Saturday 1 October 2005

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.  Concurrent Sessions D
10:30 – 11:00 a.m. Morning Tea
11:00 – 12:30 p.m. Concurrent Sessions E
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.  Lunch
1:30 – 2:30 p.m.  Concurrent Sessions F
2:30 – 3:00 p.m.  Closing Remarks/Conference reflections (Rm 343)
3:00 p.m.  Afternoon Tea

Please note: all room numbers refer to the General Purpose South Building
### CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**Friday, September 30**

**SESSION A (11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)**

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| A1 - Rm 343 | *Talking Circle*  
(Chair: Jackie Huggins)                                                                    | Three indigenous Women Elders                        |
| A2 - Rm 344 | *Hearing Mothers’ Voices*  
(Chair: Jenny Jones)                                                                               |                                                      |
| 1-A2    | *The 1950s White Australian Mother as Subject*                                             | Marie Porter  
University of Queensland                            |
| 2-A2    | *Mapping the Maternal: A Discursive Analysis of the Maternal Subject in Contemporary Western Culture* | Elaine Bernstein  
Curtin University of Technology                        |
| 3-A2    | *Power and Oppression: Silenced, Silence, Silent and Unsilencing Mothers of Children with ADHD* | Lorelei Carpenter and Helena Austin  
Griffith University                                      |
| A3 - Rm 224 | *Maternal Ambivalence?* (Chair: Trisch Short)                                                |                                                      |
| 1-A3    | *Radical Parturition and Labours of Mourning: limit, possibility, language*                  | Rose Lucas  
Monash University                                           |
| 2-A3    | *Feminism and the Idea of Maternal Ambivalence*                                              | Linda Burnett  
University of NSW                                       |
| 3-A3    | *“Bereaved Mother’s Heart”: A Subjective Arts Inquiry into Being a Bereaved Mother*         | Carla van Laar  
RMIT University                                           |

**SESSION B (2:00 – 3:30 p.m.)**

| B1 - Rm 344 | Creating ‘Mother’ (Chair: Julie Kelso)                                                      | Denise Ferris  
Australian National University                            |
| 1-B1        | *Regarding the Familiar: The Maternal Gaze and the Child Image in Fine Art Photography*       |                                                      |
| 2-B1        | *The Mother Figure as a Cultural Construct within Images*                                     | Tatjana Plitt  
RMIT Media Arts                                           |
| 3-B1        | *Visual Narratives: Self Depiction and Maternity in Women’s Art*                             | Julie Rosewarne Foster  
Monash University                                           |
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<td>&quot;Age Shall not Weary Them&quot; - The Old Maternal Body and the Case of Adriana Iliescu</td>
<td>Vivienne Muller</td>
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<td>Petra Busskens</td>
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<td>3-B2</td>
<td>Monstrous Mothers and Fearless Fathers: The Dynamics of Maternal Alienation Go Public</td>
<td>Anne Morris</td>
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<td>B3</td>
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<td>1-B3</td>
<td>Creating 'Schizophrenia': How Social Policies Fracture Mothers' Identities</td>
<td>Karen Krug</td>
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<td>&quot;A Matter of Compromise&quot;: Australian Women Talk about Arranging Paid Work and Family after Childbirth</td>
<td>Sherree Cartwright</td>
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SESSION C (4:00 – 5:30 P.M.)

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<td>2-C1</td>
<td>Adult Nursing, Induced Lactation and Queering the Maternal Body</td>
<td>Fiona Giles</td>
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<td>The Question of gift relationships in Donor Assisted Reproduction</td>
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<td>1-C2</td>
<td>Mothering and Narratives: Myths, Reconciliation and Damage</td>
<td>Jennifer Jones</td>
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<td>Elaine Bernstein</td>
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SATURDAY, October 1

SESSION D (9:00 – 10:30 a.m.)

