MOTHERS, MOTHERING, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING: PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, SPIRITUAL, CULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL

APRIL 11-14, 2019, York University, McLaughlin College, Toronto

Conference Overview

The conference "Maternal Wellbeing and Health: Emotional, Physical, Psychological, Social, Spiritual, Cultural, and Environmental," hosted by the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement, explores the complexity of the present state of motherhood as both identity and experience in the context of women's health. Its specific aim is to produce social science and humanities research to address the needs and concerns of women's maternal wellbeing. The topic of women's health has emerged as an important topic in health and women's studies over the last two decades. Since most women become mothers or engage in some form of motherwork, much of the scholarship on women's health has centered on maternal health issues. Likewise, mothers' roles in health promotion have captured the interest of researchers and practitioners because mothers tend to assume responsibility for the health of their children, families, and communities. Consequently, mothering is associated with a loss of physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. Mother-centred concerns, however, are often overshadowed by a medical emphasis on the biological as well as by the legal and social expectation that women assume primary responsibility for parenting effectively. This conference will examine the social determinants of maternal wellbeing and the impact of poor maternal health on social issues, such as women's employability and access to education. Overall, the conference will explore, leverage, mobilize, and implement social science and humanities research on maternal wellbeing that is relevant and useful for activists, service providers, and policy makers who work on behalf of mothers in order to empower mothers through improved social, spiritual, emotional, and physical maternal wellbeing.
in the context of culture and the environment.

Conference Overview continued

Bringing together scholars and practitioners who research maternal health and wellbeing from various geographical regions, and political, cultural, and interdisciplinary perspectives, the conference locates maternal health in a cross-disciplinary and cross-geographical context. As well, the conference will examine the ethical, political, sociocultural, economic, historical, racial, spiritual, physical, psychological, and environmental dimensions of maternal health to consider wide and diverse topics and perspectives, including the following: the ways in which culturally dominant ideologies about motherhood and health are taught or challenged; ways in which various paradigms of maternal thinking, being, and acting are constructed, negotiated, embedded, enacted, or resisted in specific health and social situations; ways the medical system can empower or disempower mothers; and the maternal ways of engaging in activism and advocacy work on maternal health from cross-cultural perspectives and on behalf of marginalized and oppressed mothers, childless women, and children. In order to approach the subject broadly, the conference will critically address a range of topics, including pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, menopause, infertility, addiction, adoption, cancer, cultural identity, peace activism, mothers in conflict zones, gun violence, poverty, and popular culture. Existing at the intersection of health studies and motherhood studies, the proposed conference invites participants to communicate with policy developers, researchers, and community workers in order to engage, move, and change issues concerning motherhood. With over 100 presenters from 11 countries the conference will be an invaluable platform by providing a broad and deep perspective on maternal health theories and issues across global configurations. We are so pleased you are here.

Dr. Andrea O’Reilly,
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Demeter Monthly Donors

Daughter

Muna Saleh
Summer Cunningham
Rebecca Bromwich
Tatjana Takseva
Kerri Kearney
Debbie Byrd
Laurie Kruk
Fionna Green
Tanya Cassidy
Vicki Noble
Bridget Boland

Sister

Kirsten Goa
Amber Kinser
Nicole Willey
Regina Edmonds

MIRCI Sustaining Members
Nitza Berkovitch
Wendy Peterson
Nane Jordan
Tessa Pyles
Candace Johnson
Fiona Green
Barbara Brandt
Karen Felstead
Kandee Kosior
Vicki Noble
Gertrude Lyons
Lynn Hallstein
Tola Pearce
Lucy Baldwin
Deborah Mansell
Karla Knutson
Patricia Drew
Regina Edmonds
Sarah Epstein
Garner Catherine
Gina Wong
Laurie Kruk
Ruchika Wason Singh
Genevieve Vaughan
Muna Saleh
Shanti Jones
Karen Christopher
Abigail Palko
Elizabeth Podnieks
Kelly MacCready
Lorna Turnbull
Kelly MacCready
Patricia Sortirin
Amy Lee

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE
Presented by: Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement

Date: Thursday April 11- Sunday April 14, 2019
Location: McLaughlin College, York University, Toronto, Ontario

MOTHERS, MOTHERING, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING: PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, SPIRITUAL, CULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL

Thursday, April 11
8:00 am to 9:00 am; JCR 014 McLaughlin College: Registration and Continental Breakfast

9:00 am to 9:30 am; JCR 014 McLaughlin College: Words of welcome and exciting updates about MIRCI

9:30 to 11:00 am, SESSION A

A.1: Birth; ROOM 211 McLaughlin College
Chair: Alys Einion
- Elisabeth Berger Bolaza- “Birth Pleasure”
- Doreen Balabanoff- “Embodied Experience and Birth Environment Design”
- Alys Einion- “The I-Story: a feminist narrative analysis of midwifery language and discourse”
**A.2: Mothers, Mothering: Loss; ROOM 212 McLaughlin College**

Chair: Valerie Andrews  
- Donna McCart – “Still a Mother”  
- Regina Edmonds- “A Gun Took My Child From Me”  
- Kayte Thomas – “Motherhood Lost: Maternal separation in the family court system”

**A.3: Empowering Mothers; ROOM 213 McLaughlin College**

Chair: Judith Mintz  
- Patricia Sotirin- “Research Shows Guns Are Bad for Mothers’ Health--Or Does It?”  
- Diane Shoos- “Re-screening Domestic Violence”  
- Nada Alfeir – “Communication Privacy Management Practices of Middle East Mothers with Children in U.S. Public Schools’ Sexual Education Programs”

11:00 am to 11:15 am: BREAK

11:15 to 12:45 pm: SESSION B

**B.1: Empowering Mothers; ROOM 211 McLaughlin College**

Chair: Patricia Sotirin  
- Taila Esnard- “Cultural Conundrums of Mothering as Black Female Entrepreneurs: The Case of the Caribbean”  
- Katie Garner- “How Feminism Failed the US Childcare Movement and What Empowered Moms Can Do About It”  
- Judith Mintz – “Never Not Mothering: Mothering, Self Care and the Feminist Ethics of Yoga”

**B.2: Young Mothers; ROOM 212 McLaughlin College**

Chair: Regina Edmonds  
- Deborah Byrd- “Gimme (Age-Appropriate) Shelter’: Young Mothers’ Reflections on U.S. Supportive Housing Facilities for Low-Income Families “  
- Lauren Kirshner, “Young Mothers and Creative Writing: What Their Stories Can Teach Us”  
- Erin Kuri – “Challenging the Invisibility of Queer “Young Mothers” within Pre and Postnatal Healthcare”  
- Valerie Andrews – “Psychological Impact for Surrendering Mothers and Their Children”

B.3: Mothers And Children; ROOM 213 McLaughlin College

Chair: Madison Banks  
- Dianne Fierheller - “Good” Mothers, “Risky” Mothers and Children’s Health”  
- Denise Ferris-“Mary Leunig: The Art of Inspiring Blood and Guts”  
- Rebecca Bromwich- “Concussions and Constructions of Girl as Athlete: The Rowan Stringer Case – “Law Reform and Mother Blame”

12:45 to 2:00 pm: LUNCH

2:00 to 3:30 pm; JCR 014 McLaughlin
College Keynote Panel: Indigenous Maternal Health
Chair: Rebecca Bromwich
- Hannah Tait Neufeld and Jamie Cidro – “Indigenous Maternal Health Through a Post-colonial Lens”
- Elder Betty McKenna - "Four Seasons of Health"

3:45 to 4:00pm: BREAK

4 pm to 5 pm: JCR 014 McLaughlin, Keynote Speaker
Chair: Rebecca Bromwich
–Lesley A. Tarasoff “‘I don’t want to turn totally invisible’: Experiences of plurisexual mothers through pregnancy and the early years of parenting”

Friday, April 12th
9:00 am to 10:00 am; JCR 014 McLaughlin College: Registration and Continental Breakfast

10:15 am to 11:45 am SESSION C

C.1. Empowering Mothers; ROOM 211 McLaughlin College
Chair: Joan Gavan
- Haile Eshe Cole - “Showing Up: A Black Feminist Ethic of Radical Care and Love”
- Gertrude Lyons - “Expanding Mothering: Raising a Woman's Awareness of the Opportunities of Personal and Psychosocial Growth and Development in Mothering”
- Elenora Joensuu- “Everyday World-Making: Toward an Understanding of Mothering and Affect”
- Lorna Turnball- “Matricentric policy evaluation and development”

C.2: Mothering and Popular Culture; ROOM 212 McLaughlin College
Chair: Fiona Green
- Michelle Hughes Miller and Tamar Hagar– “Not just the Opposite of Good: Examples of the Bad Mother Trope in Bad Mothers: Regulations, Representations and Resistance” (Demeter Press, 2017)
- Tessa Pyles- “mother! and the Making of Maternal Monsters
- Victoria Bailey – “Can I have some more Mom? Mother monitored media diets ”

C.3: Three Mothering in the Academe; ROOM 213 McLaughlin College
Chair: Nicole Willey
- Ginger Bihn- Coss -“Family Friendly" or "Worker Penalty" Policies: Inhibitions and Barriers to Parental Leave”
- Erin Graybill Ellis & Jessica Spears – “In/Visibilty: Performing Wellness in the Academy”
C.4: Maternal Identities and Practices; ROOM 214 McLaughlin College
Chair: Heather Dillaway
  o Florence Pasche Guignard – “Health and Spirituality in the Francophone Contexts of Natural Parenting”
  o Karen Nelson Villanueva and Annette Lyn Williams - “Multicultural Navigations in Stepparenting”
  o Heather Dillaway- “Transitions: Reflections on Menopause and Reproductive Aging”

11:45 to 12 Noon: BREAK

12:00 noon to 1:30 pm SESSION D

D.1: Mid Life Mothering; ROOM 211 McLaughlin College
Chair: Laurie Kruk
Lorinda Peterson, Nicole Willey & Kathy Mantas – “Midlife Mothering and Health and Well-being”

D.2: Mothers and Children; ROOM 212 McLaughlin College
Chair: Deborah Byrd
  o Eleonora Joensuu – “Blood, Mud, Poop, and Vomit: Reimagining Disgust through the Mother-Child Relationship”
  o Fiona Joy Green- “Feminist Mothering: Fostering the Wellbeing of Mothers and Children”
  o Kate Greenway- “Spiritual Alchemy: Art, Adoption and Healing”

D.3: Mothers and Mothering in the Academe ROOM 213 McLaughlin College
Chair: Michelle Hughes Miller
  o Anita Ewan- “Teaching with care: Exploring the effectiveness of critical nurturing pedagogy”
  o Erin Graybill Ellis – “Mental and Physical Health Impacts of Graduate School on Graduate Student Mothers”
  o Karla Knutson- “Mothering While Teaching Abroad”
  o Cheryl Neale-McFall and Mary Hermann – “Job satisfaction, enrichment, and institutional policy: listening to faculty mothers”

D.4: Maternal Health: ROOM 214 McLaughlin College
Chair: Joan Gavan
  o Alys Einion – “At the point of creation: a feminist analysis of midwifery and its relationship with the surveillance, control and definition of women, reproduction and families”
  o Rosana Edwards – “First-time mothers 35 and older- Their breastfeeding experiences, becoming a mother, and quiet acts of rebellion”
  o Emma Posca – “Indian Hospitals- The Impact on Mothering and Motherhood in Indigenous Communities”
  o Linda Hunter – “Understanding HIV Related Stigma Experienced by Mothers: The Next Generation and Implications of the New Ontario Health Education Curriculum”
Chair: Robin Silbergleid
○ Maria Novotny
○ Elizabeth Walker
○ Robin Silbergleid

1:30 – 2:30 pm: LUNCH

2:30pm – 4:00 pm SESSION E

E.1: Mothering in the Academe Part 2; ROOM 211 McLaughlin College
Chair: Nicole L. Willey
○ Nicole L. Willey “Making it While Mothering in the Academy: Mentors, Friends, and Networks"
○ Robin Silbergleid “Thirteen Ways of Looking at Infertility and Academe"
○ Sherri Rose “Are you looking for Maman or Madame?: My Dual Identity as French Professor and Parent"

E.2: Mothers and Literature; ROOM 212 McLaughlin College
Chair: Donna Sharkey
○ Linn Baran – “I Dwell in (Im)possibility: Rebellious Motherhood and Gothic Domesticity in Novels and Memoirs of the Twentieth First Century”
○ Andrea O’Reilly - “Coming to Understand What is Still Incomprehensible to Me:” Loss and Learning in Sue Klebold’s A Mother’s Reckoning: Living in the Aftermath of Tragedy”

E.3: Mothering and Reproduction: ROOM 213 McLaughlin College
Chair: Maythee Rojas
○ Lakshmi Nair – “Reaching into the Dark: A Root Re-Vision”
○ Maythee Rojas – “Expectations of Flight”
○ Joyce White – “Lòt Bó Dlo: The Other Side of the Water”

E.4: Motherlines: ROOM 214 McLaughlin College
Chair: Lorna Turnball
○ Lena Elodie Rebecca Richardson – “Journeying to the Cave of Cats: An Autoethnographic Inquiry into the Role of Being Mothered by Land-Based Connection”
○ Networking Children and Grand Children Around the World”
○ Muna Saleh – “Stories We Live and Grow by as Canadian Muslim Mothers and Daughters”

4:00 pm to 4:15 pm: BREAK

4:15 pm to 5:45 pm: JCR 014 McLaughlin College
Keynote Panel- “Pregnancy, Birth and Post Partum”
Chair: Alys Einion
- Ann Marie A Short and Abigail L. Palko – “Cultural Representations of Breastfeeding”
- Lesley A Tarasoff – “The embodied experience of pregnancy and women with physical disabilities: Challenges and opportunities”
- Claire Dion Fletcher – “Indigenous midwifery: Decolonizing health care and strengthening our families”

**Friday 5:45 pm to 9:00 pm: JCR 014 McLaughlin College; Reception and Launch**

**Saturday, April 13th**

**8:00 am to 9:00 am: JCR 014 McLaughlin College:** Reception and Continental Breakfast

**9:00 am to 11:00 am: JCR 014 McLaughlin College; Matriarchal Societies**

Chair: Heide Goettner-Abendroth
- Heide Goettner-Abendroth - “Matriarchies as Societies based on Motherhood”
- Barbara Alice Mann - “R-E-S-P-E-C-T Find out What It Means”
- Patricia Mukhim - “Stresses and strains in Khasi Matriliny: Need to reclaim lost values”
- Kaarina Kailo – “The Great Ma and Ancestral Deity of Slavic and Finno-Ugric Peoples--from Stone Babas to the Golden Woman”

**11 am to 11:15 am: BREAK**

**11:15 am to 1:15: JCR 014 McLaughlin College; The Gift Economy**

Chair: Letecia Layson
- Genevieve Vaughan - A solution hidden in plain sight: the maternal gift economy
- Angela Dolmetsch –“Nashira an other alternative practices, living examples of the Gift Economy”
- Dr. Erella Shadmi - “Non-populist activism: The revival of the gift economy and the possibility of Human security and well being”
- Sherri Mitchell – “Erasing Patriarchal Pathology”

**1:15 pm to 2:30pm: LUNCH**

**2:30pm to 4:00 pm: SESSION F:**

**F.1: Mothering and the Academy: Four Mother-Teacher-Scholars' Journeys:**

**ROOM 211 McLaughlin College**

Chair: Gloria Park
- Gloria Park
- Mellissa Carr
- Kris Lowrey
- Laurel Black
F.2: Birth: ROOM 212 McLaughlin College  
Chair: Doreen Balabanoff  
  - Joan Garvan- “Pregnancy and birth outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged women in Australia’s national capital”  
  - Martina Hynan - “Birthing Grounds: Mapping Places of Birth in Rural Ireland”

F.3: Empowering Mothers: ROOM 213 McLaughlin College  
Chair: Emilie St.Hilaire  
  - Lynn O’Brien- “Starting Early and Young: Laying the Groundwork for Mothers’ Psychological Health and Well-Being before (Young) Women Become Mothers”  
  - Amy Lee Wai Sum- “Healthy Mothers and Healthy (New) Lives in Hong Kong: Contributions to Maternal and Fetal Health by Traditional Knowledge Reinvented”  
  - Emilie St. Hilaire – “Are reborn mommies okay?”

F.4: Mothers Writing: ROOM 214 McLaughlin College  
Chair: Deborah Byrd  
  - Laurie Kruk - “Mothering &/as Health, Wholeness, Happiness: My Continuing Journey as a Mom-Poet”  
  - Melinda Vandenbeld Giles -“Exploring Social Justice through Narrative Ethnography: Families Living in Toronto Motels”  
  - Therese Novotny- “(Re)Imagining Motherhood and Spiritual Health: The Medieval N-Town Play”  

4:15 pm to 4:30 pm: BREAK  

4:30 pm to 6:30 pm: JCR 014 McLaughlin College  
KEYNOTE PANEL “Fertile Truths: Nine short films about bodies, brains, birth and bias”  
Chair: Deborah Byrd  
Speakers: Reproducing Stigma Film Circle  
Description: This courageous collection of nine micro-documentaries explores themes of body image and weight stigma in the realms of fertility, pregnancy, reproduction and parenting. Filmmakers worked with RedLab (Re-Visioning Differences Mobile Media Arts Lab) in order to tell stories about their bodies, families of origin and families of the present in dynamic and innovative ways. Blending story, music, and rich visual materials, the collective impact of these films is a grappling with the stories we carry about ourselves, our bodies and minds, our appetites, and our relationships to reproduction. Talk back with the filmmakers will follow the screening.

__________________________

Sunday, April 14th  
8:00 am-9:00 am: JCR 014 McLaughlin College: Registration and Continental Breakfast
9:00 am to 11:00 am: JCR 014 McLaughlin College

Keynote Panel: Global Maternal Health
Chair: Regina Edmonds
- Margaret MacDonald – “The global campaigns to reduce maternal mortality; from ‘neglected tragedy’ to cause célèbre”
- Tanya Hayles- “Why Black Moms Connection Matters”
- Elsie Amoako “Racialized Maternal Health”
- Candace Johnson – “Delivering Global Maternal Health: Considerations from Feminist Theory and Praxis”

11:00 am to 11:15 am: BREAK

11:15 am to 12:45 pm SESSION G:

G.1: Young Mothers: ROOM 211 McLaughlin College
Chair: Katie Garner
- Madison Banks – “Resistance, Resiliency and Perseverance: An Exploration of the Situated Knowledges of Young Mothers”
- Andrea O’Reilly- “Matrifocality, Maternal Empowerment, and Maternal Healing: Conceiving Empowered Young Motherhood in Miriam Toews’ Summer of My Amazing Luck”
- Heather Bergan- “Keeping our spirits up”: Stress and strategies for well-being in the lives of young mothers”

G.2: Maternal Health: ROOM 212 McLaughlin College
Chair: Judith Mintz
- Emily Saunders – “Maternal Mental Health in Newfoundland”
- Samar Khan – “Barriers to Maternal Mental Healthcare among Migrant South Asian Women with symptoms of Postpartum Depression”
- Katherine Wardi-Zonna – “Adverse Childhood Experiences and the Impact on Women's Health and Wellness”
- Kelly Diane MacCready – “Mothering Over the Long Haul: Social Constructs and Women’s Experiences”

12:45 pm to 1:00 pm: BREAK

1:00 pm to 2:30 SESSION H

H.1. Mothers in Academe: ROOM 211 McLaughlin College
Chair: Lynn O’Brien Hallstein
- Kimberly Hillier – “Graduate Studies and Motherhood: Experiences of Graduate Student Mothers in a Southwestern Ontario Context”
- Heather Robinson – “Mother-Bodies, Desire and Well-Being in Academic Spaces”

H.2. Mothers and Literature: ROOM 212 McLaughlin College
Chair: Victoria Bailey
- Rohni Bannerjee – “Beyond Agni Pariksha”
- Liz Podnieks – “Matrifocal Voices in Literature”
- Annisa Wardi- “Ecosystems of Memory and Midwifery in Ntozake Shange’s *Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo*”

Useful Information

CONFERENCE LOCATION:
The conference will take place at McLaughlin College. Building 51 on MAP
Keynote Panels will take place in Common Room (JCR) (Rm 014 McLaughlin)

FOOD:
A continental breakfast will be served as well as coffee and light refreshments during breaks. Vegetarian options will be available. A reception with refreshments and cash bar will take place Friday evening.
Lunches will be on your own; numerous eating-places in Student Centre and York Lanes: 10 min walk from conference location

PLEASE NOTE: THE CONFERENCE LOCATION IS SCENT-FREE

INTERNET: For non-York conference attendees please use Air York Guest and follow the instructions

BOOK LAUNCH AND BOOK SALES: We will be holding a gala Demeter launch during the Friday night reception. As well Demeter titles will be available for sale at 40% off; Back JMI issues for $10/back JARM issues for $5.

