945. It involves life history style interviews with women aged over sixty focusing on their memories of mothering.

Rumbi Goredema Gorgens is a Zimbabwean-born writer living in South Africa. She is a Mandela Rhodes scholar and holds a Master's in Diversity Studies from the University of Cape Town. Her writing focuses on feminism, gender and racial identities, and activism. She has also worked with several South African civil society organisations.

Olivia Heal is studying for a Creative-Critical (Prose) PhD at the University of East Anglia. Her research is focussed on motherhood as written, the writing of motherhood and the relationship

between the two. Through both creative and critical practices, she seeks to conceive of a poetics of motherhood.

Susan Hogan is Professor of Cultural Studies and Art Therapy. She has written extensively on the relationship between the arts & insanity, and the role of the arts in rehabilitation, particularly in relation to the position of women and in the transition to motherhood. This research is supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council, Ref. RGS. 117113. Award AH/K003364/1.

Susanna Horng teaches writing and cultural studies to undergraduates at New York University. She is working on a collection of linked short stories and essays on mothering.

Martina Hynan is an artist curator, birth activist and member of the Elephant Collective and Clare Birth Choice and is based in Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland. She was the artist and facilitator of Keeping Mum Community Art Project (2007-2009), women created artworks based on their reflections and memories of giving birth. This exhibition toured nationally and was also part of MIRCI annual exhibition, Toronto 2009. She contributed the chapter 'Joining the dots ... mapping maternal identity in Ireland' to 21st Century Motherhood Movement: Mothers Speak Out on Why We Need to Change the World and How to Do It published by Demeter press. Her PhD research (unfinished) is a feminist reading of the visual culture of childbirth in Ireland.

Hana Israeli is a Clinical Psychologist in private practice. She is a teaching associate at the University of Haifa, Israel in Women's and Gender Studies department. She is supervising therapists in the LGBT center in Tel-Aviv. She obtained her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, from the Wright Institute, Berkeley, California.

Sarah Ivens Moffett: A Londoner who now lives in the U.S., I am a PhD student in Comparative Humanities, focusing on motherhood and female identity in public arts and letters. I am also a journalist (Marie Claire, Glamour) and non-fiction author, with books published by Random House and Little Brown.

Leena Jayaswal is an award-winning photographer and documentarian with deep expertise and interest in issues that intersect race, representation and identity. Her photography has been nationally recognized in galleries around the country. Her films have been shown on PBS affiliates across the country. Jayaswal is a professor at American University.

Eglė Kačkutė is a postdoctoral researcher at Maynooth University (project title is 'Motherhood and Migration: Between Languages, Cultures and Identities'). Her research interests include comparative contemporary women's writing, French women's writing, motherhood and migration. She authored the monograph 'Svetimos ir Savos' (Strange and Familiar Selves) published by Vilnius University Press.

Mollie Kervick is a PhD candidate in English and Irish literature at the University of Connecticut. She earned her M.A. from Boston College. She specializes in Irish women's writing, gothic fiction, and feminist and maternal theory. Her creative work has been published by journals including Paradise Review and Kneejerk Magazine.

Karla Knutson is Associate Professor of English and Co-Director of Women's and Gender Studies at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, USA. She teaches courses on women's writing and rhetoric, women and children in literature, first-year writing, and ethnography. Her current research focuses on the rhetoric of breastmilk supply.

Laurie Kruk teaches at Nipissing University. She has published *The Voice is the Story: Conversations with Canadian Writers of Short Fiction* (Mosaic, 2003) and *Double-Voicing the Canadian Short Story* (Ottawa UP, 2016). She is also the author of three poetry collections: *Theories of the World* (1992), *Loving the Alien* (2006).

Rumyana Kudeva: I am Bulgarian who immigrated to USA in 2005 with my husband. I hold a Masters of Social Work from Bulgaria, and a Doctorate in Clinical Social work from University of Pennsylvania, USA. I currently teach social work at Eastern Washington University, Washington state and mother two boys.

Cheryl Lawler Lynch is a Training and Supervising psychoanalyst on the Faculty of the St. Louis Psychoanalytic Institute where she teaches and supervised clinical candidates in training. She has been in the private practice of psychoanalysis for over twenty years. She is currently also writing a dissertation at California Institute of Integral Studies focusing on "re-imagining the maternal-feminine-divine."

Máire Leane is Senior Lecturer in Social Policy in the School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork. Her research and teaching explore how policy and legislation impact on peoples' lives with particular reference to the spheres of sexuality, feminism, gender and disability.