D1 - Rm 344  A Question of Choice (Chair: Marie Porter)

1-D1 Maternal Practice and Motherguilt: At the Crossroads  Jane-Maree Maher
Monash University

2-D1 Just the One? Why Constructions of the Single Child Family May be Unjust  Helen Bowcock
University of Kent

D2 - Rm 343  Cultural Representations (Chair: Julie Kelso)

1-D2 Depictions of the 'Mother' in Tarot  Helen Farley
University of Queensland

2-D2 Where are You Mother?: Violent Domestic Space and Absent Motherhood in Recent Canadian Women’s Writing  Shelley Kulperger
University of Queensland

3-D2 The Subjugated Voice of the Mother in Enchi Fumiko’s The Waiting Years  Barbara Hardy
University of Queensland

D3 - Rm 224  Mothers in the (Paid) Workplace (Chair: Bernardine Lane)

1-D3 Not a Simple Love Song: Arts Pedagogy and Maternal Thinking  Denise Ferris
Australian National University

2-D3 The Maternity Factor: Implications for Career Advancement of Women as School Administrators/Professors  Sharon Abbey
Brock University

SESSION E (11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

E1 - Rm 224  Myths of Motherhood (Chair: Marie Porter)

1-E1 Gendered Selves, Emotions and Reflexivity: Doing Mothering  Tina Miller
Oxford Brookes University

2-E1 Too Attached to Attachment Theory?  Anne Morris
University of Adelaide

E2 - Rm 343  Representing Other Mothering (Chair: Trisch Short)

1-E2 Good Mothers and Other Mothers: representation, division and resistance  Anne Else
Victoria University, Wellington
2-E2  "My Mum’s a Dyke": Maternal Subjectivities in Mid-Life Transition From Heterosexuality to Lesbianism
Sue Kelynt
University of Queensland

3-E2  Infanticide News and the Medical Expert Witness
Nicola Goc
University of Tasmania

E3 - Rm 344  Mothering Disability (Chair: Jenny Jones)

1-E3  Unchartered Territory: Mothering Challenging Children
Heather Douglas
Griffith University

2-E3  "Special Children" and "Special Mothers": Debunking Myths about Mothering a Child with Disability
Lisa Bridle
Queensland Advocacy Inc.

SESSION F (1:30 - 2:30 p.m.)

F1 - Rm 343  Writing Her Own Story: Mother’s Autobiography (Chair: Jenny Price)

1-F1  Finnish Women’s Autobiographies: Answer to the Invitation to be a National Agent
Ritva Närkin
University of Tampere

2-F1  Remembering Mary and My Other Mothers’
Megan Mckay
Queensland University of Technology

F2 - Rm 344  Transitions (Chair: Marie Porter)

1-F2  The Social and Cultural Context of Early Motherhood for Migrant Ethnic Indian Women in Melbourne, Australia
Natasha Maharaj
University of Melbourne

2-F2  Bringing McNay into the Field
Joan Garvan
Australian National University

F3 - Rm 343  On Her Own: Sole Mothers (Chair: Julie Kelso)

1-F3  Narrating the (Lone) Maternal Subject: The Validation Stories of ‘Ordinary Women in Extraordinary Circumstances’
Lesley Patterson
Massey University

2-F3  “Like a Second-Class Citizen”: A Narrative Analysis of Identity of Seven Wellington Sole Mothers Receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit
Clare Mariskind
Massey University
ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS

ABBEY, Sharon
Brock University

The Maternity Factor: Implications for Career Advancement of Women as School Administrators/Professors

This paper uses a social feminist standpoint and sustainability theory to address the gendered experiences and dilemmas of young women educators who try to combine motherhood and career advancement agendas in both the public school setting and the university. The implications of a content analysis of open-ended interviews with women principals, vice-principals or tenure-track professors who have recently been returned from maternity leave will be discussed. Since more women are completing qualifications to apply for administrative and tenured positions, a new phenomenon of hiring women in their child-bearing years is emerging. This has created the need to re-examine policies and structures that currently result in inequitable opportunities and hiring criteria, heightened levels of stress due to career interruptions, financial disadvantages of leaves without pay or with reduced pay, misperceptions of commitment and consequences of being out of touch or unaware of new initiatives or procedures. Current Canadian statistics will be fore-grounded in this study and compared with available reports from other countries such as United States, Australia and Britain to confront the fact that the majority of women in senior academic positions are either single, divorced or have no children living at home. Conclusions call for a fundamental rethink and redesign of rigid binary dichotomies currently include rigid options such as quitting work, deferring career goals or staying at home full-time. The inter-play between mothering and educating can be very positive and enriching if strategic changes are made to foster the well-being of all stakeholders.

BARTLEET, Brydie-Leigh
University of Queensland

Conducting and Mothering: Can Women “Have It All?”