TRANSPORTATION:
To York University:
Parking is available at LOT 66 on map: Visitor parking (not reserved) part of the lot. Cost is $10 per day; paid via machine and credit card
There are two subway stations at York University; about equal distance to the McLaughlin College: Pioneer Village and York University.
https://www.google.com/maps/@43.7739092,-79.4998269,15z
Taxis: Beck Taxi: (416) 751-5555

**HOTEL INFORMATION**
Residence Inn Marriott, Vaughan
11 Interchange Way
Vaughan ON, L4K 5W3
Phone 905 8111
Link to hotel

The hotel is an 8 to 15 minute taxi ride to McLaughlin College, York University
The hotel is a 5-7 minute walk to subway station: 1 or 2 stops to conference location depending on stop you get off to access McLaughlin College.
DEMETER TITLES AND JM/JARM JOURNAL ISSUES AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT CONFERENCE
All Demeter titles 40% off, back issues of JMI: $10 (regular $22), back issues of JARM: $5 (regular $22). Cash and cheque made out to “Demeter Press” are accepted as well as major credit cards and debit.
CALL FOR PAPERS

The editorial board is seeking submissions for the *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (JMI)* Vol. 11. 1. & 2. will be published in summer 2020

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE ON MATERNAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Sub topics could include,
Ethical, political, sociocultural, economic, historical, racial, spiritual, physical, psychological, and environmental dimensions of maternal health to consider wide and diverse topics and perspectives including the following: the ways in which culturally dominant ideologies about motherhood and health are taught or challenged; ways in which various paradigms of maternal thinking, being, and acting are constructed, negotiated, embedded, enacted, or resisted in specific health and social situations; ways the medical system can empower or disempower mothers; and the maternal ways of engaging in activism and advocacy work on maternal health from cross-cultural perspectives and on behalf of marginalized and oppressed mothers, childless women, and children. There is the possibility to explore perceptions, patterns, implications, and intersections of maternal health and wellbeing across a wide range of perspectives, themes, and topics.

We welcome submissions from scholars, students, activists, artists, writers and community workers and mothers. We are open to a variety of types of submissions including academic papers from all disciplines and creative submissions and alternative presentations including creative writing and art. Community based and participatory/action research is encouraged.

**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 OCTOBER 1st 2019!

* TO SUBMIT WORK ONE MUST BE A 2019 MEMBER OF MIRCI

Please mail a copy of article to address below (with a separate cover sheet with name, email and address)

**JMI**
2546 10th Line
Bradford, Ontario
L3Z 3L3

Also email article with a separate cover sheet with name, email and address, to: info@demeterpress.org
After over twenty-two years of operation and fifty conferences, MIRIC says farewell on June 1st and will become the, International Association of Maternal Activism and Scholarship, directed by Dr. Katie Garner and located in Chicago.

I will remain as editor of The Journal of the Motherhood Initiative (though name of journal will likely change) and publisher of Demeter Press.

2019 MIRCI members will retain MIRCI membership privileges until the end of 2019 and full/sustaining members will receive the 2019 JMI issues. MIRCI 2020 memberships will convert to 2020 memberships of IAMAS.

I am deeply humbled and honoured to pass my beloved baby MIRCI to the caring and capable hands of Dr. Garner and will be remain a devoted other-mother to the International Association of Maternal Activism and Scholarship (IAMAS).

I hope to see you all at the inaugural IAMAS conference with the theme of, ‘caring about mothers’, happening May 1-3, 2020 in Chicago.

In Sisterhood,

Dr. Andrea O'Reilly
Welcome to the new IAMAS
(International Association of Maternal Activism and Scholarship)

We are so excited to begin the next chapter of MIRCI’s great history as a collective of maternal scholars.

Mothers are essential to a thriving country and the businesses within it, but here’s the thing: We need to act like it. That means using our infinite skills as a group to demand better. Women create, and we must create a society that respects mothers (not just reveres them). This cultural change requires education and coalition building. IAMAS must continue to build a coalition of bright, feisty, and determined women who are teachers, politicians, activists, social workers, journalists, and businesswomen to talk to one another and develop critical theory that can better inform policy and business decisions in our respective countries. We take a wide-reaching look at the interplay of economic, psychological, sociological, cultural, and legal issues facing mothers in order to create smarter policies that support mothers to do their work in more authentic ways. IAMAS.com is about connecting women around ideas that change lives and then moving transformative messages to the mainstream. Progress is happening, but information often remains out of reach of those who need it most or is presented in venues that lack the diversity needed for broad social support. Alliance building is at the heart of this movement and the new site, IAMAS.com, will provide an engaging place for these ideas to be exchanged, solidified, and nurtured. Motherhood is hard, always has been, always will be, but right now it’s harder than it needs to be. That’s why IAMAS is zeroed in on the deep-rooted changes that must happen to make the “hard” more manageable. At IAMAS, our core beliefs are:

1. Women carry an unfair burden of child-rearing via the demands of intensive mothering and severe wage inequality.
2. Our governments and economic sectors should contribute more to the work of child-rearing (specifically via childcare and family leave reform), thereby acknowledging that this labor is done not only as a matter of personal choice but strengthens the future of civic and economic vitality.
3. Women must be better informed and organized in order to demand the substantial support that is required. The current set-up of dual low-wage worker families and single-parent/income families is unsustainable.
4. One’s gender and sex organs aren’t always the same, but we need to talk about how moms have different needs - and need different protections - legally, economically, and socially. Modern feminism is doing little on this front to help mothers.
5. Motherhood can and should be a place of empowerment, not oppression. Our countries and employers require women to continue to replace our population. Let’s claim the power in that.
6. Women need support so that they can mother effectively and be economically independent. Much of the “choice” regarding opting out of work is an illusion. This can harm economically strained families and creates a massive drain of resources that our countries and businesses need to have our country succeed.
7. Children need stable care and mothers should have the opportunity to provide that care.

All mothers can benefit from the work done through IAMAS.com. We welcome new members to this important cause. Making motherhood better for all.

Unite. Educate. Advocate. Lead the Change. Learn more at https://iamas.com

IAMAS CONFERENCE 2020
This international conference will offer scholars, writers, mothers, artists, and more a venue to explore the critical issue of motherhood empowerment. In nearly every country around the world, mothers are revered for their life-giving and care-giving abilities, but that does not always mean they are respected.

While mothers are often the caregivers of others, who cares about mothers and the work that they do? Do people (including ourselves as mothers), communities, businesses, governments, and other entities empower, or fail to empower, mothers? What ideologies, cultural practices, work habits, government policies, and family dynamics require deeper analysis and why? What might the impact of change look like and how might this be important? Who would be impacted? How do race, class, gender, sexuality, single motherhood, religious beliefs, citizenship, and ableism (among other factors and markers) shape this empowerment, or lack thereof?

Often women’s caregiving skills are dismissed as essential traits that do not need to be compensated. What are the harms of essentialism in this framework? Are there any benefits? How does ‘choice feminism’ shape the ways that we talk about motherhood? How does outsourced care and paid carework alter the ways that we think about caregiving? How might trickle-down feminism come into play when women outsource childcare and what might the alternatives be? In what ways might capitalism and the changes therein (e.g., austerity measures, universal income, the gig economy, national childcare, etc.) help or hinder women individually or as a group based on sociological markers?

This conference will explore the ways that mothers care for others, the importance of supporting carework, and the feminism that informs both. We hope you can join us! Confirm your interest at www.iamas.com today.
Keynote Speaker Abstracts

**Elsie Amoako**
elsie@mommymonitor.ca
Title: Racialized Maternal Health

Racialized women experience poorer birth outcomes compared to non-immigrant and/or white women living in Canada (Urquia et al 2009). They experience an overall risk of a “43% higher chance of low birth weights, 24% higher for pre-term delivery, 50% higher for perinatal mortality and 61% higher for congenital malformations” (Higginbottom et al 2014). With very limited data focused on race and the need for a clear understanding of the maternal health needs of this population, adverse outcomes and experiences for this group continues to grow with little information about how to support them. In recognition of this, two innovative solutions [the Mommy Monitor app (organizes customized maternal health services through patient navigation and case management) and the Racialized Maternal Health Conference] are being tested to understand how they can support change in the maternal health outcomes and experiences of racialized women.

**Hannah Tait Neufeld and Jaime Cidro**
hannahtn@uoguelph.ca,
j.cidro@uwinnipeg.ca,
Title: Indigenous Maternal Health Through a Post-colonial Lens

As nations such as Canada formed and became colonized, traditional gender roles were seen as an impediment in many cases to successful colonization. The forced rearrangements of these gender roles disrupted families structures, namely because they removed Indigenous women from places of power. In colonized countries, Indigenous women lost their social and legal status as being dependent on fathers and then husbands. The traditional structures of communities became replaced with colonially informed governance, which reinforced patriarchy and paternalism. In Canada, the Indian Act, a legal instrument controlling life in First Nations communities, has reinforced the diminished roles of women in society through the enfranchisement of Indian status through marriage and limited property rights. Other historic policies that have had devastating effects on Indigenous women include Canada's Sterilization Act. The administration of Residential Schools throughout Canada had an immediate effect not only on mothers but on entire families and communities, both because of the resulting social pathologies and the disruption of mothering practices. The apprehension of children through child welfare has had an equally if not more devastating impact on women’s ability to mother their own children. Although some of these programs and policies have disappeared or changed, the residue of patriarchy still remains and affects how Indigenous women are positioned and directly informs how women experience pregnancy and the birth of children.

**Claire Dion Fletcher**
cdionfletcher@sgmt.ca,
Title: Indigenous midwifery: Decolonizing health care and strengthening our families

Indigenous midwives across Canada are providing exceptional health care to Indigenous women through the provision of clinical care that incorporates an Indigenous understanding of health and Indigenous practices. However, midwives are providing care within a system that not only fails to meet the needs of Indigenous people but has, at times, actively contributed to our ill-health. The health disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada are appalling. Colonization, racism and policies of forced assimilation imposed on Indigenous people actively contribute to our poor health outcomes. Cultural safety is an integral part of an improved health care system; however, it is not a significant enough change to our system. A more significant change in approach is needed if the health care system hopes to address the needs of Indigenous women and communities. Indigenous midwives are providing care that promotes the dignity and self-determination of Indigenous people to better meets the needs of Indigenous women.
Drawing on Indigenous research methodologies and using an Indigenous feminist framework, I conducted interviews with two Indigenous Registered Midwives, analyzed key Indigenous health reports and drew on my own experience as an Indigenous midwife. This project demonstrates that a decolonized approach to care needs to incorporate an Indigenous understanding of health, it needs to be Indigenous-led and sustainable, and it needs to be rooted in the strength of Indigenous women. Along with cultural safety, a decolonized approach to health care has the potential to increase Indigenous self-determination, and improve the health and well-being of Indigenous women, our families, communities and nations.

Tanya Hayles
tanya@haylescreative.com,
Title: Why Black Moms Connection Matters
Black Moms Connection grew from 20 friends to 11,000 women in just 3 years. It’s objective is to be a safe space for women to connect and share culturally relevant resources at a time when it’s never been more needed.

Candace Johnson
cajohnso@uoguelph.ca,
Title: Delivering Global Maternal Health: Considerations from Feminist Theory and Praxis
Reduction in rates of death and illness for pregnant and childbearing women is a global priority. It has been articulated in the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015), the Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030), and is declared to be the top development priority of the Canadian Government (Canada 2016). Despite what appears to be a global consensus on the importance of this goal, there are serious misgivings expressed by scholars who emphasize either the difficulties of feminist engagement across borders, or the need for a broader reproductive rights agenda. It seems to be the case that while global efforts have reduced maternal mortality ratios, other important issues have been effectively sidelined. Therefore, it is argued, donor policy and programmes that target mothers and their families are successful in reducing social suffering, which has positive consequences for donors and recipients. But such policy successes tend to neglect socio-cultural complexities in aid receiving countries and often come at the expense of others who suffer from neglected health and human rights issues related to reproductive choice, family planning, and sexual diversity (Robinson; Tiessen; Haussman and Mills). This paper will examine the relationship between local experiences with global maternal health initiatives (micro politics) and the ways in which those (global) initiatives are conceived and implemented (macro dynamics). Diana Tietjens Meyers (2001) explains that discursive environments (communities of shared cultural understanding), as concrete, tangible forces are significant in shaping realities and mobilizing resources.

Margaret MacDonald
mjm@sfu.ca,
Title: The global campaigns to reduce maternal mortality; from ‘neglected tragedy’ to cause célèbre
In this paper I trace the rise of maternal mortality as a global health issue from ‘neglected tragedy’ to cause célèbre, attracting the attention of world leaders, high profile philanthropists and celebrities. Beginning with the Safe Motherhood Initiative in 1987, I describe a series of significant shifts in thinking about maternal mortality and their implications for the kinds of interventions imagined and supported at the global level, including evidence based medicine, and the economization of maternal survival. Taking a critical anthropological perspective, I argue that the humanitarian logic of current policy and practice to reduce maternal mortality and promote reproductive health and rights is underwritten by a neoliberal script that is at odds with the reality of deeply rooted and persistent structural inequalities facing women in the global south.

Elder Betty McKenna
Breastfeeding raises many important concerns surrounding gendered embodiment, reproductive rights and autonomy, essentializing discourses and the struggle against biology as destiny, and the impact of public policies on mothers. These debates play out in public ways through visual representations of breastfeeding. The 2012 Time magazine cover, “Are you Mom Enough?” for example, resonated so strongly among its viewers because of the ways it alluded to debates about extended breastfeeding. Visual and rhetorical analyses of current cultural representations of nursing, highlight the importance of understanding the pressures socialization impose on women’s decisions about breastfeeding. This keynote will engage with varied and complicated ways that cultural attitudes about mothering and female sexuality inform the way people understand, embrace, reject, and discuss breastfeeding, as well as with the promises and limitations of feminist breastfeeding advocacy, utilizing feminist methodologies to interrogate essentializing ideologies that suggest women’s bodies are the “natural” choice for infant feeding.

Reproducing Stigma Film Circle
Title: *Fertile Truths: Short Films About Bodies, Brains, Birth and Bias*

This courageous collection of micro-documentaries explores themes of body image and weight stigma in the realms of fertility, pregnancy, reproduction and parenting. Filmmakers worked with RedLab (Re-Visioning Differences Mobile Media Arts Lab) in order to tell stories about their bodies, families of origin and families of the present in dynamic and innovative ways. Blending story, music, and rich visual materials, the collective impact of these films is a grappling with the stories we carry about ourselves, our bodies and minds, our appetites, and our relationships to reproduction.

Lesley A. Tarasoff
lesley.tarasoff@utoronto.ca,
Title: *The embodied experience of pregnancy and women with physical disabilities: Challenges and opportunities*

Drawing on interviews with 13 mothers with physical disabilities, this presentation will focus on the various ways they experienced their embodiment during the perinatal period, with a particular focus on pregnancy. Informed by feminist (Davis, 1997, 2007; Einstein & Shildrick, 2009) and feminist disability (Kafer, 2013; Wendell, 1999) theorizing about embodiment, I will discuss participants’ embodied experiences under the following themes: Achieving, feminine bodies; (4.2) Unrecognized and undesirable pregnant bodies; (4.3) Embodying ambivalence about disability, (4.4) sacrificial, anxious bodies, and (4.5) Knowledgeable, unruly bodies. Ultimately, I found that participants’ embodied experiences of pregnancy were fraught with challenges and ambivalence, particularly as they were shaped by dominant discourses of disability and pregnancy, often enacted through social interactions with family members, strangers, and care providers. As well, however, I found that disability provided opportunities for reimagining the “unruliness” of pregnancy and in turn evokes new ways to think about bodily changes.
A

Nada Alfeir
nalseir@mtu.edu
Title: Communication Privacy Management Practices of Middle East Mothers with Children in U.S. Public Schools’ Sexual Education Programs

For Middle Eastern expatriate families with preteen children living in the U.S., the issue of sexual education is a difficult one given different cultural expectations about the topic. Whereas this is a subject taught in the school, in the conservative culture of the Middle East, this is a family issue that parents teach when their children are at the proper age, which is usually before getting married. The theory of Communication Privacy Management (CPM) suggests that people negotiate rules of access and content when sensitive information is involved. This project draws on CPM to identify how expatriate mothers perceive the communication negotiations with their children over what is private and what can be shared regarding sexual education. In focus group interviews, mothers talked about their dilemma between embracing the foreign beliefs and practices and sticking to their native practices. Nonetheless, most have had discussions about sexual topics with their children.

Valerie Andrews
vjandrews@rogers.com
Title: Adoption Trauma: Psychological Impact for Surrendering Mothers and Their Children

The impact of the separation of mother and child by adoption is a lifelong, ever-changing experience that has not been identified by mental health professionals as a trauma until recently. Trauma-informed care through post-adoption services remains unavailable for most mothers and adoptees in Canada.

Adoptees now tell us that they suffer from a myriad of issues including those of abandonment, attachment, mirroring, low self-esteem, among others, and that they often feel silenced, having to embrace the narrative of being special, chosen, lucky and grateful. Celebrating adoption can be extremely hurtful to a person adopted. However, many adoptive parents continue to celebrate “gotcha day”, or, “adoption day”, the day they received the adopted child into their family. For them, this is a happy occasion, but for many adoptees this is a day of trauma, and sadness, one of remembering the lost mother.

Mothers of adoption loss, particularly those from the adoption mandate, who for many, had their babies taken directly from the delivery table while the mother was still in the final stage of birth, suffer from a myriad of mental health issues. Studies show that 85% of these mothers have suffered a major depression in their lifetime, and many suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or other mental health disorders.

Currently, post-adoption services are mostly provided for adoptive parents to assist them in adjusting to their new family member and their new role as parents. Mothers of adoption loss and those adopted continue to be excluded from most post-adoption counselling or assistance.

Heide Goettner-Abendroth
akademiehagia@aol.com
Title: Matriarchies as Societies based on Motherhood

During the last thirty years, a new field of knowledge and methodology has been developed called “modern Matriarchal Studies“. This new socio-cultural science explores historical, as well as contemporary societies that exhibit features defined as „matriarchal“.

Modern Matriarchal Studies puts an end to the common prejudice that matriarchy means “women’s rule”. It’s true that in patriarchal societies women are ruled by men. Matriarchal societies are in no way the simple reversal of this scenario. In matriarchies mothers are at the centre of culture without ruling over other members of society. The aim is not to have power
over others and over nature, but to follow maternal values, i.e. to nurture the natural, social and cultural life based on mutual respect.

The result from the studies of still extant societies of this type is that matriarchal societies have a non-violent social structure, they exist without the exploitation of humans, animals and nature, all living creatures are respected. They are egalitarian, for they are based on gender equality; their political decisions are made by consensus; insightful and well thought-through principles and social guidelines ensure a peaceful life for all.

This also is valid for matriarchal societies of the past: Although their long historical epoch has often been made invisible, women have always been the creators of societies and cultures which they have based on mothering. Regaining this deeper knowledge of history and considering the model of matriarchal societies is crucial for our future on this planet.

Elisabeth Berger Bolaza
Title: Birth Pleasure

While giving birth in institutional settings, mothers and trans/gender-nonconforming birthing people are subjected to particular kinds of control, oppression, and violence, violating their civil and human rights to bodily autonomy and self-determination. People of color, people in poverty, LGBTQI, youth, undocumented, incarcerated, indigenous, disabled, fat, and other marginalized groups are especially impacted. Inequities put these groups at elevated risk of harm and death in birth and postpartum, as evidenced by maternal morbidity and mortality data, namely in the United States. Birth narratives steep in the language of pain and suffering, but birth is also a site of incredible power, sexuality, spirituality, and even pleasure. Studies of birth pleasure thus far have voiced only white upper-class perspectives and experiences. Given what is known about the psychology and biology of birth, the impact of social support and stressors, fear, abuse, and the lack of control and autonomy experienced by many women by intersectional social standing and relative privilege, racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, institutional power, and other social forces show up in the birth process in ways that inhibit women’s ability to exercise autonomy and experience pleasure in birth. Should pleasure be considered a facet of realizing birth justice? Is birth an embodied space of political possibility? Do mothers heal from trauma and oppression through pleasure? How do mothers continue to transform the future through activism and solidarity? We will focus on embodied pleasure as a radical, transformative force, and take time to explore our lives for where pleasure has been a guide, a tool, or trigger for transformation, healing, or rebirth.

Doreen Balabanoff
doreen.balabanoff@gmail.com
Title: Embodied Experience and Birth Environment Design

The role of the environment in shaping birth experience (for mother, for child, for companions/care-givers) is underestimated in contemporary birth settings. As we seek to develop less clinical spaces based on salutogenic and evidence-based design approaches, what do we actually know about how the environment influences birth processes? Can we count on the environment itself to aid in birth processes and outcomes? What kind of environmental changes should we implement if we wish to improve health/wellbeing of mothers, infants and all involved in birth care/support. Building upon the research to date, we can begin to imagine birth centres of the future. But what theoretical positions can guide us? Considering Vitruvius’ core concepts of architectural design - Firmitas, Utilitas, Venustas - I propose that Venustas is at the heart of an emergent new model for birthspaces. Creating/developing Venustas (translated literally as the attributes of Venus) as a priority for birth environment brings us to a radically new mandate. Sexuality, sensuality, desire, fertility, female beauty and power and emotive/spiritual intensity cannot be left out of the birth environment - it must be designed in. What could this mean? I suggest that there is a gap in the knowledge that requires attention, yet focus on the ‘aesthetics’ of architecture leads into a problematic domain. Unpacking
Venustas may prove to be a way forward - a path that validates women's needs and desires at this sensitive and powerful life moment.