Patricia Miller-Schroeder is an Instructor in the Women's and Gender Studies Department at the University of Regina. She teaches Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies; Women, the Environment and Change; Reproductive Technologies: Ancient and Modern; Feminism, Gender and Science; Motherhood and Mothering; and Women's Life-Writing as Empowerment.

Clementine Morrigan is a writer, artist, educator, and rebel scholar. Their work explores the intersections of trauma, place, and spirituality. Their scholarly work has appears in *Somatechnics* and their new collection of poetry will be available from Inanna Press later this year. More can be found at www.clementinemorrigan.com.

B. Lee Murray is currently an Associate Professor at the College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan. She has a great interest and curiosity regarding "Mothering." To satisfy this curiosity, she uses autoethnography as methodology to explore the normative discourse of mothering in the context of her own experiences.

Melanie Murray: I am the author of two books of creative nonfiction, "*Should Auld Acquaintance* and *For Your Tomorrow*. With an M.A. in English from the University of New Brunswick and a Graduate Certificate in Creative Writing from Humber College, I teach English and creative writing at Okanagan College in Kelowna, BC.

Patti O'Malley: I am currently a PhD Candidate in the Department of Sociology, University of Limerick, Ireland. The title of my PhD thesis is: *The Transracial Mother/Child Dyad and the Politics of Citizenship in Ireland*.

Tricia Ong is a PhD Candidate in the Faculty of Health, School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University, Australia, and an Australian Government "2015 Endeavour Research Fellow". Tricia holds a Master of Creative Arts Therapy Degree, a Graduate Certificate in Business Management (Project Management) and other women's health certifications.

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.

Casey O'Reilly-Conlin holds a BA in Women's Studies from York University and in September will begin a Masters of Environmental Studies, also at York University.

Marlene Pomrenke lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba and works as a counselor and researcher at the University of Manitoba. She has her doctorate in social work. Much of her research and writing has examined mothering and resilience. When working with others her focus is on strengths and narratives.

Elizabeth Power is a registered psychiatric and Intellectual disability nurse (RPN & RNMH) and has a Gestalt counselling qualification. She holds a BA in Social & Economic Studies (Women's Studies) from NUIG (1996) and an MA in writing (2007). She has worked in the area of domestic violence since 1993. She is author of research *Towards a Community Response to Domestic Violence* (1998) and is editor of the early warning signs of domestic violence for young people *Life's Real fairy Tales* (2006). She has worked as Coordinator with Domestic Violence Response, County Galway, since 2000 and was project coordinator for *Equality for Women Measure 2002- 2005*.

Teija Rantala: I am a Ph.D Candidate in Gender Studies at the Department of Humanities at University of Helsinki. The doctoral project focuses on religious women's aspirations concerning female and maternal identity. In my postdoctoral work the interest is on maternal body as productive machinic space within posthumanist theory.

Lena Rebecca Richardson is a PhD student in Arts Education at Simon Fraser University. She has an M.A. in Adult Education and Community Development from OISE/University of Toronto with a focus on narrative and autobiographical stories in community contexts.

Magdalena Sancho Moreno: I'm Magda, white woman, mother from Spain. When my son said "I don't want" I said "me neither". I quit my job in corporate banking and focused on him, me and peace research. I got my Masters on Peace Studies and now I'm on my 2nd year of Ph.D. program.

Cristina Santos: Her current research and scholarship reflect an interest in investigating the monstrous depictions of women as aberrations of feminine nature via the socio-culturally proscribed norm. Part of this research encompasses an investigation of a transnational practice of mothering in Latina diasporic communities in Canada and the US.

Gwen Scarbrough is a lecturer in Social Sciences at the Sligo Institute of Technology. She has worked as a midwife in the U.S., providing care for women from a variety of backgrounds. Currently, her research is focused on maternal and infant care and mothering practices.

Ortal Slobodin, Ph.D is a clinical psychologist and a researcher. Her research focuses on the role of culture in psychopathology and mental health, particularly in ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees. She also examines cultural aspects of family relations, gender roles, and motherhood.

Jessica Spring is an educator and multidisciplinary artist with twenty years of experience in the fields of women's spirituality, human development, and creativity. She is a doctoral student in the School of Consciousness and Transformation at California Institute of Integral Studies.