The term ‘orchestral conductor’ seems to evoke images of greatness, divinity, authority, power and tyranny. On the other hand, the image of motherhood certainly does not immediately come to mind as congruent with such descriptions. Given the conducting profession’s past and patriarchal ideology, issues relating to motherhood have not even scratched the surface of its discourse. Indeed, in order to successfully negotiate the role of conductor, women have had to mould their behaviour in ways that have been contradictory to what society expects of them as “normal” females. While motherhood has defined and encapsulated women’s role in Western society, such a role has scarcely been acknowledged on the conducting podium. This has left conducting mothers grappling with their often competing subjectivities of mother and conductor. This is not to suggest that conducting mothers are any sort of “special case;” in fact, the issues presented in this paper are likely to resonate with those raised in relation to mothers in other high-powered positions.

This paper draws on recent feminist and mothering literature and my recent PhD research on women conductors. Of the group of seventeen women I interviewed across the US, UK and Australia, very few are mothers. However, for those who are mothers, their stories are very telling. They resonate with Maushart’s observation that today’s women are feeling distinctly “overfull;” the more they do the worse they feel. Balancing the often unworkable ideology of being a “good mother” is not competing demands of an international conducting career has left many of the women I interviewed asking if they can “have it all?” In this paper I reflect on some of the stories told to me by conducting mothers, and reveal their impact on me as a young conductor, part of what Maushart labels the predominantly childless third wave of feminists.
Mapping the Maternal: A Discursive Analysis of the Maternal Subject in Contemporary Western Culture

This paper maps the discourses informing the maternal construct in contemporary western culture, uncovering the processes behind the marginalisation of the maternal subject. The paper is informed by a poststructuralist feminist understanding of contemporary western motherhood as a construct that emerges at the intersection of modern discourses aimed at regulating subjects and, through this, sustaining particular power relations. Within this theoretical approach, motherhood is read as a discursive formation comprising cultural meanings and structures that define, represent and regulate maternal subjectivity.

Motherhood has long been identified by various second-wave feminisms as problematic to female agency, that is, our ability to be active social subjects. While motherhood represents women's capacity to create and reshape society, concurrently it is a key construct in the maintenance of patriarchal power relations, and as such involves the disavowal of the mother's agency. While feminism has succeeded in improving the reproductive choices of women and the opportunities for mothers to engage in public life, motherhood remains firmly anchored in modern discourses, both resting on and supporting key patriarchal western nodes of beliefs and values related to the individual, family, body, gender, sexuality and reproduction.

Thus contesting motherhood as a key site of women's oppression requires contesting the very fundamentals of how our culture talks, thinks about and conceptualises the maternal subject. Thinking about how embodied mothers can reclaim agency must therefore be preceded by an examination of the role of discourse in constructing subjects and regulating power-knowledge relations in contemporary western culture. This paper focuses on a discursive analysis of maternal subjectivity, bringing cultural studies and feminist theory together to analyse the ways in which the maternal subject is constructed to support the patriarchal power relations underlying gender inequity in our culture.

Telling Tales of Motherhood: the Significance of the Maternal Ethnography in Contemporary Western Culture

This paper examines the role of maternal ethnographies in the feminist praxis of “giving voice” to maternal subjects. Poststructuralist theory demonstrates how discourses generate ways of knowing by constructing subjectivities and positioning subjects in relation to their ability to speak—to know and generate knowledge. Giving voice refers to a range of methods used by those who wish to empower subjects whose capacity to speak, and thus their socio-cultural agency, is limited by discursive forces.

A variety of feminisms concur that the maternal subject is a primary example of such a subject. Specifically, they argue that mothers are limited in terms of their capacity to generate knowledges relating to their own subjectivity. The feminist commitment to women centres on the need to discursively reposition the female subject in ways that empowers her entitlement to represent her own subjectivity. To this end, feminism seeks to discursively reposition the maternal subject in ways that increase her speaking ability; to challenge gendered ways of knowing; and to represent marginalised female knowledges.

Of particular significance to this project are maternal ethnographies. This paper will analyse the difficult history of these ethnographies in an effort to understand why they have been marginalised by hegemonic knowledge-making practices. By uncovering their potential to shift these practices, this paper seeks to highlight the ways in which feminism can realise the ethnography’s capacity to give voice to the experiences of maternal subjects, and in doing so, to shift gendered power relations in western culture.
BOWCOCK, Helen  
*University of Kent*

*Just the One? Why Constructions of the Single Child Family May be Unjust*

Social commentators refer to the single child family as 'a new phenomenon', suggesting that having only one child is a way for ambitious women to reconcile the demands of family and career. However many more women born in the first decade of the twentieth century had only one child compared with those born in the 1950s. In the aftermath of the Second World War, pronatalism and psychology converged to stimulate higher birth rates by mandating a sibling relationship for normal social development. Mothers who have one child remain in the minority today and little has really been known of the reasons for their family size, nor of their experiences of parenting.