Rebecca Bromwich
isis00@gmail.com
Title: Concussions and Constructions of Girl as Athlete: The Rowan Stringer Case - Law Reform and Mother Blame

This presentation will report on a critical discourse analysis of the public case surrounding the inquest into the death of Ottawa, Canada high school student Rowan Stringer, a teen athlete who died from repeat concussions while playing women's rugby. It will specifically analyze how “mothers” and “sport” are constructed in the governmental events arising from her death. Insights drawn from this analysis will be situated in the broader context of “mother blame”. The central question which this presentation will address is whether, to what extent, and in what ways, mothers were and were not responsibilized for children’s sport injuries in the case.

Deborah Byrd
Title: ‘Gimme (Age-Appropriate) Shelter’: Young Mothers’ Reflections on U.S. Supportive Housing Facilities for Low-Income Families

Why do young, low-income single parents in a small Pennsylvania city who are in need of safe, affordable housing and a variety of case management services not apply to live in an inexpensive supportive housing facility for families seeking to avoid homelessness? Drawing upon interviews with a dozen young U.S. parents and an analysis of residents’ manuals, programming, and facilities of representative U.S. and Toronto area homeless shelters, the presenter foregrounds the inadequacies of Pennsylvania’s deficits-based approach to case management when one is seeking to support and mentor young parents, especially those in need of shelter.

Victoria Bailey
vjbailey@gmail.com
Title: Can I have some more Mom? Mother monitored media diets.

Media ‘binging’ is a feminist and motherhood studies issue: what exactly is meant by using the term/s ‘binge/binged/binging’ in relation to consumption of media? Historically, these terms have been linked with food and bodies, specifically women’s bodies, but they are now used to pass judgment and pass guidance on how information should be consumed using terms like ‘info-anorexic,’ and ‘media diet.’ Media consumption is not only a genderized issue, in terms of managing children’s exposure to varied media, who is expected to set parameters and police others’ media consumption on a daily basis? Who is assumed to be making and monitoring children’s media diets? This presentation will examine and exemplify ‘professionals’ media diet guidelines including imagery and contextual analysis in relation to ‘who’ they expect needs guidance and who will implement their rulings, and also include first-hand input from mothers regarding perspectives on controlling children’s access to media.

Linn Baran
linnbaran@sympatico.ca
Title: “I Dwell in (Im)possibility” : Yellow Wallpaper, Dollhouse Doors and the Reverberations of a Rebellious Motherhood in Literary Works of the Twentieth First Century

My paper examines the expressions of maternal ambivalence that I feel have become especially prevalent in literary works written by women in the late 21st century (specifically those published in the last 10 years). This research is part of an upcoming Demeter Press
Monstrous Mothers: Troubling Tropes

It is my intention in this presentation to position these texts alongside their herstorical predecessors in the genre of a Feminist Gothic. The rebellious maternal identities within these current narratives are at odds with not only the boundaries constructed by their home and domestic life but also the socio-economic and cultural limitations imposed on them to speak more softly (or not at all) about their conflicted feelings on motherhood. My paper will conclude by highlighting the maternal health benefits for both writers and readers of such texts that can essentially serve to re-imagine the “possibilities” for a more empowering experience of motherhood.

Laurel Black
ljblack@iup.edu
Title: Mothering and the Academy: Four Mother-Teacher-Scholars’ Journeys

In this critical autoethnography, four mother-teacher-scholars in higher education narrate their ways of coping, overcoming, and succeeding during their educational and professional journeys. Specifically, each in her own stage of mothering and higher education career, the panelists focus on the following: 1. Who are we as mother-teacher-scholars in the academy? a. What normative practices have we encountered in the academy, and how have they influenced us emotionally, physically, and psychologically? b. In what ways have we overcome them and been strategic about navigating them? 2. How can the academy create an environment that supports us in our identities as mother-teacher-scholars? Each speaks about her mother-teacher-scholar identity and what that means in her specific career timeline. Carr questions her ability to balance single mothering a college-bound teenager while completing coursework and staying physically healthy. Lowrey explores her experience as a pregnant graduate student and the early stages of mothering while finishing coursework and working through her dissertation. Park speaks to her mothering while pursuing tenure and providing support to other student mothers. Black examines institutional challenges and support as, through multiple rounds of cancer over two decades, she juggled motherhood, teaching, and research. The panelists conclude with audience participation.

Madison Banks
madison.c.banks@gmail.com
Title: Resistance, Resiliency and Perseverance: An Exploration of the Situated Knowledges of Young Mothers

The everyday experiences of raising children whilst managing individual and family responsibilities prove arguably challenging for any parent. This study explores the added struggles faced by young mothers as well as the implications for wellbeing as parenting intersects with social constructs of gender, age, race and class. The study interviewed ten young mothers (ages 16 to 21) in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of their lived experiences. Feminist standpoint theory highlighted the bifurcated realities between the prevalent negative conceptualization of young motherhood and the actual experiences, challenges, and joys of young motherhood as described by young mothers themselves. Using a strength-based approach the study unfolds young mothers’ ongoing negotiation of self-identity, daily acts of resistance and tremendous capacity for adaptation, resiliency and perseverance. It advocates for a greater awareness and critical examination of existing social inequalities and systemic oppressions and the implications that they have for supporting young mothers and their families.

Heather Bergan
hbergen@yorku.ca
Title: “Keeping our spirits up”: Stress and strategies for well-being in the lives of young mothers

Many new parents struggle as they adjust to an unfamiliar role, however stigma makes the transition even more difficult for young mothers. Dominant narratives identify young mothers as ‘at-risk’ or ‘babies having babies’ and this stigma has the potential to isolate them from
family and community support at a time they need it the most. Furthermore if health care or social service providers are concerned about young mothers’ ability to cope it can increase risk of involvement with the Child Protection System (CPS). Young mothers know their mothering is judged harshly so many downplay their stress when talking with professionals for fear of triggering a CPS investigation. The paper draws on research conversations with ten young mothers from Toronto. It highlights what young mothers identify as the sources of stress in their lives at both the interpersonal and structural levels. These include isolation, poverty, fear of CPS involvement, stigma, and changes in family and friend relationships. The young mothers repeatedly emphasized how the fear of CPS involvement further isolates them and creates barriers to accessing supports around struggles with their mental health, intimate partner violence, substance use issues, and assistance with their parenting. The focus of the paper is on the diversity of young mothers’ strategies to increase well-being ranging from creating chosen family in order to decrease isolation to enjoying creative play with their children to advocating for their families. While their strategies highlight their ingenuity and resourcefulness the young mothers also highlighted the importance of creating systemic solutions. These demands included a livable income, affordable housing, quality childcare and free, family-friendly access to high school and postsecondary education.

Rohini Bannerjee  
rohini.bannerjee@smu.ca  
Title: Beyond Agni Pariksha

This paper will examine the ways in which two contemporary Francophone Mauritian women writers, Ananda Devi and Shenaz Patel, write their female mother characters to negotiate and challenge the medical systems in which their children seek care. Reading Devi’s Le Voile de Draupadi (1993), we will discuss how a young mother, Anjali, must test her “fidelity” to her ailing son, and in turn, to the patriarchal medical system unable to help him, by agreeing to Agni Pariksha, that is, as written in the Ramayana, the ordeal by fire once undergone by Sita so to prove her chastity to Ram. In turn, we will discuss Patel’s Le Dernier Frère (2007) where the mother figure, nameless and silent throughout the novel, despite having no access to Western medicine, is determined to keep her runaway son healthy and alive using her knowledge of herbal medicine. We will underline how both Devi and Patel amplify the voices of their two marginalized mother figures, oppressed either because of patriarchal Hindu traditions (Devi) and/or because of low socio-economic class (Patel). These mother figures choose mothering over and above medical prognosis, or lack thereof, breaking both gender and class barriers, all for the well-being of their sons.

Haile Eshe Cole  
https://hailecole.com/contact/  
Title: Showing Up: A Black Feminist Ethic of Radical Care and Love

The presentation expounds upon the experiences of love and community between Black mothers and how these factors can have real and lasting impacts on health, well-being, and survival. The presentation reflects on the experiences of a collective of mothers of color in Austin, TX who not only work to create programming to impact maternal and infant health outcomes in their community but also the ways in which the relationships among the group members provided evidence of the concrete impacts of love, friendship, and community on health, wellness, and survival. Based on both the personal lived experiences as well as fieldwork and ethnographic experiences, this presentation argues that love, friendships, and community operate as important factors that impact maternal health outcomes but also can mitigate chronic stress and in many ways, protect against the impacts of institutional and systemic inequities. It builds upon the idea of what it means to “Show up” not only for Black women and mothers but the ways in which Black women and mothers “show up” for one another. In the end, it considers the ways in which showing up, a black feminist ethic of radical care, is a useful model and framework for social transformation.
Melissa Carr  
ktpv@iup.edu  
Title: Mothering and the Academy: Four Mother-Teacher-Scholars’ Journeys

In this critical auto ethnography, four mother-teacher-scholars in higher education narrate their ways of coping, overcoming, and succeeding during their educational and professional journeys. Specifically, each in her own stage of mothering and higher education career, the panelists focus on the following: 1. Who are we as mother-teacher-scholars in the academy? a. What normative practices have we encountered in the academy, and how have they influenced us emotionally, physically, and psychologically? b. In what ways have we overcome them and been strategic about navigating them? 2. How can the academy create an environment that supports us in our identities as mother-teacher-scholars?

Each speaks about her mother-teacher-scholar identity and what that means in her specific career timeline. Carr questions her ability to balance single mothering a college-bound teenager while completing coursework and staying physically healthy. Lowrey explores her experience as a pregnant graduate student and the early stages of mothering while finishing coursework and working through her dissertation. Park speaks to her mothering while pursuing tenure and providing support to other student mothers. Black examines institutional challenges and support as, through multiple rounds of cancer over two decades, she juggled motherhood, teaching, and research. The panelists conclude with an audience participation.

Ginger Bin-Cross  
gbihncos@kent.edu  
Title: “Family Friendly” or “Worker Penalty” Policies: Inhibitions and Barriers to Parental Leave

Not just the Opposite of Good: Examples of the Bad Mother Trope in Bad Mothers: Regulations, Representations and Resistance (Demeter Press, 2017).

D

Heather Dillaway  
dillaway@wayne.edu  
Title: Transitions: Reflections on Menopause and Reproductive Aging

Menopause may signify women’s move beyond a biological capacity to bear children but this lifecourse marker is part of a much larger reproductive aging process. Biomedical and feminist researchers agree that menopause is a time of transition and border crossing, yet they offer differing perspectives about whether menopause signals deficiency and burden, or growth and freedom. Individual women also vary significantly in their perspectives and experiences of this process; tracking this variation in perspectives becomes necessary if we truly seek to understand this multifaceted experience. This presentation will explore how current variations in perspectives on reproductive aging allow us to understand better how women think about and experience reproduction in contemporary times. The notion of a “reproductive continuum” will be introduced to focus in on reproductive aging in social and lifecourse context. Selections from a forthcoming Demeter Press volume on reproductive aging will be highlighted as part of this presentation.

Angela Dolmetsch  
Angela.Dolmetsch@gmail.com  
Title: Nashira and other alternative practices, living examples of the Gift Economy

Genevieve Vaughn defines the gift culture as, “that culture which challenges the core underpinnings of the Global Market and the Development Project, which are built on extraction and concentration of wealth and power and the spread of monoculture. Most importantly, the gift culture is the key to sustainable living and real happiness on the
On three hectares in Colombia, eighty women, victims of the Colombian conflict, have developed a happy and sustainable community by following gift economy paradigms. The women built their own houses and so did not acquire them through the exchange economy. Their houses were built using environmentally friendly parameters. The wall panels were made from materials recycled from previous constructions. The houses were provided without monetary cost to the beneficiaries.

The women of Nashira cultivate staple crops using permaculture techniques, thereby receiving as gifts from Mother-Nature the benefits of a healthy environment, such as clean air and water. Fruit trees flourish in the common areas used by the whole community. Some of the cooking uses solar power and the women proudly collect and recycle organic and inorganic waste from the neighbourhood. The recycled plastic, glass and other inorganic materials are used to make products for their own use.

Most administrative decisions are taken by consensus. There is no crime in Nashira. Childcare and maintaining the ecovillage are tasks, shared through “mingas” or collective work.

---

**E**

**Alys Einion**  
a.b.einion@swansea.ac.uk  
Title: *The I-Story: a feminist narrative analysis of midwifery language and discourse*

This paper identifies the duality of a female-oriented profession, which professionally rejects the ideology of the technocratic model of birth whilst continuing to perpetuate its oppressions.  

**Conclusion:** Midwifery practice should explicitly address the power imbalances inherited from the medical model through a shift in language and a focus on developing personhood, resilience, and self-activism as the means of shifting the narrative frame of the childbearing experience. A model of midwifery language, for rewriting the ‘I-story’, incorporating the principles of salutogenesis and the underpinning principles of inclusive discourse patterns, is proposed.

**Title:** *At the point of creation: a feminist analysis of midwifery and its relationship with the surveillance, control and definition of women, reproduction and families*

Midwives, educated to support women in the transition to motherhood, straddle the divide between a patriarchal, medically dominated discipline which regulates, controls and mechanises the experiences of reproduction, whilst advocating, as a profession, for the empowerment and autonomy of women. This paradoxical and invidious position can be critiqued through the exploration of the dimensions of the family that are manifest in the field of childbearing, utilising a critical, feminist approach taking. This paper critically and uncompromisingly debates the strange duality of a female-dominated, female-oriented profession which professionally and conceptually rejects the ideology of the technocratic model of birth whilst continuing to perpetuate its oppressions, and to correlate our understanding of reproduction as one of the primary modalities of control within the family with our understanding of the means by which this achieved - via the institution of medicine and its offshoot, midwifery. Midwifery, the last great bastion of heteronormativity, state control of the female body, and social control of women and families, requires a critical lens in order to address necessary changes in the regulation of family life during childbearing.

**Regina Edmonds**  
reginaedmonds@gmail.com  
Title: *A Gun Took My Child From Me*
There is perhaps no loss more profound than the loss of a child and yet in the United States there is an epidemic of child loss due to gun violence, perpetrated by enraged, lone shooters as well as by those permitted by the state to kill, namely police officers. This presentation will explore the psychological toll experienced by mothers who have lost children to gun violence, will examine the ways in which their grief is expressed, and will look at various social actions mothers are taking in trying to recover. The focus will be on mothers of children lost in high profile mass school shootings and police shootings. Activism in the face of child loss is often observed and an assessment of the degree to which the actions of mothers responding to gun violence mirror those taken by mothers dealing with state-sponsored violence within an international context will be addressed.

Talia Esnard
talia.esnard@sta.uwi.edu
Title: Cultural Conundrums of Mothering as Black Female Entrepreneurs: The Case of the Caribbean

Increasingly, many studies trouble the centrality of gender ideologies on the expectations and experiences of women who enter the entrepreneurial space (Ahl, 2006; Marlow et al., 2009; Lewis 2006; Gupta et al., 2009; Orser et al., 2011). Many of these analyses have typically captured the experiences of female entrepreneurs at a broad level, within developed countries, and with a heavy examination of work-family related conflicts within the entrepreneurial space. What remains lacking is an interrogation of the cultural underpinning of mothering as an entrepreneur and the specific challenges that these create for female entrepreneur who operate within contexts like the Caribbean, where women continue to bear the burden for child care and where ethnic practices continue to inform their maternal practices. The paper therefore presents a cultural interrogation race, ethnicity, and gender and its implications for the wellbeing of Black Caribbean mothers who also serve as female entrepreneurs within the region.

Anita Ewan
racew714@gmail.com
Title: Teaching with care: Exploring the effectiveness of critical nurturing pedagogy

In this paper, I discuss a research project I conduct with international and racialized students at Humber College, which focuses on creating spaces that allow students to be their authentic selves, and thus wholly present. The aim of this project is to explore the effectiveness of this teaching approach in order to provide alternative and culturally inclusive methods for other higher-education educators. I examine and highlight the ways in which I create classrooms that are culturally inclusive by using pedagogical practice defined by Friedman and Poole (2015) as “critical nurturing”. I argue that these spaces have a significantly positive impact on the learning outcomes and overall experiences for my students. Furthermore, I am able to express my true self as an individual who empowers others and builds relationships through nurturing and care. Also deriving from the work of Friedman (2015), I consider how throughout my teaching experience, I have been able to allow my roles as a parent, professional and educator enmesh into one. I conclude this paper with a conversation about how the practice of critical nurturing disrupts dominant and patriarchal pedagogy, where educators are expected to reinforce westernized norms and ideologies.

Rosana Edwards
redwa013@uottawa.ca
Title: First-time mothers 35 and older- their breastfeeding experiences, becoming a mother, and quiet acts of rebellion.

I am proposing to present on the results of a constructivist grounded theory study entitled “The breastfeeding experiences of first-time mothers ages 35” and over. This study is currently being undertaken as my doctoral research in the School of Nursing at the University of Ottawa. In this talk I will be focusing on the small, deliberate acts of rebellion (crossing the line at times into acts of anarchy) against the advice of well-meaning healthcare professionals. I plan
to explore how for the 23 mothers in this study breastfeeding on their own terms and often in
direct defiance of the advice of health care professionals is used as a response to counter the
over medicalization of breastfeeding and the narrative of the good mother in popular culture.
The mothers in this study have all given the metaphorical middle finger to authority, and used
the anger and energy to empower themselves and redefine their internal narrative of what a
good mother should be.

F

Dianne Fierheller
Dianne.Fierheller@thp.ca
Title: “Good” Mothers, “Risky” Mothers and Children’s Health

Maternal roles and responsibilities within western society are inter-connected to the overall
health and well-being of children, families and communities. Throughout history maternal lived
experience has played a central role in the mothering process, as knowledge was primarily
passed on from the women within a mother’s social network. As the field of medicine and
health care developed, access to medical expertise, knowledge and resources increased for
families. Medical professionals began to develop and publish “best” practices for raising a
healthy child, which created a shift towards the “medicalization of motherhood” and the
normative ideologies of “good” and “bad” mothering. Throughout this presentation I will
examine the dominant biomedical discourses that have constructed “good” and “bad”
mothering practices within children’s health in western society. I will incorporate the voices
and lived experiences of mother’s that I have worked with as a paediatric health care social
worker as well as my own personal experiences of mothering. I will draw on maternal theory
and Michel Foucault’s theoretical framework of neo-liberal governmentality to illustrate the
conceptualization of morality, risk and individual responsibility that has been placed on
mothers in raising “healthy” children.

Denise Ferris
denise.ferris@anu.edu.au
Title: Mary Leunig: The Art of Inspiring Blood and Guts

Mary Leunig is an Australian artist, who categorises her artwork as Drawing but who is
identified as a cartoonist because of the kinds of drawings she has published in over 35 years.
In this presentation I show Leunig’s incisive drawings to a wider audience and examining some
of her work’s dominant themes, locate her practice in the wider realm of artists critical of the
domestic status quo. While these include visualising her distaste for capitalism and
“conservative bullshit”, her major preoccupations shine a harsh light on the work of care and
the maternal relationship. These detailed drawings are highly accomplished, a mixture of
fanciful (ornot) heroism, domestic surrealism and reality, tender and brutal as well as visceral,
extreme, violent but invariably acute. In addition Leunig transgresses social norms by airing,
indeed washing, ‘her dirty linen in public’. Estranged from her two grown children, she has
both a difficult story and tells difficult stories, the kind marked by great vigour, violence, or
fierceness that is — blood and guts. This intense delivery potentially alienates audiences but it
is the doggedness and courage of her profound transgression I wish to analyse for its bravery
and benefits — Its clear demonstration of saying, and representing, the unspeakable.

G

Katie Garner
katiebgarner@gmail.com
Title: How Feminism Failed the US Childcare Movement and What Empowered Moms Can
Do About It

In 2018, the IWRP reported that US mothers earn just half of what men do, highlighting an
intense need for solution-oriented research and confirming Bueskens’ theory that mothers are
treated as a separate category than women more generally. Motherhood can be a site of
empowerment, but for that to happen mothers need labor equality and childcare. Mothers also need work to make feminism work for them and their needs.

We must resolve the conflict between care advocates who seek compensation for stay at home mothers and those who seek subsidized outsourced childcare. Understanding how class and race have shaped attitudes on both sides may prove helpful.

Importantly, many women “opt out” of waged work when faced with the need to mother “intensively” while simultaneously determining they are fiscally behind by working outside the home. This happens in part because the US government permits companies to undercut the wages of part-time workers (who are predominantly women). Importantly, the EU has reached successful negotiation of part-time worker protection, which I will examine more closely.

Pulling from child care scholar as well as my own 100 one-on-one interviews and 600 online surveys with US mothers, I recommend stronger alliance building, so mothers can advocate for more robust support of their essential labor.

Erin Graybill Ellis
erin.ellis@alumni.twu.edu
Title: Mental and Physical Health Impacts of Graduate School on Graduate Student Mothers

The stresses of graduate school and their impact on the health of graduate student mothers is explored, using their own words. Data is combined from two different in-depth qualitative studies, one study of twelve graduate student mothers and one study of fifty graduate student mothers who experienced pregnancy during graduate school. Themes that arose include chronic illnesses, mental and physical health, pregnancy related health complications, postpartum related health, sleep related health issues, poor eating habits, and postpartum depression.