Tatjana Takševa is Associate Professor of English and Women and Gender Studies at Saint Mary's University, Canada. Her recent and ongoing research deals the different contexts of motherhood, such as motherhood and consumerism and motherhood and ambivalence, as well as more specifically with raising children born of wartime rape in post conflict Bosnia. She is the co-editor of *Mothers Under Fire: Mothering in Conflict Zones*, with Dr. Arlene Sgoutas (Demeter Press, 2015). She is the mother of three, and lives in Halifax.

Michelle Tarnopolsky blogs about women's and gender issues in Italy at malafemminista.com and has published articles in Maclean's Magazine and The Florentine. She is originally from Toronto but has lived in Italy for 15 years and works as an administrator at Syracuse University in Florence.

Mariana Thomas received her BA and MA with Distinction in English at Kingston University, London, before becoming a PhD candidate in English at the University of Southampton. Her research explores the contemporary maternal experience in women's memoir writing, with an emphasis on temporality and subjectivity.

Jill Trenholm is registered nurse who has worked predominantly with survivors of trauma and sexual and domestic violence; has a Peace/Conflict Bachelor and a doctorate from Uppsala

University, Sweden (International Maternal and Child Health unit/Centre for Gender Research): an ethnographic investigation of war rape in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Lorna Turnbull is Professor of Law at University of Manitoba, focused on the legal regulation of mothers and the work of care. She is the author of *Double Jeopardy: Motherwork and the Law*, has worked on various equality claims before the courts, served as a community activist and raised three children.

Bronwyn Turnbull-Innis is a student at the University of Winnipeg in Canada (B.A. Honours (Psychology) 2017). They have long been concerned with gender issues and with the social conditions that foster human thriving. They have significant work and life experiences that support their goal of earning the qualifications to be a clinical psychologist.

Jan Valle is author of *Practicing Disability Studies in Education: Acting Toward Social Change*. Gay edited *Knowledge, Pedagogy and Postmulticulturalism*.

Karin White works as lecturer in Social Sciences, IT Sligo. She hold a PhD in Social Anthropology/Byzantine Studies and an MA in Translation Studies. She has carried out extensive fieldwork with rural Greek/Roma populations. Current research includes mothering and space, language acquisition and issues concerning English translations of Freud.

Gay Wilgus' research focuses upon the experiences of mothers from immigrant backgrounds as they seek services and schooling for their children with disabilities.

Rola Abu Zeid - O'Neill: A PhD student of Sociology in UCC, and a political and feminist sociologist who interest in memory, ethnicity, conflict and immigrant communities, and taught these topics. She is a coordinator of the Diploma in Women's Studies, and the Diploma in Development and Global Human Rights Studies in ACE at UCC.



CALL FOR PAPERS

The editorial board is seeking submissions for Vol. 8.1 and 8.2 of the *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (JMI)*
This double issue will be published in fall/winter 2017

MOTHERS, MOTHERING, MOTHERHOOD IN TODAY'S WORLD **DOUBLE ISSUE TO COMMEMORATE MIRCI'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY**

We welcome submissions from scholars, students, activists, artists, community workers, bloggers, mothers and others who research in this area. Cross-cultural and comparative work is encouraged. We are open to a variety of types of submissions including academic papers from all disciplines and creative submissions including art and literature.

Motherhood scholars argue that motherhood, as it is currently perceived and practiced in patriarchal societies, is disempowering, if not oppressive, for a multitude of reasons: the societal devaluation of motherwork, the endless tasks of privatized mothering, the incompatibility of waged work and care work, and the impossible standards of idealized motherhood. Many of the problems facing mothers—whether social, economic, political, cultural, or psychological—are specific to their role and identity as mothers. This double issue of *JMI* positions mothers' needs and concerns as the starting point for a new politic and theory of feminism to empower mothers and to explore what mothers in the 21st century need to adequately care for their children while living full and purposeful lives. This issue will examine 21st century motherhood under four interconnected themes of inquiry: motherhood as experience, identity, agency, and institution. It considers what changes are needed in public-social policy, health, education, the workplace, the family, popular culture and the arts to create full and lasting gender equity for mothers in the 21st century.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

Articles should be 15-18 pages (3750 words) including references. All should be in MLA style, WordPerfect or Word and IBM compatible.

Please see our style guide for complete details:

<http://www.motherhoodinitiative.org/journalsubmission.html>

SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY

MAY 1, 2017!

TO SUBMIT WORK ONE MUST BE A MEMBER OF MIRCI

<http://www.motherhoodinitiative.org/membership.html>

Please direct your submissions

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