This paper will provide a brief review of this historical context and will examine the contemporary construction of the single child family. It will review the findings of a qualitative study of 46 mothers in Britain who have a school age child and who assume that they will have no more children. The reasons given by mothers for choosing to have one child will be reviewed and their experiences will be compared with those of mothers who have tried to have a second child, but have instead experienced infertility, miscarriage and, in one case, infant death. The variables of maternal education, employment relationship, birth experience and the theme of 'intensive mothering' will be drawn upon to demonstrate the incongruence between public assumptions about single child families and their lived experiences.

BRIDLE, Lisa  
*Queensland Advocacy Inc.*

*“Special Children” and “Special Mothers”: Debunking Myths about Mothering a Child with Disability*

Most of us embark on motherhood with only very hazy ideas of what we are seeking in that experience. Nevertheless, becoming the mother of a child with disability is an unwelcome, even feared, experience - one which is seen to contradict common dreams of motherhood. Yet the stories of women who live this experience are seldom heard. The experience of mothering a child with disability is both a highly marginalised and highly mythologized experience. Just as people with disability exist outside the mainstream, so do their mothers. They are cast into roles as "special mothers" and objects of pity, they may be both admired as "exceptional" and judged for their failure to produce the "correct" offspring. They often inhabit an uncomfortable place within groups of mothers. This paper will draw upon a piece of insider research with a group of mothers of children with Down syndrome. It will explore how these women made meaning of their experience of motherhood, their changed identities, the costs and joys of their experience, what they identified as the "same" and "different", and their struggle to find a vocabulary which did justice to their experiences. The paper will also discuss how new technologies, such as prenatal diagnosis, are remaking expectations of family life and how mothers who live with children with disability challenge the views that disability is wholly unwelcome.

BURNETT, Linda  
*University of New South Wales*

*Maternal Ambivalence?*

As part of the feminist revision of maternal narratives and a reaction to patriarchal sentimentalization of motherhood the concept of maternal ambivalence, understood as the co-existence of love and hate in mothers' feelings for their children, is increasingly widely used in feminist discourses of maternal subjectivity. While many feminist writings ascribe ambivalence to all mothers this was not the picture emerging from the accounts given by a diverse group of
mothers in unstructured, in-depth interviews. In this paper I want to examine more closely what exactly it refers to; how it’s been constructed and how psychoanalytic writings have been used in its construction; how it is used in feminist discourses of maternal subjectivity; and what effect it has.

I argue that there are significant problems with the use of the concept of ambivalence in relation to maternal feelings. It is used somewhat loosely in feminist writing and this application of psychoanalytic concepts ignores their derivation and accompanying theoretical baggage. The assumption that all mothers feel ambivalent denies the diversity of women’s responses and is, in effect, a reversal of patriarchal essentialism. The emphasis on the negative side of ambivalence tends to obscure maternal desire and the passion and joy of mothering, and also precludes further exploration of the complexity of maternal subjectivity and the mother-infant relation. Finally, universalizing negative feelings ignores the effect of the social conditions of a woman’s mothering, and tends to erase their specificity and thus the possibility of changing the circumstances.

BÜSKENS, Petra
Melbourne University

Motherhood and Modernity: On the Emergence of the Mother Who Leaves Home

The mother who leaves is a distinctly modern phenomenon dependent upon the prior construction of the mother who stays. In this paper, I shall develop a theoretical account of the relationship between motherhood and modernity exploring the emergence of both the “institution of motherhood” and its inbuilt rupture in the figure of the mother who leaves. Tracing an historical line around the twin towers of modernity: the idea of freedom and the division of labour, I shall explore how these two foundation stones generated a peculiar “sexual contract” oriented to the sequestration of women in the home. However, underwriting this development, I contend, was the creation of the conditions for its transgression. Simply put: once mothers were sequestered to the home and new - non-familial, non-traditional - spaces emerged “outside”, the possibility opened up for a mother to leave in a qualitatively different way from within a pre-industrial or “simple” society. I chart the emergence of the mother who leaves as a new category of woman identified first as a shadow in the text of early modern philosophy, domestic guides and literature, and later as a “real” woman. Making the argument that the mother who leaves is a gender truant, we shall explore the revolutionary implications of a woman out of her place.