Title: In/Visibilty: Performing Wellness in the Academy

Using Butler’s conceptualization of performativity, we explore the processes of living an academic life while also coping with invisible, contested illnesses. We use photo imagery and duoethnography to document the layered disruptions and stutters of becoming academics through new diagnoses, prolonged medical interventions, and hospitalizations for maladies that are poorly understood, all the while ‘looking’ healthy.

Florance Pasche Guignard
mmelindagiles@hotmail.com
Title: Health and Spirituality in the Francophone Contexts of Natural Parenting

Health and spirituality are two important and often intertwined themes in natural parenting. This paper will present key findings of a postdoctoral research on this particular style of parenting in contemporary francophone contexts. Also known as eco-parenting or green parenting, natural parenting is influenced to a great extent by attachment parenting and is informed by environmentalist agendas. In France, some of its key practices, such as breastfeeding or the use of washable diapers, are seen as antagonistic to feminism. Some of the uncommon choices that the ‘natural moms’ make in the domains of fertility management, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation and childrearing are often associated with religion or spirituality, and, in many media, connoted negatively. The ‘mamans nature’ engage in the performance of natural parenting, as well as of healthy and environmentalist practices as a form of private and domestic activism that this paper will shed some light on.

Fiona Joy Green
f.green@uwinnipeg.ca
Mainstream motherhood places unrealistic and harmful expectations on all mothers. Feelings of isolation, incompetence, and exhaustion are commonly experienced by mothers throughout their years of raising children. Essential to the daily lives of many families and communities, feminist mothering entails the distinct approach of combining one's feminism with one's parenting. It fosters the agency, authority, authenticity, and autonomy of mothers and children not generally found within the institution of motherhood. This paper examines how feminist mothers, including transgender folks and cismen comprehend, trouble, and consciously dispute the damaging effects of motherhood to create and model healthy parenting practices for mothers and the well-being of their children (Green, 2006, 2011; Green and Freidman).

Kate Greenway
seanandkate@hotmail.com

Of course it is possible that an adopted baby may suffer some emotional setback from the separation from his birth mother, but this seems doubtful, and one would suppose recovery from it to be rather rapid.

Decades later, the well-being of those who have experienced adoption in their lives from any point of the ‘triangle’ still may not be attended to in ways that truly reflect the levels of potential spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical trauma. I posit that the complexities of adoption, when thought about in multidisciplinary ways, can move beyond the narrowness of the standard quantitative socio/psychological profile to a more wholistic examination of those who have had difficulties in coming to terms with unresolved absences in their lives. In an arts-based approach to investigation can be found new ways of representing subjective experience, encouraging empathy, critical reflection, and healing.

Joan Garvan
garvanjoan@gmail.com

Pregnancy and birth outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged women in Australia’s national capital

Pregnancy and birth outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged women in Australia’s national capital Joan Garvan, PhD (ANU) Pregnancy and birth are events of social and cultural significance that have been highly medicalized. There are 300,000 plus births across Australia each year. In 2013 97% of births occurred in hospitals, in conventional labour-ward settings; 72% of these were in public hospitals and 28% in private hospitals. A much smaller proportion of 2% gave birth in birth centres and .3% at home or in other settings. Less than 8% of women can access midwifery led care in Australia even though there is continuing and strong evidence that this has the best outcomes. The influence of neoliberal policies over recent decades has led to a schism between hospital systems and alternatives offered by private practitioners, midwives, doulas, psychologists or counsellors who assist women and their families to navigate pregnancy and birth along with cooks and cleaners who ease the transition to parenthood. This has led to a two-tiered system whereby those with the knowledge and the finances can research and employ what they determine to be the best. Vulnerable and disadvantaged women and their families, however, must rely on hospital systems that are under pressure. Framed within this related research my paper draws from interviews with selected practitioners in Canberra so as to gain some insight into the outcomes of pregnancy, birth and the transition to parenthood for
vulnerable and disadvantaged women in Australia’s national capital.

Melinda Vandenbeld Giles
mmelindagiles@hotmail.com
Title: Exploring Social Justice through Narrative Ethnography: Families Living in Toronto Motels

The lineup was endless. Celia stood there waiting, leaning heavily against the doorjamb. Couldn’t anyone see her enormous pregnant belly? Didn’t these people realize when a pregnant woman needs to use the toilet, she needs to use the toilet! And this time it was worse than normal. Celia concentrated on her breathing. She felt a funny sensation. Not pain, exactly. Oh God, she really had to go. She should have just left the movie earlier. Okay, it was *The Da Vinci Code*. And she had been waiting anxiously to see the movie after reading the whole book in a couple days. But still. No movie was worth this!

Finally, it was her turn. She rushed into the tiny cubicle, expecting to feel immediate relief. But things didn’t happen that way. Instead, the water just kept rushing, right down her leg when she thought she was finally done. Looking into the toilet bowl with a mixture of horror and pure panic, and seeing the swirls of blood, Celia realized her water broke. “Um…” She heard her voice. Timid. Afraid. Uncertain. “Um…anyone? I…uh…well, I think my water just broke.”

H

Tamar Hagar
tamar.hager@gmail.com
Michelle Hughes Miller and Tamar Hagar,
Title: “Not just the Opposite of Good: Examples of the Bad Mother Trope in Bad Mothers: Regulations, Representations and Resistance” (Demeter Press, 2017)

Jennifer Heisler
profjenn1234@gmail.com
Title: Relational Dialectics and Academic Motherhood: The Tensions and Coping Strategies of the Departmental Chairperson.

“[E]ven the most abstract theories are, to varying degrees, informed by their subjective conditions of existence: by, that is, the inner psychic dynamics of the theorist” -- Stuart Hall, *Familiar Stranger*

“[T]heory can do more the closer it gets to the skin.” -- Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* I didn’t want to be the Chairperson of my department. I had just received tenure 9months prior. I was relieved, tired, and a little surprised. I had three small children at home (all academic babies); I struggled to publish and research; work-life balance” Frankly, I was looking forward to taking a deep breath. I knew I was one of the ‘lucky ones.’ Two other women in my doctoral cohort had left tenure-track academy for other pursuits - one forced and one burned-out. I understood their plight; I had also lived their stories. For academic babies #2 and #3, I returned to the classroom one week after giving birth, choosing to save FMLA leave for the following semester. No. I did not want to be Chairperson.

Six months later, I moved into the Chair’s office and started a 6-year term as department leader.

Mary Hermann
mahermann@vcu.edu
Title: Job satisfaction, enrichment, and institutional policy: listening to faculty mothers

With a growing number of mothers in academia (Flaherty, 2016), this study gives voice to the experiences and perceptions of faculty mothers from a large, public doctoral-granting university in the northeast region of the United States. Data show a correlation between faculty in higher education who feel supported and satisfied in their job and retention and productivity across their careers (Bennett, 2006; Wilson, 2012). In addition to retention and productivity, job satisfaction influences teaching efficacy and positive modeling of health and wellness for students.

Ellen Heed
elleenheed@mac.com
Title: Women’s Sexual Pain After Childbirth: Development of a Somatic Model for Scar Tissue Remediation, Education, and Management

Scar tissue after childbirth is largely unrecognized as causative in the gynecologic, urologic, physical therapy, and psychotherapeutic settings where women seek help for painful sex. Despite availability of pelvic therapies that address scar tissue, women lack confidence, accurate genital vocabulary, and self-permission when describing vaginal and vulvar pain(s) in pursuit of help for their birth injuries. Too often, sexual pain remains unresolved, creates emotional trauma leading to stress, which increases sexual pain in a negative cycle of exacerbation. Two Sexological Bodyworkers undertook a preliminary critical investigation of birth-related scar tissue and treatment, using mixed qualitative methodologies, including action research and intuitive inquiry. Research identified effects of scars related to sexual pain by excluding confounding factors. Our research model predicted that once pain from biochemical, biomechanical, and emotional origins was ruled out, scars must be at cause. In a convenience sample of 12 women, treatment protocols included somatic sex education, hands-on scar tissue remediation techniques, and manual self-help training. Our primary investigation was whether mindful palpation and treatment of scars had potential to cause immediate dramatic, and positive tissue change. Inquiry also included whether and how sexual pain from scars might resolve as a result of somatic recall. Four of 12 subjects experienced one or more potent episodes of somatic recall during treatment. This immediately preceded rapid, dramatic changes in density and viscosity of scars. Of 12 subjects, 10 completed the research protocol, providing feedback. All 10 subjects reported nearly complete cessation of sexual pain and/or significant improvement in sexual sensation, which occurred during or within 4 weeks of participation in this research.

Martina Hynan
martina@hynan.com
Title: Birthing Grounds: Mapping Places of Birth in Rural Ireland

“[I believe that if my daughters are to survive in a patriarchal world, they must know the stories, legends, and myths of their foremothers].” (Andrea O’Reilly, In ‘Search of the Goddess’, Motherlines Spring/Summer 2018 Volume 9, No. 1, p.43) It is the contention of this paper that the stories, legends and myths of our foremothers in Ireland surrounding childbirth have been hidden and silenced, and that this can be traced back to the shift from home to hospital birth. This schism has altered both the experience of childbirth and also the complex interrelationship between place and birth. Until the middle of the twentieth century most births in rural Ireland took place in the home. From then on childbirth increasingly took place in hospital settings. Not only did this physical relocation of birth from home to hospital affect women’s lived experiences of childbirth and traditional midwifery practices but both were also inextricably bound up with the complex relationship to women’s bodies and place within the evolving post-colonial Irish state. This paper examines the layered readings of place of birth, maternal identity and midwifery practices during the formative years of the Irish state (1922-1950). It considers how the rupture from home to hospital birth affected women’s experience of childbirth, both positively and negatively and perceptions of place within the community. This presentation will be viewed through the prism of feminist visual cultural
theorisations of the birthing body as part of an art practice-led PhD utilising deep mapping methodologies; drawing on folklore, oral testimonies, maps, drawings and photography to create multiple readings of birth in rural West of Ireland. This will also be an opportunity to explore this research with international scholars and consider possible connections with the experiences of childbirth with for example, indigenous communities in Canada.

Emilie St. Hilaire
esthilai@ualberta.ca
Title: Are reborn mommies okay?

Reborn dolls have been growing steadily since the early 2000s as a fun, creative, and therapeutic hobby for thousands of adult women (and some men) around the world. Reborns are hand-painted, weighted, hyper-realistic dolls made to resemble real infants. In this conference presentation I will propose that reborn mommies privately challenge culturally dominant ideologies about motherhood by engaging in non-reproductive mothering. Public negativity surrounding reborn play is the primary reason why enthusiasts avoid bringing their dolls into the public sphere, even if it would bring them great joy to do so. I will share narratives on this topic collected from community members and discuss strategies that might reduce the stigma around reborn babies. Negative public perceptions of reborn mommies are prompted by the uncanniness of the dolls and based on gendered expectations of heteronormative behaviour.

Kimberly Hillier
crosby4@uwindsor.ca
Title: Baby on Board: Exploring the Experiences of Graduate Student Mothers and Faculty.

The increasing number of women participating in post graduate education has been one of the dominant social trends in Ontario over the last half century and has provided an opportunity to explore the complex relations between gender and education (Blackmore, 2006; Statistics Canada, 2013; 2014). Employing a feminist perspective that views gender as a social, cultural, and historical construct situated in relations of power (Blackmore, 2006; Butler, 1990; Connell, 1995), a qualitative narrative approach was utilized to explore the experiences of 11 women who balanced or were currently balancing motherhood and academia. Women who are current or recent graduate students and mothers were included in this study, as well as faculty/ sessional instructors. Mothers in this study were from a range of faculties at the University of Windsor. Inductive analysis of the semi-structured interviews and focus groups revealed five key themes concerning motherhood and graduate studies: (a) intersection of work and family; (b) mentoring opportunities and access to campus resources; (c) inconsistency between institutional and program policy (d) support from departmental faculty but lack of support from the university as a whole; and (e) an overall level of satisfaction in being a graduate student mother. Implications of these key findings are discussed and provide evidence on policy, campus resources, mentoring opportunities, and graduate student well-being, while also addressing issues of gender equity.

Linda Hunter
lehunter@uoguelph.ca
Title: Understanding HIV Related Stigma Experienced by Mothers: The Next Generation and Implications of the New Ontario Health Education Curriculum

There are many sources of stigma for mothers living with HIV in Canada, and these negatively impact their decision about whether or not to disclose their status. Societal norms and values regarding motherhood are generally not compatible with the negative and stigmatizing messages that exist about HIV-positive women becoming mothers. One reason that many HIV-positive mothers are often unwilling to access health supports is because of the stigma and unwelcomed surveillance that accompany their diagnosis. We begin with a brief discussion on sources of stigma for women and mothers living with HIV, and then move into a discussion on the newly revised Ontario Health Education Curriculum in terms of its progress in addressing HIV-related stigma. Although we note there is room for improvement, the new health curriculum has positive implications for reducing HIV-related stigma by promoting greater

36
awareness around the effects of stigma. Additionally, we propose that HIV-awareness poster campaigns may be a useful tool for supplementing the work of the curriculum in reducing and, ultimately, eliminating HIV-related stigma. The new Ontario Health Education Curriculum, as well as more recent HIV-awareness poster campaigns, challenge the dominant perceptions about HIV stigma, and they have the potential to lead to positive change, which could reduce HIV-related stigma for mothers now and in the future.

J

Elenora Joensuu
Title: “Blood, Mud, Poop, and Vomit: Reimagining Disgust through the Mother-Child Relationship”

Disgust encounters are commonplace to daily experience, yet they remain challenging to address personally, theoretically, and practically. They are particularly difficult given that they can be marked by repulsion and fascination, which seem opposed and incompatible. Current theories of disgust have relied on incomplete understanding of disgust given their dismissal of fascination. This incomplete understanding of disgust has an impact on being able to answer the ethical question of affect: what do I do with what I feel?

Disgust encounters as they occur in mother-child relationships, however, operate differently than in other forms of relationship. They provide a site in which connection and fascination are more visible in the disgust experience than in other forms of relationship. This connection can contribute to mediating the repulsion experienced in disgust and lead to different answers to the ethical question. What mothers do with the repulsion they feel can be different than what is done with repulsion in other forms of relationship. This paper will propose the mother-child relationship as a resource for imagining new ways of being across human relationships, even when those relationship are with others who disgust us.

Title: Everyday World-Making: Toward an Understanding of Mothering and Affect

The lack of consideration of mothering in relation to affect theory, and of affect theory in relation to motherhood studies, is in one sense surprising given the persistent association between women, mothers, and emotions in both Western epistemology and popular culture. In another sense, the gap is not so surprising, since, as Boler highlights, emotions are considered “risky business” in scholarship: they are “culturally associated with femininity, ‘soft’ scholarship, pollution of truth, and bias” (Boler, Feeling Power 109). In this session, which draws from our recently published scholarly collection of the same name, we ask what the lens of mothering does to affect theory, and we simultaneously consider what happens to our (understanding of) mothering when we directly address its affective dimensions and potentials.

K

Lauren Kirshner
lauren.kirshner@ryerson.ca
Title: Teen Mothers and Creative Writing: What Their Stories Can Teach Us

Mothers in their teens are often stereotyped by popular culture as incapable, irresponsible, and uncaring. We hear little from teen mothers themselves due to the barriers they face to self-representation. Community creative writing programs for teen mothers can form an important form of self-representation for teen mothers and a site of creative resistance to culturally dominant ideologies about teen motherhood. They can offer teen mothers a supportive environment to write stories about the realities of their lives, reverse the transmission model of learning by empowering teen mothers to become creators and public presenters, and increase the community’s understanding of the issues that shape their lives. This paper examines a case study of a community creative writing program for teen mothers which operated in fall of 2018 in partnership with Jessie’s: The June Callwood Centre for Young Mothers. Presented by Sister Writes, an intersectional creative writing program established in
2010, the initiative engaged 12 teen mothers in mentorship with acclaimed women writers and in workshops where they learned writing skills and wrote unique personal narratives, which they published in a magazine. These stories, which are about pregnancy and childbirth, coming-of-age and parenting, and about the writers’ own relationships with their parents and their partners, remind us that there is no one story about teen motherhood. Drawing on a theoretical context in community creative writing programs for women, and my experience as Founding Creative Director of Sister Writes, my presentation will showcase original writings created in this program to shed light on the experiences of teen mothers, in their own words.

Erin Kuri
kurie@mcmaster.ca
Title: Challenging the Invisibility of Queer “Young Mothers” within Pre and Postnatal Healthcare

Abstract: For youth who identify as queer “young mothers”, multiple vectors of oppression result in the erasure of their identity and material needs within the current healthcare system. This paper presents the argument that although the visibility of queer pregnant and parenting youth is an important step in order to collectively establish inclusion within healthcare, that recognition alone is not enough. Collaborative advocacy efforts must take an intersectional approach, prioritizing the dismantling of various overlapping systems that distribute opportunities and care to some and withhold it from others. This presentation attends to ways that these systems are shaped by dominant values of patriarchy, capitalism, and white-supremacy, acting as enduring sites of oppression and violence for marginalized groups. Based on literature within feminist theory, contemporary motherhood studies, and queer studies, the author illuminates a sense of direction with respect to advocacy efforts in collaboration with queer-identified pregnant and parenting youth.

Karla Knutson
Knutson@cord.edu
Title: Mothering While Teaching Abroad

Faculty-led enclave study-away programs present benefits and challenges for faculty leaders. Traveling with, teaching, and sometimes “mothering” a group of students requires continual negotiation of pedagogical, personal, logistic, and financial responsibilities. As co-leaders of a month-long enclave program set in Scotland, we experience these responsibilities through the lenses of academic mothers teaching a course about gender and parenting in contemporary society. Rarely has the personal felt more political than in our attempts to navigate the difficulties of balancing the needs of our children, whether they travel with us or remain at home, of co-parents, of our children’s caregivers, of our students, of ourselves, and of our institution. Our presentation will share our experiences mothering while teaching abroad, interrogate the assumptions underlying faculty’s role in this type of program, and outline suggestions for advocating for more institutional support for mothers and parents of young children.

Kaarina Kailo
Kaarina.Kailo@gmail.com
Title: The Great Ma and Ancestral Deity of Slavic and Finno-Ugric Peoples--from Stone Babas to the Golden Woman

The aim of my presentation is to introduce my most recent research on Terra Feminarum, the mysterious Land of Women, situated by Tacitus and Adam von Bremen in areas near the current Estonia, Finland and the ancient Permia. The stone dolmae, menhirs and “babas” going back hundreds of thousands of years in the Ural Mountains have been identified as ancestral great mothers worshipped during the matriarchal era of Northern Europe and Russia. A multifaceted
figure called by many ethnic, locally colored names from Kamennaja Baba, Zolataja Baba (Golden Woman) to Kyldysin, Zlata Baba and even Baba Yaga gives us clues to how differently pre-Christian peoples conceptualized motherhood, human/animals relations and the good life. She is the most important matriarchal goddess in the regions from Iceland to Finland, Samiland, Slavic countries and Siberia. She has been particularly important to Finno-Ugric and even Turkic peoples whose conceptions of spiritual motherhood and the gift economy she embodies. The maps, legends and historical references, ancient textiles and other artifacts/mentifacts to do with the Golden Hag are a gateway to Northern matriarchal cultures with their radically different notions of gender, ecosocial sustainability and egalitarian worldview.

Laurie Kruk

lauriek@nipissingu.ca

Title: "MOTHERING & AS HEALTH, WHOLENESS, HAPPINESS: MY CONTINUING JOURNEY AS A ‘MOM-POET’"

I was a poet before I was a mother....but becoming a mother of two daughters (“millennials”) has certainly deepened my poetic journey. With the publication of my third book of poetry (My Mother Did Not Tell Stories, Demeter Press, 2012), I began to reach across the generations to recognize my own links to my maternal ancestors and “motherlands.” In this literary presentation, I will share some poems that are markers of this journey. I begin with the initiation journey of a new mother in “Heart Exercise” (My Mother) and my reflection on my maternal legacy in the title poem. Newer, uncollected poems will then be shared as I navigate the teenage years (“Mockable Mom” and “Nourishing Your Baby and Child”) with their tensions of connection and difference. “Partial Eclipse” explores the child’s transition to university-age independence. “Re-birthed” uses birth imagery in treating a medical procedure of mid-life. Finally, “Historical” revisits the “motherland” of Ireland and my placement in history as Irish-Canadian mother/daughter/granddaughter.

Samar Khan

Title: Barriers to Maternal Mental Healthcare among Migrant South Asian Women with symptoms of Postpartum Depression

This research explores the needs and the gaps in knowledge and service delivery in maternal mental healthcare among migrant South Asian women in Toronto, who are experiencing symptoms of postpartum depression (PPD). Qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with six Key Informants from the Parkdale Community Health Centre (PCHC) and the South Asian Women’s Centre (SAWC). Two main categories of barriers to care for recent migrant South Asian women were identified: ‘practical barriers’ and ‘cultural/social barriers’. Practical barriers included knowing where and how to access maternal healthcare services, and overcoming language difficulties. Cultural/social barriers, on the other hand, included fear of stigma (often associated with mental health in the South Asian community); lack of acknowledgement of depressive symptoms by family and society; and psychosocial pressures and feelings of isolation that accompanies migration to a new, foreign country. Furthermore, the challenges experienced by service providers working with this population were organized into two additional categories: ‘professional limitations’, and ‘inexpert or knowledge-based limitations’ (pertaining to South Asian culture). Professional limitations included lack of competence with regards to providing adequate care, language barriers, and inadequate assessment tools that would cater specifically to this population in Toronto. Inexpert cultural knowledge-based limitations included cultural (South Asian) uncertainty, cultural assumptions and biases, and the dynamics around it. The findings of this study suggest that not only are there important barriers to accessing postpartum care for recent migrant South Asian women, but it can also be challenging for service providers to deliver care. Understanding some of these barriers and challenges from a more nuanced perspective is indeed an important step to resolving the gaps and obstacles in the Canadian healthcare system.