CARPENTER, Lorelei and AUSTIN Helena
Griffith University

Power and oppression: Silenced, silence, silent and unsilencing mothers of children with ADHD

Despite its clear inadequacy to the realities of contemporary life, the motherhood myth incubated in the early part of the century, and hatching fully feathered in the 1950s, still has a tenacious grip on our thinking. Although social and political advances in what we might characterise as ‘western liberal democratic societies’ made moves during the last century to release women (and men) from many of the mythologies that have constrained our thinking, the work of mothering continues to be situated around notions influenced by beliefs including ‘women are biologically destined to be caregivers and nurturers’, ‘the mother is the ultimate teacher’ and ‘the measure of a mother is her child’. Such beliefs make possible binary categorisations of good mother/ bad mother.

Our project examines the narratives of mothers who measure poorly in an important criterion of motherhood: ‘the measure of a mother is her child’. These mothers have children who disrupt the category ‘good child’. Their children have been identified as different and have had their difference labeled: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Our project explores how the child’s difference disables the mother, placing her on the margins, putting her
outside the boundaries of the motherhood myth; she is constructed as ‘other', as ‘bad mother'. This marginal space of ‘bad mother' has the potential to isolate women in many ways.

This paper explores one of these ways: silence. We notice the several forms of silence that permeate women’s narratives of mothering a child with ADHD. The women tell of being silenced, by not being heard, by not being given voice and by choosing not to make themselves available to misunderstanding and judgement. We hear the silence that they hear of any positive appraisal of their mothering. We hear the silence that they hear of affirmation of their good parenting from their children’s behaviours. The mothers also tell of being silent of their needs, feeling they cannot tell the truth of their experience or ask for assistance.

An underpinning theoretical and methodological concern of our project is to continue in the spirit of feminist ethnographies that seek to both empower participants (including readers) in the very telling (and reading) of their story and seek to reach for means to represent these women’s experience in ways that do more than render them the saintly and heroic objects of voyeuristic admiration. Our first small step has been to make space for mothers to identify their ‘good’ mothering in conversation with a researcher, our second small step is to challenge the silences by broadcasting their voices beyond that conversation. The journey continues...

CARTRIGHT, Sheree
RMIT University
Session 2-B3

“A Matter of Compromise”: Australian Women Talk about Arranging Paid Work and Family after Childbirth

How women decide about paid work, child care and family life at motherhood seems to be a question that exists for women today in a way that there might not have been for their grandmothers' generation. It is also an issue that has received increasing attention in public debate and policy development in Australia and internationally. Motherhood is a point where the crippling double shift is acute because women undertake a greater responsibility for caring and other unpaid work, however some research suggests this is due to choices freely made (Hakim, 2000). While previous research has tended to focus on the orientations of women’s paid work participation and future trends, less is known about women's experience of ‘choice' regarding paid work and family life with regard to the transition to motherhood and after childbirth, and the strategies women put in place to enable them to combine paid work and family. This paper reports on the first phase of data from 27 qualitative interviews with women who are pregnant and some who have recently become mothers, about their intentions and preferences for how they organize their paid work and family after childbirth. The project is conducted in Melbourne, with women employed in Higher Education and the Retail Industry. The research suggests that the key factors influencing the ways in which women organize paid work and family after childbirth are ideas about motherhood, the workplace, workplace policies, and gender arrangements.

DOUGLAS, Heather
Griffith University
Session 1-E3

Unchartered Territory: Mothering Challenging Children

The myth of mothering is presented as always a positive experience. While mothering is certainly a maturing growth experience, what happens when our mothering situation demands more than we as mothers feel we can manage? This is the situation when mothering children with major behavioural challenges such as autistic children. Although children with a disability are not rare, approaches to this form of parenting are seldom included in textbooks. Mothering children with challenging disabilities is extremely demanding but not exciting. For the parents involved it is a life changing experience with both lows and highs. This paper explores some of the published academic literature on parenting children with special needs, particularly those with challenging behaviours. The paper outlines the experience, both positive and otherwise, of mothering challenging children from social capital, collective action and acculturation perspectives based on personal experience and contact with mothers of autistic children over
ten years. Having a child with challenging behaviour in the family has differing affects on mothers, fathers and siblings.