L

Gertrude Lyons

39
Women are ill prepared for the social and emotional rigors of motherhood. In turn they are failing to benefit from the adult development that is possible for themselves as they raise their children. Past and current cultural myths, beliefs, and lack of an applied, research based, curriculum traps a woman into a narrow definition of what it means to be a mother and curtails the breadth of personal development and transformation that is possible in motherhood. I developed and studied the impact of a curriculum intended to expand a woman’s awareness and capacity for personal and psychosocial development through mothering. The curriculum is founded on Wright Integrative and Wright Performative Education theories and methodologies with particular emphasis on the Wright Model of Human Development. These models integrate the theories and methodologies from developmental psychology, existential philosophy, human potential psychology, Adlerian psychology, neuroscience, and education research. The impact of the curriculum was rigorously tested utilizing quantitative and qualitative measures immediately preceding, at completion of the delivery of the curriculum, and six months post training. The results reveal that the curriculum had a statistically significant impact on the participants. Previously held cultural beliefs about mothering shifted to a more expanded view that included critical thinking of the choices surrounding conception, pregnancy, birth, and parenting. Furthermore, they experienced themselves as mothers in all they do—whether they have children or not. The prospect of the pain associated with mothering shifted from an avoidance mentality to embracing the inevitable pain as a possible vehicle for transformation. The results of this study ignite a larger initiative to value and foster the experience of mothering as one that holds not only huge potential for personal human emergence of the individual mother, but for society as a whole.

Kris Lowrey
ltpv@iup.edu
Title: *Mothering and the Academy: Four Mother-Teacher-Scholars’ Journeys*

In this critical autoethnography, four mother-teacher-scholars in higher education narrate their ways of coping, overcoming, and succeeding during their educational and professional journeys. Specifically, each in her own stage of mothering and higher education career, the panelists focus on the following: 1. Who are we as mother-teacher-scholars in the academy? a. What normative practices have we encountered in the academy, and how have they influenced us emotionally, physically, and psychologically? b. In what ways have we overcome them and been strategic about navigating them? 2. How can the academy create an environment that supports us in our identities as mother-teacher-scholars? Each speaks about her mother-teacher-scholar identity and what that means in her specific career timeline. Carr questions her ability to balance single mothering a college-bound teenager while completing coursework and staying physically healthy. Lowrey explores her experience as a pregnant graduate student and the early stages of mothering while finishing coursework and working through her dissertation. Park speaks to her mothering while pursuing tenure and providing support to other student mothers. Black examines institutional challenges and support as, through multiple rounds of cancer over two decades, she juggled motherhood, teaching, and research. The panelists conclude with an audience participation.

Donna McCart
dsharkey@sympatico.ca
Title: *Still a Mother*

*Still a Mother* explores the lives of eight Canadian women who have lived through the death of a child within the last four years. It asks the question of whether motherhood is a permanent
designation. Two connected issues will be examined: mother grief and how a new self-identity is forged through the loss of a child. Through a focus on how mother grief is experienced during the first two years following a child’s death and ways in which the lives of these women are unalterably transformed, six salient features of this grief will be explored.

And finally, four of these women, having gone through such an extraordinarily difficult experience and while seeped in grief, have found ways to begin to build resilience. The mechanisms they have used to accomplish this will be illustrated.

Judith Mintz
judithrmintz@gmail.com
Title: Never Not Mothering: Mothering, Self Care and the Feminist Ethics of Yoga

After mothers emerge from the fog of early motherhood, many ask themselves, who am I now? What was I before I had this child, and how can I integrate my pre-and post-mothering selves? Many turn to yoga as a path of self discovery and wonder how can they can use their yo-ga practice to fuel the arc of social justice as a mother. This paper examines the struggles and potentials of mothering for mothers who navigate their paid employment in conjunction with the notion of yoga as a pathway to healing and social change. Using fieldwork data from interviews with mothers who practice yoga, I analyze their experiences to explore the tensions inherent in balancing the return to work, doing activism, and self-care. Incorporating yoga philosophy, the research points towards a feminist ethics of care to provide solutions of empowered mothering that benefit the not only the mother, but the whole community.

Michelle Hughes Miller
hughesmiller@usf.edu
Title: Not just the Opposite of Good: Examples of the Bad Mother Trope in Bad Mothers: Regulations, Representations and Resistance (Demeter Press, 2017)

Rarely do scholars write about the Bad Mother Trope as a cultural and institutionalized force in mother’s lives separate from its more popular counterpart, the Good Mother. However, in our co-edited volume, Bad Mothers: Regulations, Representations and Resistance (Demeter, 2017), we posit that the Bad Mother trope, though shaped by the Good Mother trope and similarly bound to patriarchal motherhood and women's oppression as mothers within patriarchy, does not just represent the “Other,” the failed “good mother.” Instead, we argue that the Bad Mother image has become a complex political, social, and ideological label that is a separate and additional effective social and cultural mechanism of surveillance and control in the lives of mothers. In this presentation we discuss the implications of our argument and use research from Bad Mothers to illustrate the distinct yet nuanced effects of the Bad Mother trope in the lives of women.

Kathy Mantas
kathy@nipissingu.ca
Panel Title: On Wanting Motherhood: The Art of Maternal Desire and Infertility

Following in the footsteps of Adrienne Rich, much recent motherhood scholarship has encouraged us to conceive motherhood not as singular ideology but as mothering, a verb, a series of behaviors and practices. While such theorization encourages recognition of the labor that goes into parenting regardless of one's biological connection to the child she mothers, it obfuscates the question of maternal identity and desire. What of the woman who wants to have a child, to mother, but is not yet one? Or, the woman who donates eggs or serves as gestational carrier, whose maternal connections are erased through the prioritizing of 'mothering'? How might we rethink the nature of 'mother' and the very nature of maternal desire from the perspective of the infertile woman? This panel brings together four artist-scholars who work on infertility to explore the limits of motherhood and to complicate
standard notions of maternal identity. We will present writing and art from two collections--The ART of Infertility and ART-i-facts--provide brief narrative and theoretical discussion, as well as invite participation in discussion and art-making workshop.

Barbara Alice Mann
Title: R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Find out What It Means

In 1967, Aretha Franklin might have been begging for respect—“just a little bit”—but in the Woodlands Matriarchies of Hanōwa Tgawēnot (Turtle Island), respect was a requirement, and the primary object of everyone’s respect was Mother. As Gāwaowannah put it in 1919, “Her word was law.” He had it from his Grandmother, and one did not mess with Mother. This sounds ominous to Westerners, who conflate authority with sustained, criminal assault. Woodlands respect is, however, of another order of awe, entirely. It is existential, connected with the cosmos. Mother is the “first Ongwe,” or shining person, of the first Ongwe Shona, the Original (Shining) People, direct to us from Karionake, Sky World. In Indigenous cultures, generally, the first to arrive is accorded primary rights, and clearly, Mom arrived before Junior. The matter goes deeper than this, however, for generative properties, the stuff of creation, are esteemed with wonderment. Associated closely with Blood Earth, Mothers create at will: soil; sustaining crops; children—new life of all kinds. This sort of ability is considered wisdom, and the people rely on it, and on the Mothers who share it for the sake of the children.

Patricia Mukhim
Title: Stresses and strains in Khasi Matriliny: Need to reclaim lost values

The passage of the the Khasi Lineage Amendment Bill by the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council in 2018, seeking to disenfranchise a Khasi women and her children if the woman marries a non-Khasi man has created societal fissures never seen before. While the Bill earlier sanctioned that a Khasi man marrying a non-Khasi woman would be able to induct her into the Khasi tribe through the process of 'tang jait' where the non-Khasi woman is given a new Khasi clan name, a similar condonation is not given to the woman. This was done without consulting the traditional institutions or the heads of the Khasi clans who are powerful societal forces and whose assent to the Lineage Bill is considered imperative. While this Bill was passed with the motive of garnering political brownie points in view of the forthcoming elections to the Autonomous District Councils in early 2019, it will have far reaching repercussions if made into an Act. At the moment the Bill is lying with the Governor of Meghalaya whose assent is necessary for the Bill to become an Act. The District Councils were created by the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution for the sole purpose of safeguarding Khasi customs and tradition of which Khasi Matriliny is a shining example. It is unfortunate that that very Instrument which seeks to conserve the facets of Khasi culture is being used to take away the essence of Matriliny. Needless to say, the Khasi Lineage Amendment Bill is another attempt by the forces of patriarchy within the society to disempower women by blaming them of the erosion in the Khasi value systems. This paper will explore how Khasi Matriliny is now a subject of political manipulation and a vote-bank garnering tool but which will have long term repercussions in society, the like of which we have not witnessed before.

Sherri Mitchell
Sacredinstructions@gmail.com
Title: Erasing Patriarchal Pathology

There is a tendency in those who have been oppressed to try to prove their essential worth by finding a valued place for themselves within the systems of oppression. Not only does this fail to establish a sense of worth within those individuals, it also lengthens the distance that their entire group must travel to find authentic value and representation within the society.
Our oppressor has been the colonial patriarchy, which has silenced the sacred feminine through countless beliefs and practices that diminish and subjugate all feminine representations within the society. This has caused us to doubt our true strength as women and led us into unhealthy competition with one another. The patriarchy has also devised masculine and feminine character stereotypes (e.g. toxic masculinity and damsels in distress) that strengthen the inequitable power relationship between men and women, creating a sustained lack of safety for women and girls across the globe. In order to survive within this system, we have conditioned ourselves to hide our essential truth; the raw powerful truth that only emerges when we give rise to the sacred feminine. To reconnect with this truth, we must first find our way out of oppression.

The road that leads out of oppression is littered with the fragmented pieces of ourselves that we have sacrificed along the way. These broken pieces call to us, and our grief over their loss drags us to our knees. But we cannot stay in the places where we were wounded. We must collect our lost fragments and move on. To stay here would lead to death, of ourselves and all that we hold dear. So, we must forge a new path, one that will provide us with a new way of being in relationship with one another and with the world around us.

Kelly Diane McCready
kmaccready@gmail.com
Title of Presentation: *Mothering Over the Long Haul: Social Constructs and Women’s Experiences*

Abstract: The relationship between motherhood and mental health is complex and dependent on a multitude of issues including class, age, race, perceptions of gender, experiences of family and society, chance, timing and more. While it is nuanced and difficult to describe, many women attest to the fact that a palpable relationship does exist between motherhood and mental health and are saying so through research, literature, art, protest and more. Relationships between anxiety, depression, mental illness and the inception of motherhood are well-studied via postpartum depression and/or psychosis yet few studies look at motherhood over the long haul and incorporate women’s experiences, thoughts, opinions, narratives and understandings of how motherhood has shaped their lives and related to their mental health as they age and their maternal role changes. This presentation will examine the social construction of motherhood and how it relates to women’s mental health as they age and their mothering evolves over time and their life course.

Cheryl Neale-McFall
cneale@wcupa.edu
Title: *Job Satisfaction, Enrichment, and Institutional Policy: Listening to Faculty Mothers*

With a growing number of mothers in academia (Flaherty, 2016), this study gives voice to the experiences and perceptions of faculty mothers from a large, public doctoral-granting university in the northeast region of the United States. Data show a correlation between faculty in higher education who feel supported and satisfied in their job and retention and productivity across their careers (Bennett, 2006; Wilson, 2012). In addition to retention and productivity, job satisfaction influences teaching efficacy and positive modeling of health and wellness for students.

Maria Novotny
maria.t.novotny@gmail.com
Following in the footsteps of Adrienne Rich, much recent motherhood scholarship has encouraged us to conceive motherhood not as singular ideology but as mothering, a verb, a series of behaviors and practices. While such theorization encourages recognition of the labor that goes into parenting regardless of one’s biological connection to the child she mothers, it obfuscates the question of maternal identity and desire. What of the woman who wants to have a child, to mother, but is not yet one? Or, the woman who donates eggs or serves as gestational carrier, whose maternal connections are erased through the prioritizing of “mothering”? How might we rethink the nature of ‘mother’ and the very nature of maternal desire from the perspective of the infertile woman? This panel brings together four artist-scholars who work on infertility to explore the limits of motherhood and to complicate standard notions of maternal identity. We will present writing and art from two collections--The ART of Infertility and ART-i-facts--provide brief narrative and theoretical discussion, as well as invite participation in discussion and art-making workshop.

Lakshmi Nair
info@satyayogacollective.com
Title: Reaching into the Dark: A Root Re-Vision

Roots are underground and subconscious shapers of our destiny. If there is a wound at the root, it can affect our entire system. This is what I teach my yoga students when we learn about the energy body. My father’s mother, for whom I was named, died in childbirth when my father was 2 years old. By leaving my father motherless at the age of 2, she shaped who I am in ways she never could have imagined. My father was born at home. My mother was also born at home. My daughter was born in India in 2003 when I was 32. I chose to give birth with a midwife rather than in the hospital. No one understood my decision. In the generation since my parents were born at home, birth in middle class India had been entirely turned over to the Western medicine establishment with absolute blind faith. The high maternal and child mortality rates of yore were used as indisputable evidence for the superiority of Western obstetric practice to traditional birthing customs. I will be sharing the story of my experience of having an out-of-hospital birth with a midwife in India. I want to get at the “root” of the question of why childbirth, a natural process for which our bodies are designed, is so dangerous and difficult? Why is it more dangerous in some countries and circumstances than others? How much do the historical traumas of patriarchy and colonization affect our ability to bring a child down from the sacral waters through those brutalized and scarred roots onto earth? I want to dig down to meet my grandmother, my ancestor, for whom I was named, who lost her life in childbirth, who put the yearning in my bones to give birth my way and live.

Therese Novotny
tnovotny513@gmail.com
Title: (Re)Imagining Motherhood and Spiritual Health: The Medieval N-Town Play

Medical journals have recently published studies examining the spiritual health of mothers of children in NICU or cancer wards. Jeff Levin (2016) argues that this subject of study, however, is not new. The two concepts (religion and medicine) have been intrinsically intertwined through the last century. Medieval culture, however, also validated the connection between motherhood, health and spirituality. The fourteenth-century “N-Town Play” examines the
problematiс pregnancies of Mary and Elizabeth, whose scriptural narratives were enacted in public stages (Sugano, 2007). Unlike the official church narrative of Mary and Elizabeth obediently succumbing to God’s will, this play validated the physical dangers of risk-filled pregnancies. Medieval women recognized Mary and Elizabeth’s ambivalence and fears. Mary and Elizabeth’s correct reading of signs and their mutual need for support establish links between health and spirituality.

Andrea O’Reilly
aoreilly@yorku.ca
Title: Matrifocality, Maternal Empowerment, and Maternal Healing: Conceiving Empowered Young Motherhood in Miriam Toews’ Summer of My Amazing Luck

Motherhood scholar Deborah Byrd argues that young mothers are “rarely invited to tell their own stories” (496). Indeed, what we know about young mothers has been narrated and constructed by dominant discourses, which in the words of Tanya Darisi, position young motherhood “as a social problem in need of remedy” (29). Young mothers, as studied in research or portrayed in popular media, are represented “as either unworthy choice makers or as passive victims: either fully in charge of their lives or without any agency” (Kelly 10). A major challenge for young mothers, Byrd argues, “is resisting the cultural pressure to internalize the negative stereotypes of young mothers as unambitious, irresponsible, immature, immoral, and as incapable of adequately nurturing a child’s cognitive, physical, emotional development” (497). This paper consider how Miriam Toews’ novel Summer of My Amazing Luck, a story about single young mothers living in public housing in Winnipeg Canada, counters these normative discourses by situating young motherhood as a resistant and redemptive maternal space wherein young mothers are empowered to define and live their own meanings and practices of mothering. More specifically, the article explores how the young mothers create a matrifocal space at the residence they humorously name Half-a-Life and how, through this community, the women are able to achieve maternal empowerment through an empowered mothering and an empowered maternalism. Finally, the article considers how the matrifocal space, particularly as it is enacted in Lish’s maternal healing, gives rise to Lucy’s quest of rebirth through which Lucy achieves self-integration within a self-created community to secure an empowered maternal subjectivity as a young mother.

Title: “What is Incomprehensible”: The Myth of Maternal Omniscience and the Judgment of Maternal Culpability in Sue Klebold’s A Mother’s Reckoning and Monique Lépine’s Aftermath

The paper examines the memoirs of two mothers whose sons, Dylan Klebold and Marc Lépine, committed two of the most infamous school shootings in North America and then died by suicide: Columbine in the United States (1999) and the Montreal Massacre in Canada (1989). The Columbine High School massacre was a school shooting that occurred on April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School in Columbine. Dylan Klebold and his friend Eric Harris killed thirteen people and injured many more. The both later died by suicide. The École Polytechnique massacre, also known as the Montreal massacre, was a mass shooting at the École Polytechnique in Montreal, Quebec, Canada that occurred on December 6, 1989. Twenty-five year old Marc Lepine began his attack by separating the male students from the female students and after calling the women a “bunch of feminists” proceeded to kill fourteen women and injured another ten women and four men. He then died by suicide. His suicide note blamed feminists for the failure of his life. The memoirs by Sue Klebod—A Mother’s Reckoning: Living in the Aftermath of Tragedy (2016)— and by Monique Lépine—Aftermath: The Mother of Marc Lépine Tells the Story of Her Life Before and After the Montreal Massacre (2008)—narrate what Klebold terms “coming to terms with the impossible” and Lépine describes as “her descent into nightmare,” as each mother seeks to understand what caused her son to commit the massacre and die by suicide. The paper explores each mother’s journey toward understanding her son’s crime and death through denial, despair, anger, grief, shame, and, eventually, healing. In this paper I examine the normative discourse of good motherhood and how it informs and shapes each mother’s attempt to explain and comprehend how her son, in Lépine’s
words, “turned into a heartless murderer” (22). In particular, I address two salient beliefs of normative motherhood: first, good mothers raise good children and bad mothers raise bad children; and second, good mothers, as involved parents, should and must know their children. Klebold and Lépine in their poignant rendering and remembering of mothering deliver a potent critique and corrective to these conjectures of normative motherhood. The first section of the paper on A Mother’s Reckoning examines the myth of maternal omniscience while the second section on Aftermath considers the judgement of maternal culpability. What readers learn in these memoirs of loss is that children may be unknowable and that mothers are not responsible for the actions of their children. In so doing, the memoirs astutely disrupt, dispute, and discredit mother blame as they are enacted in the myth of maternal omniscience as well as in the judgment of maternal culpability.

Lynn O’Brien
lynnobrienhallstein@yahoo.com
Title: Starting Early and Young: Laying the Groundwork for Mothers’ Psychological Health and Well-Being before (Young) Women Become Mothers

Today and in future partnerships, having more gender equity in parenting partnership is crucial for mothers’ psychological health and well-being. However, given the current inequity that persists in many parenting partnerships between mothers and fathers, ensuring that equity has been and continues to be elusive. In “But, Didn’t I Choose This? Laying the Groundwork to Empower Mothers by Closing the Choice Gap between Women and Men Before Becoming Mothers and Fathers,” in After the Happily Ever After: Empowering Women & Mothers in Relationships, edited by Linda Ennis, I proposed six conversations I believe future parenting partners should ask one another prior to becoming parents together to try to lay the foundation for more gender equity in future parenting. In April 2018, a survey of young, college-age people was piloted based on those six questions. The purpose of the pilot survey was to assess how contemporary young couples think about gender equality and how they imagine their future family structure and division of labor in the home. In this paper, I report the findings from the survey and propose some strategies based on the survey results for continuing the work to lay the groundwork that is necessary for mothers’ psychological health and well-being before (young) women become mothers.

Lorinda Peterson
2ljp3@queensu.ca
Title: Midlife Mothering and Health and Well-being

Abstract: Contemporary mothering journeys are complicated by all the roles and identities mothers acquire along the way. By midlife, physical, mental and other related health issues often impact mothering practices. Caring for their sick children or their aging parents—sometimes both at once—while possibly mothering other children, and maintaining careers that often peak at midlife, can take its toll on mothers’ health and well-being as well. Mothers coping with health issues and well-being challenges at midlife can feel adrift in a society where maternal supports and resources are difficult to find, and seldom enough. However, through their resiliency and often by resisting hegemonic mothering ideals, midlife mothers maintain their positions, and exercise their options as new alternatives emerge. As a follow up to our co-edited text Middle Grounds: Essays on Midlife Mothering, we propose co-presenting with other authors from this collection to foreground maternal health, well-being and mothering at midlife. Possible topics include midlife mothering and: post-partum depression; elder care; empty nest; specially abled

Emma Posca
poscae@yorku.ca
Title: Indian Hospitals- The Impact on Mothering and Motherhood in Indigenous Communities

This paper will address how Indian hospitals were created from colonization through various legislations and ignored treaty rights that outlined proper medical care for Indigenous people. Through the development of Indian hospitals, barriers were created for Indigenous women and children with regarding being mothers and being mothered. Ethnographies such as “Separate Beds” by Maureen Lux and “Healing Histories: Stories from Canada’s Indian Hospitals” by Laurie Meijer Drees have stood out as stories of courageous survival. By examining the Truth and Reconciliation Report, it is obvious that there is no tangible apology to Indigenous people on behalf of the Canadian government for the way that they were treated in Indian hospitals. This paper is a response to decolonization because it gives voices to those that have been so traumatized by being in Indian hospitals and is a way to draw attention to the situation to create change. The federal government felt that they were the best ones to decide the fate of care for Indigenous people in Canada even though they had no understanding of the way that Indigenous people handled illness in their communities.