DOUGLAS, Pamela  
University of Queensland

**Milk Mother**

Despite the emergence of an extensive literature of embodiment by feminists across the social sciences throughout the 1990s, the body of the “milk mother” - the gestating, birthing and (biologically or metaphorically) lactating mother - has not yet been substantially written into Australian literature. This mirrors her absence from the dominant Judeo-Christian mythology, and coincides from the Industrial Revolution onward with the medical appropriation of motherhood. More than a third of women do not birth vaginally. “Not enough milk” is the most common reason given for lactation failure. Twenty percent of mothers suffer clinically diagnosed postnatal depression. Thirty percent of infants cry excessively. In this paper, I search for the milk mother's body in Australian literature. Instead, I find her suffering in my consulting room, and propose that a radical and literary re-imagining of the milk mother is required, in order to free her. I use excerpts from *milkriver journal*, my own memoir, to illustrate how we can celebrate her, valorise her, and re-construct mythological identities that bind her to her own body, to the landscape, and to her ancestral selves.

**APPLE-TREE**

She loves without fear  
*of the loss of herself*  
*since she is the sacred tree.*

*She yields up her dreams to the winds and the sky and  
her roots wind down to the core of the earth and  
she is sap rising, she is leaves senescing and her imperfect  
love is the fly-blown the bitter  
the abundant summer-sweet  
fruit  
on which  
they feast.*

ELSE, Anne  
Victoria University, Wellington

**Good Mothers and Other Mothers: representation, division and resistance**

Motherhood has long been a problem for democratic Western societies. As recent well-publicized statements in New Zealand by both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition exemplify, deploying representations of maternal subjectivities so as to produce politically contrasted groups of “good” mothers and “other” mothers has become a major discursive strategy for managing and shifting public opinion.

Much recent political theorizing has focused not on the mechanisms of structural inequality, but on the figures of various kinds of mother, distinguished primarily by their relationships to men, the state, and the labour market, as well as by ethnicity, sexuality and reproductive behaviour. These differences imply differing maternal subjectivities, ranked by moral value. For example, simply being “on a benefit” or “on welfare” now carries implications of maternal irresponsibility and indifference to children’s moral, social and economic wellbeing, in much the same way as “going out to work” once did. An important strand in recent feminist theorizing, too, has centred on what motherhood means. Again, competing distinctions among mothers are being constructed, based on implied judgements as to how maternal subjectivities conform or fail to conform. Yet feminist theory also offers promising ways to avoid such categorizing, as a key move in resisting what Michel Foucault has usefully described as one of
the central mechanisms of "biopower": "distributing the living in the domain of value and utility".

FARLEY, Helen
University of Queensland

Depictions of 'Mother' in Tarot

In this paper I will argue that the image of the 'mother', while not explicitly depicted as such, has always been present in the tarot deck in some form. In the trump cards, women appeared as feminine allegories of the theological and cardinal virtues, as The Papess (later The Priestess) and as The Empress. In many packs it was a woman who ruled over The World trump, often the most powerful card in the deck. It was in tarot that Queens were first added to the court cards of King, Knight and Jack. By examining the likely identities of the female figures illustrated in Renaissance and ensuing decks, their status in the trump hierarchy and the subsequent divinatory meanings ascribed to them since the nineteenth century (when tarot was first used as a divinatory device), I will argue that over nearly 500 years, the role of the 'mother' in tarot has become increasingly significant. In conclusion, I will demonstrate that in the last twenty years, the image of the mother has become explicit and integral in many New-Age, divinatory tarot decks, some entirely focused around the idea of the archetypal 'mother'.

FERRIS, Denise
Australian National University

Regarding the Familiar: The Maternal Gaze and the Child Image in Fine Art
Photography

I will examine the anxieties, fears and apprehensions concerning children's photographs in fine art. While there is surprisingly little community reaction to the proliferation of children's representations in advertising and other media, there is often unease surrounding their exhibition in art galleries, especially when produced by individuals, mother-artists of their own children.

Considering photography's increasingly contentious role in the construction of childhood is it necessary for mother-artists to make the private realm public and represent the domestic?

For centuries children's images have been in popular and artistic use, while the advent of the mother-artist and photography are more recent phenomena. Do mother-artists photograph their children with desire or pleasure and should their public exhibition be censored? What are the inherent qualities of photography that influence interpretation? I argue that when mothers publicly display photographs of their children, their malleability of meaning particularly when displayed without text, contributes to a deep uncertainty about such a public display inciting 'mother blame' as a consequence. The mother is held not only responsible for the child's depiction but its reading and held accountable for any lack of clarity in its meaning.