Gloria Park
Gloria.park@iup.edu

Title: Mothering and the Academy: Four Mother-Teacher- Scholars’ Journeys

In this critical autoethnography, four mother-teacher-scholars in higher education narrate their ways of coping, overcoming, and succeeding during their educational and professional journeys. Specifically, each in her own stage of mothering and higher education career, the panelists focus on the following: 1. Who are we as mother-teacher-scholars in the academy? a. What normative practices have we encountered in the academy, and how have they influenced us emotionally, physically, and psychologically? b. In what ways have we overcome them and been strategic about navigating them? 2. How can the academy create an environment that supports us in our identities as mother-teacher-scholars? Each speaks about her mother-teacher-scholar identity and what that means in her specific career timeline. Carr questions her ability to balance single mothering a college-bound teenager while completing coursework and staying physically healthy. Lowrey explores her experience as a pregnant graduate student and the early stages of mothering while finishing coursework and working through her dissertation. Park speaks to her mothering while pursuing tenure and providing support to other student mothers. Black examines institutional challenges and support as, through multiple rounds of cancer over two decades, she juggled motherhood, teaching, and research. The panelists conclude with an audience participation.

Liz Podnieks
lpodniek@ryerson.ca

Title: Matrifocal Voices in Literature

Throughout literary history, mothers have always occupied diverse textual positions. They may hover in the background in plots centered on children (i.e., heroic sons, rebellious daughters); be main characters but described by an omniscient narrator, their own first-person status de-centralized; or be an absent presence (i.e., through death, choosing to abandon a child, or being forced to relinquish a child). With the surge of first-wave feminism in the late 1800s, increasing demands for women’s autonomy and agency in private and public spheres went hand in hand with challenges to patriarchal motherhood. Such a charged climate generated, unsurprisingly, a rise in matrifocal literatures. Matrifocal literatures are written and narrated by mothers in the first-person or limited third-person voice, rendering maternal identity and experience from subjective perspectives. Further, they (re)value the significance and meaning of maternal figures in cultural, social, and national arenas; and often contest or negotiate traditional ideologies of the “good” mother as self-sacrificing, nurturing, and sexless with her antithesis, the “bad” mother. As such,
these narratives perform what Susan Maushart calls the act of “unmasking” motherhood to reveal and depict truths about maternity heretofore silenced or repressed. In this paper, I offer an overview of maternal literatures, surveying key scholarship that positions the topic in historical, critical, and theoretical terms. Read as a genre in and of itself and as part of a tradition of writings about motherhood, matrifocal literatures are sites of textual liberation where women self-consciously and outspokenly chart, confront, debate, and celebrate maternal feelings, practices, bodies, and identities.

Tessa Pyles
vtglyphes@bgsu.edu
Title: mother! and the Making of Maternal Monsters.

Throughout American history, motherhood has been a primary purveyor of cultural norms. Indeed, American motherhood is central to the germination of American ideologies. As a result, motherhood is a precarious experience. This is because what is expected of the role of motherhood might appear static, but the reality is that the meanings of motherhood are layered and constantly in flux. Ever-shifting social, cultural, political, and economic demands dictate the many meanings the role of motherhood has acquired, and these demands require constant acquiescence on the part of mothers. Yet, even when mothers meet these demands, they are primary scapegoats for what ails America. That is, they are America's monsters upon which the country’s collective social anxieties are projected. mother! pulls back the proverbial curtain to reveal the mechanisms that can make figurative monsters of even the most compliant of mothers. The film exemplifies the ease by which mothers are made to bear the burdens of their nation’s anxieties. It also demonstrates the disdain and swift and harsh punishment for mothers who dare to perform motherhood in ways that do not serve social and cultural demands.

R

Reproducing Stigma Film Circle

Panel
This courageous collection of nine micro-documentaries explores themes of body image and weight stigma in the realms of fertility, pregnancy, reproduction and parenting. Filmmakers worked with RedLab (Re-Visioning Differences Mobile Media Arts Lab) in order to tell stories about their bodies, families of origin and families of the present in dynamic and innovative ways. Blending story, music, and rich visual materials, the collective impact of these films is a grappling with the stories we carry about ourselves, our bodies and minds, our appetites, and our relationships to reproduction. Talk back with the filmmakers will follow the screening.

Sherri Rose
srose1@hillsdale.edu
Title: Are you looking for Maman or Madame? My dual identity as a French professor and parent

Since becoming a parent, the last few years have been the most exhilarating and exhausting in the personal and professional spheres of my life. My heart was brimming with love following the birth of my daughter at the same time that my brain was sending me stress signals to prepare for beginning a tenure-track position the following month. In spite of the anxiety and guilt I experienced leaving my daughter for campus each day, my perspective on the world had changed. I felt immensely grateful for the opportunity to continue doing what I’d loved most for the past decade—teaching French language and literature—while also growing in my new role as parent. I had encountered a similar emotional roller coaster while pregnant on the job market. The future course of my life was wildly out of my control, yet I felt a sense of tranquility thinking about the new life developing in my body as I went from interview to interview. Two and half years later, I am pregnant with my second daughter and will be
submitting my tenure file next year. The internal and external pressures in my daily life have increased, but I feel more confident in the coping strategies I have learned, the most basic of which is to take life one day at a time.

**Maythee Rojas**  
maythee_rojas@hotmail.com  
**Title:** *Expectations of Flight*

*My essay offers a recollection of my experience as a Latina feminist scholar who married at almost 40, decided tentatively and then wholeheartedly to attempt motherhood at 41, spending a period of time that felt much longer than a year and spilled into birthdays, semesters and other markers of time trying to make sense of losses that had no place or expectancy. I suffered four miscarriages, two of which required surgical procedures, and underwent painful IVF treatments and fibroid removal. These events transpired throughout a busy yet typical school/work life. My essay connects these odd passages of time with a series of equally odd interactions I had with dead and missing birds during this same period. Serving as a trope for the unpredictable flow of nature and human life, my bird encounters became the best instrument for putting all of these events into perspective and finding some peace, direction and hope to the pain, disillusion and uncertainty. The birds - vulnerable as their deaths and absences illustrate - serve as a way to reflect on the life taking place around me as well as its inability to take place at all. The birds’ deaths, like so many women’s miscarriages - and very much like the experiences of most women of color - occurred in an unremarked manner. Perhaps not surprisingly, no one noticed them except me. And yet, the same was true of my miscarriages. Time moved on, responsibilities ensued, but life had ended; it was just that the latter remained unremarkable. Unlike the soaring flight of a delivered pregnancy, my miscarriages were the hatchlings left stagnantly grounded. Since that difficult year, I have used time not only to move forward but also to reach back and find a final resting place, niche, nest for those baby chicks never born.*

**Lena Elodie Rebecca Richardson**  
lena.elodie@gmail.com  
**Title:** *Journeying to the Cave of Cats: An Autoethnographic Inquiry into the Role of Being Mothered by Land-Based Connection*

*In this autoethnographic presentation, I follow the tracks of my own journey to Ireland, the land of my maternal great-grandmother, Jane O’Brien. I journeyed from my home in Canada. Sparked by a desire to connect with my own maternal line with very little information or knowledge of this history or place, I share my experience of a fortuitous pilgrimage, and a visit in particular to several sacred sites in Ireland. The paper traces experiences of the land as alive with memory and a flow of communication and asks how particular places can become teachers and offer their own elemental forces of mothering.*

**Heather Robinson**  
hrobinson@york.cuny.edu  
**Title:** *Mother-Bodies, Desire and Well-Being in Academic Spaces*

*Many scholars have suggested that the idealized academic worker is seen as “pure mind,” but as such inhabiting a white and male body which can move invisibly in academic spaces. Women’s bodies have been described as performing a “problematic role … in teaching” (Perriton, 1999, p. 295) because, as Swan (2005) writes, “women can’t control what their bodies are seen to symbolize” (p. 320). However, women in academic spaces often find that the performance of heteronormative femininity can be advantageous. In this presentation I consider pregnancy’s and maternity’s intervention in academic performances, as they disrupt bodily invisibility and/or heterosexual desirability. Through autoethnographic exploration,*
consider how pregnancy and the mothering of small children bring about changes in the performance of academic work. I contrast the hypervisibility of a pregnant body with the invisibility of a tired, changed, unavailable mother-body, and discuss how these changes can affect women’s emotional health.

Patricia Sotirin  
pjsotiri@mtu.edu  
Title: Research Shows Guns Are Bad for Mothers’ Health--Or Does It?

Current public debates over how to reduce gun violence are central to mothers’ health and well-being. Mothers have been front and center in the aftermath of school shootings, police shootings, and accidental child shootings. And they are themselves often gun violence victims. Women are more likely to be killed in domestic violence involving guns; indeed, if a gun is present during a domestic violence incident, the risk that a woman will be shot and killed increases by 500% (Brady Report, 2017). While there is public pressure at present to legislate gun violence, I argue that groups like Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America have given insufficient attention to the need for public health gun violence research. Using a governmentality framework, I consider why that is the case and how mothers, guns, and research need to come together in contemporary public debates over gun violence.

Diane Shoos  
dshoos@mtu.edu  
Title: Re-screening Domestic Violence

Domestic violence continues to be a significant safety and health threat for women, yet much mainstream media reproduces simplistic, sensational, action-driven stories of hyperbolic heroism that deny the devastating, far-reaching repercussions for mothers and children who suffer abuse. Alternative domestic violence narratives such as Big Little Lies (2017) as well as documentaries and docudramas such as Private Violence (2014), Every F--ing Day of My Life (2007), and Silent Voices (2005), privilege the voices of mothers and children and foreground the complexity of everyday rather than exceptional struggles against domestic violence. These alternative media texts refigure reified mainstream abuse narratives and advance possibilities for systemic critique, collective feminist agency, and social transformation.

Jessica Spears  
jwilliams56@twu.edu  
Title: In/Visibilty: Performing Wellness in the Academy

Using Butler’s conceptualization of performativity, we explore the processes of living an academic life while also coping with invisible, contested illnesses. We use photo imagery and duoethnography to document the layered disruptions and stutterings of becoming academics through new diagnoses, prolonged medical interventions, and hospitalizations for maladies that are poorly understood, all the while ‘looking’ healthy.

Robin Silbergleid  
silberg1@msu.edu  
Title: Thirteen Ways of Looking at Infertility and Academe

My proposed paper positions this moment the center of a much-needed discussion about academic women who are also experiencing infertility and other forms of reproductive loss. I come at this subject as an associate professor at an R1 institution whose biological clock and
tenure clock converged and conflicted not just in the abstract but in daily lived experience; I lost multiple pregnancies during my probationary period as junior faculty, my classes were observed for my teaching portfolio the day of a major medical procedure, I was in the midst of an IVF cycle while my tenure file was being reviewed by the upper administration. On the other side of both those experiences (tenure! kindergartener!) I have written two book-length creative works about reproductive loss; I also partner with the international art, oral history, and portraiture project The ART of Infertility and supervise student research on infertility. With another friend and faculty, I co-taught a class on motherhood and feminism and began a support group for mothers in our department. That is, what was once the defining trauma of my pre-tenure years is now listed proudly on my CV. This paper considers how writing about my experience both in creative work and in personal essay/autotheory not only provides an outlet to process the emotional weight of those years but also opens up conversation with, and for, other academic women. More broadly, what resources and procedures could specific departments and universities have in place to help other junior faculty navigate the often unseen, unspoken realities of infertility and reproductive loss?

Muna Saleh
mhsaleh@ualberta.ca
Title: *Stories We Live and Grow by as Canadian Muslim Mothers and Daughters*

Drawing upon my two-year narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) alongside three Canadian Muslim girls and their mothers (Saleh, in press; Saleh, 2017), I discuss three narrative threads that resonated across the stories we (re)told and (re)lived alongside one another, including: living in the midst of, and in relation to, single stories (Adichie, 2009) and arrogant perceptions (Lugones, 1987) of who we ‘should’ be as Muslim mothers and daughters; planting, living, and growing stories of relational resistance alongside one another; and imaginatively composing lives in relation. This research contributes an important perspective to academic and wider social narratives, one that possesses the potential to shift dominant narratives of the experiences of Muslim females composing lives in Canada. It will also provide insights into ways families, teachers, and community members can better support Muslim girls, youth, women, and families in the many places we compose our lives.

Dr. Erella Shadmi
Title: *Non-populist activism: The revival of the gift economy and the possibility of Human security and well being*

Under the discourse of neo-liberalism and its heavy price, the rise of ethnic-nationalist populism, and the decline of the left, millions of activists who understand that the Western system is collapsing come together and begin to build a new world from below: They set up new social institutions and develop a new kind of humanism founded on giving, responsibility, respect to Nature, and acceptance of all others. These institutions include, for example, communal rather than nuclear family; employment cooperatives rather than the individual worker and the labor union; eco-villages and intentional communities that provide local identity, security, and well-being rather than depending on the national State; co-housing and shared living for the elderly rather than loneliness and isolation experienced by many people of the so called Golden Age; clusters of villages and towns (zoning) that combine force to build better life for all. This direction, so I argue, is, consciously or unconsciously, founded on motherly and indigenous perspectives, particularly the gift economy and matriarchal legacy.

Amy Lee Wai Sum
amylee@hkbu.edu.hk
Title: *Healthy Mothers and Healthy (New) Lives in Hong Kong: Contributions to Maternal and Fetal Health by Traditional Knowledge Reinvented*

Similar to many highly urbanized megacities in the world, currently Hong Kong has a low birth rate and is seeing an aging population. This is a very different picture from the Hong Kong 40 years ago, which was generally considered as a high point of economic progression and in turn
the beginning of a solid sense of identity as Hong Kong citizens. 40 years on, due to social, political and economic changes we experienced, becoming a parent is no longer a preferred choice for many local citizens. Pregnant women are not a common sight and besides the governmental encouragement, in the community, specific care and attention to the wellbeing of mothers have been developed. In the presentation I am sharing some of the most recent examples such as (Buddhist) maternal meditation practices, and maternal healthcare offered by Traditional Chinese Medicine as assisting care throughout the pregnancy period.

Emily Saunders
ersaunders@mun.ca
Title: Maternal Mental Health in Newfoundland

Mothers with mental health issues face unique challenges in their identity as mothers, their sense of maternal competency, accessing health services for themselves and their family, and social support from their families and communities. Despite the influential and integral role mothers play in defining the family dynamic and child development, there is limited research on the typical maternal experience and even less understanding on the characteristics that contribute to the psychosocial adjustment of mothers, including those who have a diagnosis that falls across the spectrum of mental health disorders. Utilizing the data collected through the provincial online survey entitled ‘The Newfoundland Motherhood Project’, this paper will discuss the prevalence and experience of maternal mental health issues in Newfoundland as well as factors impacting mothers access to and use of health and community services in this province.

Kayte Thomas
Kayte_Thomas1@baylor.edu
Title: Family court as a weapon: How mothers are losing their children to abusers

There is an epidemic of mothers losing custody of their children in family court. Some seek protection in the legal system only to find out that it often worsens the problem, while others are brought to court by abusers using the legal system as a weapon of control. All of them are stunned when the conventional belief that mothers don’t lose custody unless they’re unfit proves to be untrue. This session will provide insight into why family court is a perfect setting for sanctioned control of women, explore ways that patriarchal views of motherhood and women’s roles have fueled this crisis, address the impact on mothers and children, and discuss options for positive change including advocacy and social reform. Recognized by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women as a frequent concern, discrimination against women resulting in the loss of child custody is an international crisis warranting attention from all who have an interest in motherhood issues and maternal-child outcomes.

Lorna Turnbull
lorna.turnbull@umanitoba.ca
Title: Matricentric policy evaluation and development

Many of the problems mothers face (social, economic, political, cultural, psychological) are specific to women’s role and identity as mothers. Mothers need a matricentric mode of feminism organized from and for their particular identity and work as mothers as well as a matricentric approach to policy development.

I will outline a new approach to policy research using an intersectional approach to interrogate particular policies using population wide data. The partnership model for this research that explicitly foregrounds lived experience of service users and engages high level public servants
will help to make the space for a matricentric approach at least in policies affecting women in 
their mothering roles. Some existing research from the population data that is explicitly 
focused on Mothers will be shared to demonstrate the value of placing an explicit focus on 
mothers both for the mothers and their children, and for society at large and will conclude 
with some possible questions for future research.

Karen Nelson Villanueva 
knvillanueva@yahoo.com 
Title: Multicultural Navigations in Step-parenting

Step-parenting is stepping mindfully, with careful attention to the numerous dynamics at play 
between beings: your partner and the former partner, you and the former partner, you and 
your partner, you and the children, and the children’s relationship with their parents. An extra 
dynamic is added when you and the group (yes, group) you’ve partnered with are of a different 
cultural background from your own. Multiple negotiations ensue between differing cultural 
values and culturally-informed parenting styles that inform decisions ranging from diet to 
housework to homework. Negotiations can be formal or spontaneous improvisations - 
sometimes fraught but often creative collaborations. In this presentation Annette Williams and 
Karen Villanueva will share from their multicultural step-parenting experiences that highlight 
joys as well as challenges and shines light on the complex bonds of love and webs of 
interconnection within families.

Veeksha Vagmita 
veeksha.17@stu.aud.ac.in 
Title: Fathers, ‘mothering’, and public responsibility in The Hero’s Walk

While developing the idea of “maternal thinking”, Sara Ruddick evokes a future where an equal 
sharing of mothering responsibilities joins private care and public responsibility seamlessly. The 
Hero’s Walk, by the Indian-Canadian novelist Anita Rau Badami, works out the subtle 
connection between the emotional transformation of the protagonist, Sripathi, who has 
repressed his maternal side, and the possible transfiguring of his ‘public-spirited’ letters to the 
editors of newspapers. The sudden death of his estranged daughter and the arrival of his 
orphaned granddaughter shake up his hardened core. The gradual dawning of deeper 
(metaphysical) truths, the humble acceptance of larger (uncontrollable) forces, and the 
revitalizing of maternal capacities change the nature of his engagement with others. The 
domestic drama plays out alongside crippling urbanization. I would like to unravel the links 
between social welfare, sensitivity to the environment, political opportunism, public 
participation, and maternal/paternal attitudes, woven into the narrative’s texture.

Genevieve Vaughan 
genvau@gmail.com 
Title: A solution hidden in plain sight: the maternal gift economy

The model of a matricentric gift economy give us the tool for deconstructing patriarchal- 
capitalist economy, which is configured in a gift plundering relation of parasite and host. We do 
not recognize this relation because we have not considered unilateral giving as economic on a 
par with market exchange. The patterns of provisioning and nurturing that take place in early 
childhood are the ones that can provide a way out of our present economic and ecological 
disaster. In this paper I try to describe the possibility of the free maternal economy, relying also 
on the pre existence of indigenous economies based on gifting and in contrast with the 
exploitative patterns of market exchange. It is possible to address and re interpret many issues 
that now beset us by revisiting them through a framework that contrasts gifting and exchange. 
Many attempts at social experiments now taking place reference gifting but leave aside the 
connection with mothering. A deep shift in necessary that will allow us to see how mothering/ 
gifting actually already permeate and sustain society but have been hidden by the emphasis on
quid pro quo exchange. The domestic sphere must be viewed not as an externality to the market but as an alternative economy that coexists and runs alongside it, and has much in common with indigenous economies that are exploited by markes in similar ways. By accessing the early patterns we can devise a new viable matricentric society beyond patriarchy and the market.

W

Annette Lyn Williams
alywnms@hotmail.com
Title: Multicultural Navigations in Step-parenting

Step-parenting is stepping mindfully, with careful attention to the numerous dynamics at play between beings: your partner and the former partner, you and the former partner, you and your partner, you and the children, and the children’s relationship with their parents. An extra dynamic is added when you and the group (yes, group) you’ve partnered with are of a different cultural background from your own. Multiple negotiations ensue between differing cultural values and culturally-informed parenting styles that inform decisions ranging from diet to housework to homework. Negotiations can be formal or spontaneous improvisations - sometimes fraught but often creative collaborations. In this presentation Annette Williams and Karen Villanueva will share from their multicultural step-parenting experiences that highlight joys as well as challenges and shines light on the complex bonds of love and webs of interconnection within families.

Nicole L. Willey
nwilley@kent.edu
Title: Making it while Mothering in the Academy: Networks and Friendships

I am an academic who was pregnant and/or lactating for approximately half of my probationary period. I had two sons prior to tenure—some looked on with admiration, but more sent not so subtle messages of “concern.” Tolling did not exist for my first pregnancy; I needed it desperately then. It did exist for my second son, though I chose not to use this brand new policy for a variety of reasons. Now, as a full professor and the mentoring program coordinator for my campus, I have walked many faculty members through their probationary period, and several of those faculty members have had young children and/or new babies. I want to talk about the ways our policies fall short, the ways we could do better as an academy, and discuss the less tangible but practical uses of networking and community as faculty members of all types, but particularly those on the tenure track, struggle with balancing parenting and academic responsibilities.

Panel - Lorinda Peterson, Nicole Willey & Kathy Mantas - Midlife Mothering and Health and Well-being

Elizabeth Walker
Panel: On Wanting Motherhood: The Art of Maternal Desire and Infertility

Following in the footsteps of Adrienne Rich, much recent motherhood scholarship has encouraged us to conceive motherhood not as singular ideology but as mothering, a verb, a series of behaviors and practices. While such theorization encourages recognition of the labor that goes into parenting regardless of one's biological connection to the child she mothers, it obfuscates the question of maternal identity and desire. What of the woman who wants to have a child, to mother, but is not yet one? Or, the woman who donates eggs or serves as gestational carrier, whose maternal connections are erased through the prioritizing of ‘mothering’? How might we rethink the nature of ‘mother’ and the very nature of maternal desire from the perspective of the infertile woman? This panel brings together four artist-scholars who work on infertility to explore the limits of motherhood and to complicate...
standard notions of maternal identity. We will present writing and art from two collections---The ART of Infertility and ART-i-facts--provide brief narrative and theoretical discussion, as well as invite participation in discussion and art-making workshop.

Joyce White
Joyce.white@students.cau.edu
Title: Lòt Bó Dlo: The Other Side of the Water

Mary Kolawole argues that, “A conscious effort is being made by women of African heritage...to construct a bridge in spite of centuries of forced alienation...Now these women are transcending history to reconstruct the ties that bind us together as Africans” (191). Edwidge Danticat’s The Farming of Bones reconstructs, via spiritual rebirth, the narrative bodies of the brutal, historically omitted 1937 massacre of Haitians, referred to as “The Parsley Massacres,” “El Corte,” or “The Cutting.” Danticat’s novel not only “farms” the bones but also recreates the form and structure of the narrative bodies, birthing them into existence through the African cosmological symbol of the crossroads. Employing water as conduit, the novel creates narrative birth canals that allow characters to simultaneously exist in the physical and spiritual realms, as well as traverse beyond the boundaries of the water so their stories can be told. Expanding the notion of twinning and the marasa, Farming constructs a textual crossroads while tracing the crossroads’ four stages (death, rebirth, birth, and high consciousness). This essay argues that, through storytelling, The Farming of Bones textualizes the ideographic principles of the crossroads and rebirths the narrative bodies at the center of the previously erased historical narrative of 1937.

Anissa Wardi
wardi@chatham.edu
Title: Ecosystems of Memory and Midwifery in Ntozake Shange’s Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo

Ntozake Shange’s Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo is an African American ecocritical narrative insofar as memory is written on water, humans and land. Specifically, Shange turns to the environment—the Atlantic Ocean, Sea Islands, plants and herbs—in her characterization of Indigo, a central character in the novel. Indigo’s intimate relationship with—and embodiment of—the natural world is an antidote to the alienation and fragmentation wrought by the transatlantic slave trade. While diasporic experience is genuinely theorized as a fragmented one, Shange characterizes Indigo as a unified body of diasporic memory, who ritualizes her ancestral connection via the natural world and through her midwifery practice on the Sea Islands. Transcending temporal constraints, the islands become a locus of ancestral immersion. In this paper, attention will be paid to the ways in which the natural world becomes a conduit to ancestral memory, specifically in terms of homeopathic cures, herbal medicine, and ancient birthing practices.

Katherine Wardi-Zonna
kwardizonna@edinboro.edu
Title: Tell Me About Your Mother: Mother Blaming in Mental Health

The imagery of the devious mother figure is replete in books, films, and other media. This representation is seen in iconic fairy tales, such as “Hansel and Gretel”, and later in famed films, such as Carrie, and Sybil. However, this is not a modern-day phenomenon; throughout the Bible, there emerges two tropes of motherhood, namely the idealized, loving, self-sacrificing mother and, by contrast, the resentful, manipulative, and sadistic mother. In the early 1900’s famed psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud, ushered in a revolutionary theory of psychopathology. He postulated that the etiology of maladjustment can be traced back to early life experiences with the offender being the mother. He hypothesized that events of early life created maladjustment and set the child on a path of pain, suffering, and perversion. Freud’s gave a “scientific rationale” that ultimately maligned the maternal figure justifying the dark beliefs about motherhood. These psychiatrically sanctioned issues will be identified and explored.
Keynote Speaker Biographies

Elsie Amoako
Founder/CEO of Mommy Monitor, Elsie Amoako is a graduate student at the University of Toronto and has worked in research for over 8 years. She has founded and organizes the Racialized Maternal Health Conference and she is the recipient of several awards and funding (including the Centre of Social Innovation Agent of change award, WeWork creators award, Elevate everyone award, Startup Canada's Women's Founders Award, Women Leaders in Digital Health Canada award, etc) and continues to be recognized as a rising leader in racialized maternal health.

Hannah Tait Neufeld
Assistant Professor, College of Social & Applied Human Sciences, Department of Family Relations & Applied Nutrition. Prof. Neufeld's research primarily involves multidisciplinary and collaborative research with Indigenous women focused on the determinants of food choice and chronic disease prevention.

She also has experience working in international nutrition policy and evidence-based guideline development with the World Health Organization. Her current research interests continue to focus on health inequalities, taking into consideration community interests, along with environmental and other factors influencing maternal and child health, along with Indigenous food systems globally.

Jamie Cidro
Dr Cidro looks at Aboriginal health issues through a socio-cultural lens with a specific focus on socio-cultural determinants of health such as cultural identity, and cultural based health interventions. She was the principal investigator in a community based NEAHR grant through CIHR on cultural based oral health interventions in Norway House Cree Nation and a co-investigator on a CIHR grant on oral health interventions for early childhood tooth decay, and is the lead site investigator for Norway House Cree Nation. Dr. Cidro currently the principle investigator on a CIHR funded community
driven project looking at repatriating birthing to a FN community in northern Manitoba. She is also working with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs on developing research toolkits with Manitoba FN communities. She is the Associate Director of the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network Prairie Research Centre (SSHRC) and has led several projects on inner city food security in Winnipeg in partnership with the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre and North End Food Security Network. She holds an undergraduate degree in Environment and Resource Studies, and a Master's degree in Economic Development both from the University of Waterloo, as well as a PhD in Rural Studies, Sociology Anthropology from the University of Guelph.

Claire Dion Fletcher
Claire Dion Fletcher is an Indigenous (Lenape- Potawatomi) and mixed settler Registered Midwife practicing at Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto. Claire is co-chair of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives and Aboriginal Student Coordinator for the Ryerson Midwifery Education Program. Claire recently completed her MA in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies at York University where her research focused on decolonized health care and Indigenous midwifery.

Tanya Hayles
Tanya Hayles spends most of her days turning ideas and dreams into reality, from events of all sizes as the Chief Creative Officer at Hayles Creative Elements and is the founder of Black Moms Connection, a non-profit providing culturally relevant tools and resources. Passionate about equal access and equal opportunities, Tanya is a village builder, a mother, and an engaged citizen, but at the root of all her works, a creative storyteller.

Candace Johnson
Professor Department of Political Science University of Guelph Candace Johnson is a political theorist with expertise in gender politics, maternal health policy, and reproductive rights. Her book, Maternal Transition: A North-South Politics of Pregnancy and Childbirth (published by Routledge 2014 and 2016), is a comparative examination of maternal health preferences in Canada, the United States, Cuba, and Honduras and the ways in which these preferences reflect global, regional, national, and micro-scalar dynamics (the research for which was supported by aSSHRC Standard Research Grant). She has also published more widely on women and politics, healthcare policy, social rights, and Latin American politics. Her latest book project is a volume on Human and Environmental Justice in Guatemala, co-edited with Stephen Henighan (2018 University of Toronto Press). In 2017 and 2009 Professor Johnson was awarded the Canadian Political Science Association’s Jill Vickers Prize in recognition of her work on gender and politics, and was nominated for this award on two other occasions (in 2011 and 2015). Her current research includes an examination of the global #MeToo movement and a project (funded through a SSHRC Insight Grant) on Canada’s global maternal health commitments in Guatemala.

Margaret MacDonald
Margaret MacDonald, PhD, was trained as a medical anthropologist and specializes in research on women's reproductive health. She has conducted ethnographic research within the global maternal health community, a community development NGO in Senegal, and amongst midwives and their clients in Canada. In each of these settings her interests lie in how cultures of biomedicine, science, and technology -- and their alternatives -- shape our ideas and practices concerning health, illness and the body.

Elder Betty McKenna
Elder Betty McKenna touches others profoundly by generously sharing the traditional teachings she has learned from her grandmother and other elders. Anishnabae from the Shoal River Band in Manitoba, she reviews content for the Canadian Virtual Hospice website and provides guidance from an Aboriginal point of view.

Elder Betty is the Elder in Residence, First Nations and Métis Education at the Regina Public School Board, as well as the guiding elder for RESOLVE (Research and Education to End Violence and Abuse) Saskatchewan. She also provides leadership to many research projects concerned with culturally safe care for Aboriginal people and families - from end-of-life care to support for Aboriginal women with neurological conditions to intimate partner violence and Aboriginal grandmothers caring for grandchildren. Elder Betty is co-author of several peer-reviewed publications and sits on two graduate committees at the University of Regina.

Ann Marie A. Short
Ann Marie A Short is an Associate Professor, English, Gender Womens Studies at St. Mary’s College, Notre Dame. Research interests include: Postcolonial studies, Anglophone literature, Gender and women’s studies, Motherhood studies, US immigrant literature.

Abigail L. Palko
Abigail L. Palko is the Director of the Maxine Platzer Lynn Women’s Center at the University of Virginia. Her scholarship focuses on representations of mothering practices in literary fiction and popular culture/media. She is the author of *Imagining Motherhood in Contemporary Irish and Caribbean Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan) and co-editor of *Mothers, Mothering and Globalization* and *Breastfeeding and Culture: Discourses and Representation* (both from Demeter Press), as well as numerous articles and book chapters.

Reproducing Stigma Film Circle
The Reproducing Stigma Film Circle is a group of Toronto based women who have grappled with issues of weight stigma, parenting, fertility, reproduction and pregnancy. The group connected through a digital storytelling project on these topics.

Lesley A. Tarasoff
Lesley A. Tarasoff is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Toronto Scarborough and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. She holds a PhD in Public Health Sciences and an MA in Women & Gender Studies from the University of Toronto. Her program of research focuses on improving the health and health care experiences of marginalized groups, namely women with disabilities and sexual and gender minority (LGBTQ) populations. Specifically, Lesley’s research has focused on the reproductive, perinatal, and mental health of these populations.
Conference Speaker Biographies

A
Nada Alfeir
Nada Alfeir is a PhD student at Michigan Technological University.

Valerie Andrews
Valerie Andrews is an adoption activist and a Masters Graduate in Gender, Feminist and Women’s Studies at York University. Her works include The Language of Adoption, Crimes Against the Unmarried Mother in Post WWII Canada, Sales and Marketing in Modern Domestic Adoption, #Flip the Script on Teen Mothers, Motherhood Denied: Canada’s Maternity Homes, White Unwed Mother: The Adoption Mandate in postwar Canada. Valerie is the Executive Director of Origins Canada: Supporting Those Separated by Adoption.

Heide Goettner-Abendroth
Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth has been docent at the University of Munich, visiting professor at the University of Montreal in Canada, and at the University of Innsbruck in Austria. Since 1986, founder and director of the “International Academy HAGIA for Matriarchal Studies and Matriarchal Spirituality” in Germany. She published extensively on matriarchal society and culture, and founded Modern Matriarchal Studies. She lectured in Europe and abroad. Her first major work “Matriarchal Societies. Studies on Indigenous Cultures across the Globe” has been published in German, English, Italian, Spanish, and French. In her second major work (in progress) she re-writes history by bringing the lost or denied matriarchal-egalitarian epoch to light again. In 2005 and 2006, she was twice elected as a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Internationale Akademie HAGIA
www.hagia.de
www.goettner-abendroth.de

B
Elisabeth Berger Bolaza
Elisabeth Berger Bolaza is a mother of two, Human Sexuality scholar-activist, and Ph.D. candidate at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. Her mixed-methods research focuses on the birth pleasure, the sexuality of motherhood and birth, and the social justice issues facing birthing people.

Doreen Balabanoff
Doreen Balabanoff is an artist/designer and Professor, Environmental Design, Faculty of Design, OCAD University. Her recent practice-based PhD dissertation is entitled “Light and Embodied Experience in the Reimagined Birth Environment. She has recently spearheaded the Global Birth Environment Design Network as a catalyst for change.
Rebecca Bromwich  
Faculty member, Carleton University Department of Law and Legal Studies

Deborah Byrd  
Dr. Deborah Byrd, Professor of English & Women’s and Gender Studies, Lafayette College

Chantal Bayard  
Chantal Bayard is a sociologist and Phd student at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS) in Montreal. She works as a research assistant and coordinator assistant for the International Journal Enfances Familles Générations, directed by professor Laurence Charton. Her thesis focuses on motherhood, celebrities, representations and social media.

Victoria Bailey  
Is a PhD Student at Teesside University, UK, studying in the Dept.: Creative Writing - (Single) Motherhood Studies Focus.

Linn Baran  
Linn Baran is an Independent Scholar and believes she was a feminist mother since she was 10 years old.  
A graduate of York University with degrees in English Literature and Women’s Studies, Linn stepped off the academic path to put her feminist theorizing into practice in her community-at various women’s centres, at a community health centre for street youth, at a midwifery practice, and at a shelter for young mothers.

Laurel Black  
Laurel Black, Kris Lowrey, Mellissa Carr, and Gloria Park are mother-teacher-scholars at different stages of their academic career at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Bonded by motherhood and their experiences journeying through the academy, each woman shares her victories and challenges of what it means to navigate motherhood in the Academy.

Madison Banks  
Madison Banks is a graduate of the Master of Arts Early Childhood Studies Program at Ryerson University and a Registered Early Childhood Educator. Her work with children and families in early learning and family resource programs has centered around inclusion and social justice.

Heather Bergan  
Heather Bergen did community work in Toronto for a decade and is currently doing her PhD in Social Work at York University. Her research focuses on what young mothers say about the interpersonal and structural support their families need to thrive.

Rohini Bannerjee  
Dr. Rohini Bannerjee is an Associate Professor of French and Francophone Studies, as well as a Faculty member of the Asian Studies, International Development Studies and Women and Gender Studies programs at Saint Mary’s University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Her primary area of research is in contemporary Indo-Mauritian Francophone literature and Cultural Studies.

Haile Eshe Cole  
Haile Eshe Cole is a visiting assistant professor at Amherst, College and received her Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology and African Diaspora studies at The University of Texas at Austin. Her current research focuses on the intersections of blackness, motherhood, and reproductive health disparities.
Melissa Carr
Laurel Black, Kris Lowrey, Melissa Carr, and Gloria Park are mother-teacher-scholars at different stages of their academic career at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Bonded by motherhood and their experiences journeying through the academy, each woman shares her victories and challenges of what it means to navigate motherhood in the Academy.

Ginger Bin-Cross
Ginger Bihn-Coss is tenure-track faculty at Kent State University Tuscarawas in the Department of Communication Studies.

D Heather Dillaway
Heather Dillaway received her Ph.D. from Michigan State University, M.A. from the University of Delaware and her B.A. in history and sociology at Cornell University. She began at Wayne State in August 2002, before even finalizing her dissertation at MSU!
Not only is she Associate Professor of Sociology, but she is also associate dean of academic programs, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, and has previously served as associate dean of master’s programs in the Graduate School, sociology director of graduate studies, director of undergraduate studies, and interim department chair. Most recently she served as acting director of the Institute of Gerontology.

Angela Dolmetsch

E Alys Einion
Dr Alys Einion is Associate Professor of Midwifery and Reproductive Health and Swansea University. She is a lifelong feminist, writer, blogger, mother and midwife. Her research interests include midwifery education; feminism and reproduction; motherhood; lesbian and queer families; women’s life writing and narratives; and narrative construction. She is also a novelist, an avid and unashamed bibliophile, and an advocate for LGBT+ rights within the workplace.

Regina Edmonds
Regina Edmonds is a licensed clinician and Professor Emerita of Psychology at Assumption College. She also directed the Women's Studies Program there for nearly a decade. Her research focuses on the persistence of mother-blame within psychological theory, the qualities that characterize successful mother-daughter relationships, the treatment of trauma-based disorders in women, and the challenges migrating mothers face.

Talia Esnard
Lecturer, Sociology Unit, Department of Behavioural Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago

Anita Ewan
Anita Ewan teaches part-time in the fields of child development, early childhood education and social work. She teaches at three institutions where she has the privilege of working with many students of diverse backgrounds. Anita is also a social work doctoral student.

Rosana Edwards
Rosana Edwards is a Doctoral candidate, RN, MScN, PhD(c), IBCLC at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Health Sciences, School of Nursing.
Dianne Fierheller
Dianne Fierheller, MSW RSW, PhD Student, McMaster University, Department: Social Work.

Denise Ferris
Denise Ferris is a photographer interested in visual representations of motherhood, the work of care and the maternal relationship by diverse artists. Ferris is the Head of the School of Art.

Claire Dion Fletcher
Claire Dion Fletcher is an Indigenous (Lenape- Potawatomi) and mixed settler Registered Midwife practicing at Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto. Claire is co-chair of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives and Aboriginal Student Coordinator for the Ryerson Midwifery Education Program. Claire recently completed her MA in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies at York University where her research focused on decolonized health care and Indigenous midwifery.

Katie Garner
Katie Bodendorfer Garner, PhD focuses on labor equality, childcare, and motherhood. She is thrilled to have the opportunity to take over MIRCI, soon to be IAMAS (www.iamas.com). In addition to teaching English and GWS courses, Katie runs consciousness-raising workshops for mothers. Her (in-progress) book covers interviews with nearly 100 U.S. women. See more at: www.drkatiebgarner.com.

Erin Graybill
Erin Graybill Ellis is a PhD Candidate in Medical Sociology & Sociology of Motherhood, at Texas Woman's University, Department of Sociology and Social Work.

Florence Pasche Guignard
Florence Pasche Guignard holds a PhD in religious studies from the Université de Lausanne (Switzerland). Her research explores issues at the intersection of religion and ritual, digital and material cultures, embodiment, and gender. Her most recent publications focus on motherhood, parenting and religion in a variety of past and present cultural contexts. She brings her interdisciplinary scholarship in conversation with anthropology, ritual studies, media studies, as well as with gender and women’s studies. She is an instructor at Ryerson University in Religious Studies, Department of Philosophy.

Fiona Joy Green
Professor at the University of Winnipeg’s, Department of Women’s and Gender Studies. Dr. Fiona Joy Green is a feminist mother and Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies who believes in the power of revolutionary feminist parenting in raising children. She’s interested in the agency of children and mothers, in gender socialization and gender identity, and in the ability of feminist motherwork and motherlines to contribute to feminist theorizing and praxis. She has held the positions of Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts, Chair of the Department WGS, and is the founder and former Director of the Institute for Women’s and Gender Studies, where she is a research affiliate. She teaches a range of Women’s and Gender Studies courses from first year to honours, and is an adjunct professor at the University of Manitoba, most recently in the Faculty of Education and in the Department of Community Health Sciences.

Kate Greenway
Department Head, English, Arts at Holy Trinity School. Kate Greenway’s commitment to learning is demonstrated by the fact that she has been student most of her adult life; she recently completed her multi-modal PhD in Education, which included a solo art exhibition.
is the recipient of several academic and teaching awards including the York University Graduate Development Fund for Research, York University Alumni Excellence in Teaching Award, York University Graduate Education Major Research Prize, and the Toronto Star Teacher Honour Roll. She has been a teacher in England and Scotland with M.E.I. International Academy’s experiential travel program, has taught adult courses for Theatre Ontario at Brock University, and has published several scholarly articles. Prior to teaching, Kate worked in professional theatre across Canada, including three years with the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, where she won a Guthrie award.

Joan Garvan
Joan’s research is in Sociology and Gender. In 2010 she was awarded a doctorate from the ANU her thesis: Maternal Ambivalence in contemporary Australia: navigating equity and care. Joan has an internet site at: www.maternalhealthandwellbeing.com and offers online Professional Development Courses. She has 4 years experience with the ANU as an Online Moderator for a unit on Gender and Development and a semester with the Australian Catholic University as a Lecturer on Intro to Sociology.

Melinda Vandenbeld Giles
PhD candidate and sessional lecturer at the University of Toronto and Lakehead University Dept. Anthropology. Melinda Vandenbeld Giles’s research involves exploring ideas of home, belonging and identity in a neoliberal global context of precarity and migration. In particular, Melinda did her fieldwork with mothers living with their children in motel rooms in Toronto. She has published an edited volume titled Mothering in the Age of Neoliberalism along with several book chapters and journal articles. Melinda’s graduate research was supported by SSHRC. Her MA research involved exploring identity within the context of African-derived religions in the Americas, specifically Candomblé and Rastafarianism. She has published a feminist novel based on her research in Brazil.

Tamar Hagar
Senior Lecturer, Tel-Hai Academic College | telhai · Department of Education and gender studies program

Jennifer Heisler
Associate Professor at Oakland University. Jennifer Heisler (Ph.D., Michigan State University) is an associate professor with a specialization in interpersonal communication. She teaches Communication Theory and various Interpersonal and Family Communication courses. She has been recognized for her commitment to teaching several times, including awards presented by Michigan State and the International Communication Association. Her research focuses on interpersonal issues within the family. Her work examines the socialization of gender through parent-child communication. Her publications can be found in Journal of Family Communication, Basic Communication Course Annual, Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, Communication Quarterly, Communication Teacher and Communication Education.

Mary Hermann
Associate Professor, Counseling And Special Education at the Virginia Commonwealth University. An associate professor in the School of Education’s Department of Counseling and Special Education, Dr. Mary A. Hermann also served as the department chair from August 2010 to June 2015.

Over her career, Hermann’s research has focused on legal and ethical issues in counseling, women’s studies and social justice. She has served as president of the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) and co-chair of the SACES Women’s Interest Network. She has also served as chair of the American Counseling Association (ACA) Foundation Board of Directors, as a member of the ACA Ethics Committee and as a member of the ACA 2014 Ethics Revision Task Force.
Ellen Heed
Ellen Heed spent twenty years developing her clinical approach to pelvic floor work, traveling the world. As anatomy instructor to somatic professionals, she taught yogis, Sexological Bodyworkers, midwives, doulas, and psychologists. After a PhD in Somatic Psychology, she’s focused on help for sexual pain at her clinic in Los Angeles.

Martina Hynan
Martina Hynan is a PhD candidate with the Centre for Irish Studies, National University of Ireland, Galway. She is a mother, artist, curator, birth activist and scholar based in West of Ireland. Her research is interdisciplinary and socially engaged allowing her to explore the experience of childbirth from multiple perspectives.

Emilie St. Hilaire
Emilie St.Hilaire is a multidisciplinary artist currently pursuing a research-creation (RC) PhD at Concordia University, in Montreal. Her research examines the sub-cultural phenomenon of reborn dolls from a feminist perspective. She has published in RACAR about RC and has exhibited her artwork at galleries and festivals nationally and internationally.

Kimberly Hillier
Kimberly Hillier is a 5th year PhD in Educational Studies doctoral candidate. She is exploring the experiences of graduate student mothers and faculty/sessional instructors who were mothers at the time of their graduate student careers. She is also mother to her 4 year old daughter and inspiration, Eva.

Linda Hunter
Dr. Linda Hunter is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Guelph as well as the Department’s Undergraduate Coordinator. Dr. Hunter has published journal articles on the depiction of gender in the media, HIV awareness health campaigns, young mothers, communication and HIV prevention, support needs for HIV positive women and mothers, along with controversial health educational curriculums. She is currently researching teaching methods and the application of interdisciplinary programs such as fine art, to the study of sociology, with a focus on the representation of motherhood. Dr. Hunter has previously worked with social service agencies in the community and has worked as a gender and media columnist for CBC radio.

Elenora Joensuu
Professor in the Education department at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.

Lauren Kirshner
Assistant Professor at Ryerson University, Department of English
Education: BA Honours (Toronto); BEd (Toronto); MA (Toronto); PhD (York-Ryerson)
I bring my creative and scholarly interests into the community through participatory projects focused on arts for social justice. I am Founding Director of Sister Writes, a creative writing program that honours the wisdom and experience of women. Through workshops, public arts events, and literary magazines, Sister Writes strives to empower women, provide mentorship, and inspire the community with vital stories about women’s lives. Recognized by The Toronto Star and CBC, Sister Writes was the winner of a 2018 Arts Bridges Award for Remarkable Achievement in Community Arts. My other community initiatives, including an intergenerational oral history program, have won the support of various arts councils and foundations, and my Young Authors Project was a finalist for the 2013 Ontario Minister’s Award for Innovation in the Arts.
Erin Kuri
Erin is a PhD Student at McMaster University in the Department of School of Social Work/ Gender Studies and Feminist Research

Karla Knutson
Associate Professor, English; Co-Director, Women's and Gender Studies, English, Women's and Gender Studies, B.A., at Concordia College, Minnesota. M.A. and Ph.D., University of Kansas. Research Interests: Composition and rhetoric, popular culture, Chaucer, medieval literature, medievalism

Kaarina Kailo
Dr. Kaarina Kailo is Docent of North American Studies and former professor of Women’s Studies at Oulu University, Finland. She also held women’s studies positions at Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Canada (principal in 1997). Her expertise includes women and indigenous studies, gift economies/imaginaries, peace studies, the ecosocial impact of neoliberal globalization, ecomythology and -spirituality. Her anthologies and books include Wo/men & Bears—the Gifts of Nature, Culture, Gender, Introduction to Ecopsychology and finally, Finnish Goddess Mythology and the Golden Woman, Climate Change, Earth-Based Indigenous Knowledge and the Gift. She is active in Finnish politics, a municipal councillor, a senior rights activist and textile artist focused on Finno-Ugric deities.

Laurie Kruk
Professor / Faculty of Arts and Science - English Studies at Nippsing University.

Samar Khan
Samar Khan is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in the Gender, Feminist, and Women’s Studies program at York University. Her current research is focused on understanding the cultural/religious and social barriers to maternal mental healthcare - more specifically, postpartum depression (PPD) - among migrant South Asian women living in Toronto.

Gertrude Lyons
Dr. Gertrude Lyons is an international speaker and educator. She is director of the Family Program at the Wright Foundation and faculty at the Wright Graduate University. She received her B.B.A. in Finance and Accounting from St. Mary’s College, Notre Dame, her M.A. in Psychology from Antioch University McGregor School and her Ed.D and M.A. in Transformational Leadership and Coaching at the Wright Graduate University.

Kris Lowrey
Laurel Black, Kris Lowrey, Mellissa Carr, and Gloria Park are mother-teacher-scholars at different stages of their academic career at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Bonded by motherhood and their experiences journeying through the academy, each woman shares her victories and challenges of what it means to navigate motherhood in the Academy.

Donna McCart
Donna McCart grew up in Montreal and now lives in Ottawa. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Ottawa and her research includes studies conducted with war affected girls and young women. Her research has been published in numerous academic journals and she has contributed to various anthologies. Prior to retirement, she was a professor at The State University of New York. She is the mother of Alessandra and Renata.

Judith Mintz
Judith Mintz recently completed her PhD in the School of Gender, Feminist, and Women’s Studies program at York University, and is an instructor in the Bridging Course for Women Progrm. Judith’s research articulates political economy, critical race and feminist embodiment theories to produce an analysis of contemporary race, indigeneity, and complimentary health culture in North America. She teaches in Gender Studies and mothers two children.

Michelle Hughes Miller
Dr. Michelle Hughes Miller is an Associate Professor in Women’s and Gender Studies at the University of South Florida. Her academic interests are in discursive constructions of motherhood within law and policy and systemic responses to violence against women. She is particularly interested in transnational development discourse related to mothering and gender-based violence and, closer to home, victim advocacy within particular ecological environments. Recent publications have appeared in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence and the Journal of Community Psychology. Her courses include: Politics of Motherhood, Women and Social Justice, Women, Crime & Justice, Pedagogy, and Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies.

Kathy Mantas
Associate Professor/ non-student, Schulich School of Education, Nipissing University, Creator of ART-i-Facts.

Barbara Alice Mann
Mann, is a Ph.D. scholar and Professor of Humanities in the Jesup Scott Honors College of the University of Toledo, in Toledo, Ohio, USA. She has authored over 200 chapters and articles along with fifteen books. A perennial favorite, Iroquoian Women: The Gantowisas, is in its third printing.

Patricia Mukhim
Patricia Mukhim is from the Khasi matrillineal society of the Indian state of Meghalaya. She has been a participant observer of the society and has written extensively on it for the local and national newspapers. She has been a gender rights activist for decades. Patricia Mukhim is now the editor of The Shillong Times, the oldest English language daily newspaper which is also the most widely circulated. She continues to engage with contemporary social issues especially the threats to matrilineal value systems on account of influences from surrounding patriarchal societies.

Sherri Mitchell
Sherri Mitchell is Native American attorney, speaker and teacher. She has served as an advisor to the Indigenous Elders and Medicine People’s Council of North America for the past 20 years, and is the host of “Healing the Wounds of Turtle Island,” a global healing ceremony that brings people together from all corners of the world. Sherri is the author of the award-winning book Sacred Instructions; Indigenous Wisdom for Living Spirit-Based Change.

Kelly Diane McCready
Kelly is a FIFSW doctoral student, community worker, activist and educator with over 20 years of practice experience in diverse communities in Toronto and Central America. She has worked in a counseling and community support capacity in Toronto for 17 years, predominantly with women experiencing poverty, violence and/or abuse, homelessness and mental health issues.

Her research interests include the conceptualization of mental health and it’s intersections with poverty, gender and aging; critical, feminist and queer theory; critical pedagogy, popular education and participatory action research; body image and fat studies; mad studies/mad pride and the application of intersectionality theories to social work practice.

Cheryl Neale-McFall
Dr. Cheryl Neale-McFall is an Associate Professor in the Department of Counselor Education at West Chester University, a Nationally Board Certified Counselor and a Licensed Professional
Counselor. Dr. Neale-McFall has multiple presentations, publications, and grant funding surrounding the topic of the working mother and motherhood in academia.

Maria Novotny
Assistant Professor/non-student Department of English University of Wisconsin- Oshkosh, Co-director The ART of Infertility

Lakshmi Nair
Lakshmi Nair is an artist and yoga teacher. In 2014, she founded Satya Yoga Cooperative, the first member-owned Yoga Cooperative for People of Color in the US, possibly in the world. Her writing is included in Yoga Rising: 30 Empowering Stories by Yoga Renegades for Every Body (2018).

Therese Novotny
Instructor at Marquette University
English Department
Dr. Novotny’s educational, business and personal experiences have given her the opportunity to write and conduct research in academic and non-academic sectors. In addition to her early work writing materials for clients in the healthcare, energy, and manufacturing industries, she has spent more than twenty academic years teaching literature and writing courses at Marquette University, where she completed her doctoral studies in medieval English literature. Dr. Novotny continues to write, research, and travel, while analyzing the changing roles of women and religion from medieval periods through the twenty-first century. She has presented at national and international conferences, and her articles are featured in Canadian (2016), Italian (2019), and British (2019) publications. Her personal travels and interests include Native American historic sites linked to the spirituality of indigenous people.

Andrea O’Reilly
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 22 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) and the forthcoming Feminist Perspectives on Young Mothers and Motherhood (2019). O’Reilly is also author of Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart (2004), 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) and is co-editor of the Routledge Companion on Motherhood (2019) 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.

Lynn O’Brien
Lynn O’Brien Hallstein is an Associate Professor of Rhetoric and an Affiliated Faculty of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program at Boston University. As a motherhood scholar who employs a communication lens, her research explores the various ways that contemporary motherhood is constructed rhetorically.

Lorinda Peterson
Lorinda Peterson currently works in Cultural Studies at Queen's University, Canada. Lorinda does research in maternal, trauma and comics theories. She also creates trauma comics in a research creation art praxis. Lorinda's current project looks at the impact of quotidian trauma on mothers' experiences of both living and mothering in the everyday.

Emma Posca
I am a PhD candidate in the School of Gender Feminist and Sexuality Studies at York University. My dissertation topic is rooted in Sociological and Feminist theory as it resolves around the access to mental health resources for women in living in Diasporas in Toronto. By using Intersectionality, I will be able to identify the structures of inequality based on race, class, sexual orientation and immigration status to unpack the cultural, social and economic barriers towards mental health resources. By comparing women in various Diasporas in Toronto I will focus on the similarities and differences in various cultures, communities and ethnic groups. My ethnographic study will allow me to compare 5 generations of women in the Italian, Guyanese, Jamaican, and African-Canadian and Indigenous community and diasporas to create mental health discourses and add to the knowledge around patriarchy, oppression and hegemonic views.

Gloria Park
Laurel Black, Kris Lowrey, Mellissa Carr, and Gloria Park are mother-teacher-scholars at different stages of their academic career at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Bonded by motherhood and their experiences journeying through the academy, each woman shares her victories and challenges of what it means to navigate motherhood in the Academy.

Liz Podnieks
Elizabeth Podnieks is a Professor in the Department of English at Ryerson University, Toronto. She is the co-editor of Textual Mothers, Maternal Texts, and the sole editor of Mediating Moms: Mothers in Popular Culture. Her latest edited collection is Pops in Pop Culture: Fatherhood, Masculinity, and the New Man.

Tessa Pyles
Tessa Pyles is a doctoral candidate at Bowling Green State University, where she anticipates graduating with a PhD in American Culture Studies, May 2019. Her dissertation project approaches the topic of contemporary motherhood through the revealing lens of culturally-defined “bad mothers,” specifically as they are represented in popular film and television.

Sherri Rose
Sherri Rose is an Assistant Professor of French at Hillsdale College in Michigan. She earned her Ph.D. in French Language and Literature at the University of Virginia. Sherri has published her work on the intersections of literature and blindness in the journals Dix-Neuf and Nineteenth-Century French Studies.

Maythee Rojas
Professor of Chicano and Latino Studies, Maythee Rojas is the author of Women of Color and Feminism (2009). Her work has appeared in numerous journals, including Feminist Teacher, Frontiers, MELUS, Women’s Studies: An Inter-Disciplinary Journal and reference books such Encyclopedia of Latino Popular Culture, and Latinas in the United States.

Lena Elodie Rebecca Richardson
Lena Elodie Rebecca Richardson is a doctoral student at SFU in Arts Education.

Heather Robinson
Associate Professor, Department of English, York College/CUNY. Heather works at the intersections of Composition Studies, Applied Linguistics, Writing Program administration and
Feminist Theory. Her recent works include a discussion of resisting white supremacy and colonialism in the composition classroom via taking a post-colonial approach to the teaching of writing, and explorations of feminist approaches to program administration and academic labor.

Patricia Sotirin
Michigan Technological University, Dept.: Humanities. Dr. Patty Sotirin's research involves critical-interpretive approaches to issues of culture, relationality, and gender. Her work draws on discursive theories of communication, critical management studies, cultural studies, feminist theories and qualitative methodologies. She has published articles in such journals as *Text and Performance Quarterly, Women's Studies in Communication, Qualitative Inquiry, Journal of Research Practice, Cultural Studies<=>Critical Methodologies, and Organization Management Journal.*

Diane Shoos
Michigan Technological University, Humanities Department, Dr. Diane L. Shoos' research is in the area of the practice and theories of visual representation, including advertising, television, and, especially, cinema. Her scholarship focuses on the representation of women and the construction of female subjectivity in visual texts, the evolving formulations of sexual difference and masculinity in these texts, and gender as a factor in their production and reception.

Jessica Spears
JESSICA S., Associate Professor of Sociology. B.A., Texas Tech University; M.A., Southwest Texas State University; Ph.D., Texas Woman's University.

Robin Silbergleid
Tenured Faculty, Michigan State University, Department: Department of English. Robin Silbergleid works in the areas of creative writing (poetry and creative nonfiction), twentieth- and twenty-first century American literature and culture, narrative theory, and women's/ gender studies. As a writer who holds both a PhD and MFA, she is particularly interested in exploring the sometimes vexed relationships between critical and creative writing; her current project, Reading Maso, combines sustained close readings of Carole Maso’s novels with personal essay and poetic fragments. Additionally, she is co-editing a book, *Critical Innovations: Reading and Writing Experimental Texts* that explores performative and creative modes of literary analysis. Her creative work focuses on issues of domesticity and the female body, specifically single parenting, reproductive loss, and infertility.

Muna Saleh
Sessional Instructor, Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta. Muna Saleh is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Concordia University of Edmonton. Drawing upon her experiences as a Canadian Muslim woman, mother (to Malak, Ahmad, and Maya), educator, and researcher, Muna’s doctoral research was a Killam Trusts-funded narrative inquiry into the experiences of Canadian Muslim girls and their mothers. Prior to engaging in graduate studies, she was an elementary and secondary school teacher and leader. Her research interests include multiperspectival narrative inquiry, mothering and motherhood, conceptions
of curriculum, familial curriculum-making, and research alongside children and youth with exceptionalities and their families.

Dr. Erella Shadmi
Dr. Erella Shadmi is a feminist, peace and anti-racism activist and scholar living in Israel. She co-founded Kol Ha’Isha - the Jerusalem feminist center, the Fifth Mother - a women’speace movement - and the Ashkenazi women’s group established to contemplate on Ashkenazi racism. She has been active, among other things, in Women in Black, and the Mizrahi feminist movement, Achoti. She was a board member of B’tselem and a member of the Truth Commission for the Nakba in the Negev 1948-1960, established by Zochrot organization. She is now active in the Haifa Feminist Center, Isha Le’Isha, and currently leads the initiatives to establish the Center for Women’s Cultures and co-housing for elderly women. She is also active in two global networks, dealing with gift economy, matriarchal societies and indigenous rights and knowledge.

Erella is the former head of the Women’s Studies Program at Beit Berl Academic College. Her numerous published books and articles deal with social change movements, male violence against women, Ashkenaziness, lesbianism, spirituality, the maternal gift economy and matriarchal societies. As a criminologist and one of the pioneering researchers of the Israel Police, she published several critical articles and the first of its kind a book on police and policing in Israel.

Amy Lee Wai Sum
Associate Professor, Humanities, Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), China

Emily Saunders
PsyD candidate at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Dept. Department of Psychology.

Kayte Thomas
Kayte Thomas is a licensed clinical social worker and certified trauma specialist. She is a current PhD student at Baylor University and a passionate advocate for social justice, with a particular interest in an intersectional approach to motherhood issues.

Lorna Turnbull
Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. Dr. Turnbull maintains an active research program, focusing on law, gender equality, motherwork, income tax and human rights. Her work has been funded through internal and external granting programs/agencies, including SSHRC. She has broadly disseminated her work through journal publications, book/book
chapters, reviews, and conference presentations/invited lectures. She maintains a strong commitment to teaching and learning through undergraduate and graduate teaching and supervision.

V

Karen Nelson Villanueva
Adjunct Lecturer, Women’s Spirituality, Philosophy and Religion Department, School of Consciousness and Transformation, PhD, California Institute of Integral Studies, MA, George Washington University; MA, Holy Names University. Karen Nelson Villanueva, Ph.D. is Adjunct Faculty at Holy Names University in their Humanities and Religious Studies programs, and also at the California Institute of Integral Studies in the Women’s Spirituality program. As a Tibetan (Vajrayana) Buddhist practitioner in the Gelug tradition, she leads Buddhist ritual and meditation at the Tse Chen Ling Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies. She is also a certified teacher in Cultivating Emotional Balance training. She was raised in Detroit and received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan before serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Costa Rica.

Veeksha Vagmita
Is a PhD sudent at Ambedkar University Delhi, India in the Department of English, School of Letters.

Genevieve Vaughan

W

Annette Lyn Williams
Program Chair and Assistant Professor, Women’s Spirituality, Philosophy and Religion Department, School of Consciousness and Transformation. Annette Williams holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy and Religion with a concentration in Women’s Spirituality from the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco as well an M.A. in psychology with an emphasis in Jungian and archetypal approaches. Research interests have centered on healing from sexual trauma at the level of the soul that involves reclamation of the powerful erotic (à la Audre Lorde) and libidinal (à la Jung) energies suppressed by assault. While at CIIS she has continued to explore the theme of wounded female sexuality, expanding the discussion to more fully expound upon socio-historical and cultural influences.

Nicole L. Willey
Nicole Willey is a Professor of English at Kent State University at Tuscarawas, where she has been teaching literature and writing courses since 2003. Her research interests include mothering, masculinities, memoir, pedagogy, nineteenth-century American literature, and slave narratives. She wrote Creating a New Ideal of Masculinity for American Men: The Achievement of Sentimental Women Writers in the Mid-Nineteenth Century and co-edited the collection Motherhood Memoirs: Mothers Creating/Writing Lives, and is currently working on a collection about Feminist Fathering. She is also the Mentoring Program Coordinator for faculty at the Tuscarawas campus. She lives in New Philadelphia, Ohio with her husband, two sons, and their dog.

Elizabeth Walker
Communication specialist and Artist at the Department of Pathology University of Michigan, Co-director The ART of Infertility. [http://www.artofinfertility.org](http://www.artofinfertility.org)

**Joyce White**  
Joyce White is a Ph.D. candidate in Humanities with a primary focus in African American Studies at Clark Atlanta University. Her research interests include 19th, 20th, and 21st century diasporic literature. Currently, Ms. White is working on her dissertation, which will examine select texts of Edwidge Danticat.

**Katherine Wardi-Zonna**  
Assistant Professor Counseling, School Psychology and Special Education, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

**Annisa Wardi**  
Associate Professor at Chatham University. Anissa Wardi has been a faculty member at Chatham University since 1996. As a member of the English Department, Dr. Wardi has taught courses including The Harlem Renaissance, Toni Morrison Seminar and August Wilson and Pittsburgh. The author of two books, Dr. Wardi has published widely in the area of 20th century African American literature