While questions of the child-adult power relationship, informed consent and children's representation are crucial, the condemnation of existent reports from the domestic sphere has consequences for society's perception of the maternal and the necessary understanding of the construction of childhood.

(Paper together with PowerPoint Slideshow of Photographs)

FERRIS, Denise
Australian National University

Not a Simple Love Song: Arts Pedagogy and Maternal Thinking

Sara Ruddick defined Maternal Thinking1. essentially as protection, nurture and training. I wish to consider how these and other attributes of Maternal Thinking are evident in the pedagogical model within arts based tertiary teaching.
Many principles of maternal thought used daily in arts pedagogy, a paradigm where the expectation of originality necessitates critical thinking and problem-based learning strategies. In this context, protection may be understood as using power appropriately, transmitting awareness of 'big picture' parameters integral to development and providing the security of support for experimental practice. Nurture promotes confidence and self-esteem, qualities fundamental to the practice of art, where decision-making relies on the confidence to initiate and innovate for speculative outcomes, which are largely undefined and experimental. Training promotes the understanding, ability and methodology to repeat outcomes by fostering critical thinking and problem solving.

Ruddick and others suggest that Maternal Thinking is characterised by ordering and valuing in particular ways, thinking of another in the first instance, and that some may show this consideration though they are not mothers, yet they are 'enacting maternal ways'. Key philosophies in Maternal Thinking contribute to teaching methods fundamental to the learning needs of art students. This model of pedagogy does not mother students but recognises these values in Maternal Thinking as essential to teaching in art education, promoting excellence in pedagogical standards, by acknowledging mutual strategies and similarities of purpose.

GARVAN, Joan  
_Australian National University_  
_Session 2-F2_

**Bringing McNay into the Field**

In my paper I will outline a framework built from theorists Pierre Bourdieu, Paul Ricoeur and the psychoanalytic theorist Cornelius Castoriadis that I will take to the field in order to find insights into gender differences in the 'transition to parenthood'. In the process of transition to parenthood men and women are confronted with multiple contradictions that lie inherent with the related practices, for example: changes to identity, changes to relationships, changes to life course. Their conception of self is informed by social narratives and personal experiences from within a constituted psychological framework. Individuals need to navigate these multiple influences in order to redefine a self that has personal meaning but is also socially viable.

The direction I have taken has been influenced by the feminist theorist Lois McNay who's work is suggestive of how it might be used as a theoretical underpinning for a practical application. The theorist Bourdieu, Ricoeur and Castoriadis work at three levels: gender and power relations, historical context through which power relations and creative responses are played out, and the individual psychoanalytic framework in which individuals are constituted.

GILES, Fiona  
_Sydney University_  
_Session 2-C1_

**Adult Nursing, Induced Lactation and Queering the Maternal Body**

This paper will look at maternal subjectivities in relation to breastfeeding. However, instead of looking at the intersubjectivity entailed in feeding babies, and considered by theorists such as Melanie Klein, I would like to examine the way that maternal subjectivity is reconfigured by induced lactation and adult nursing. That is, what happens to the maternal subject when the breastfeeding function is applied to care and communication that is not, strictly speaking, maternal? My paper would look at adult nursing communities on the internet and examine the ways in which these relationships are understood and nurtured through the discussion groups. The paper will also look at induced lactation, by males and females, for the primary purpose of breastfeeding adopted children, but consider the ramifications of this practice to our understanding of the maternal body, and the heteronormative scope of parenting.
Infanticide News and the Medical Expert Witness

Infanticidal mothers are highly newsworthy. In London, at the height of the Victorian era and again at the end of the twentieth century, infanticide news discourse was elevated in newsworthiness as journalists privileged information from medical 'experts' and created highly sensationalised infanticide news stories.

These infanticide news texts, inscribed with the authority of 'scientific' discourse, created a heightened public awareness of mothers harming their babies and precipitated moral panics more than a century apart. This paper will examine the media representation of infanticidal mothers through two case studies: Victorian London infanticide news and Medical Coroner, Dr Edwin Lankester and his use of exaggerated statistics; and late twentieth and early twenty-first century infanticide news and Professor Sir Roy Meadow and his use of false statistics.

In the 1990s three English mothers were found guilty of murdering their children, in part on the evidence of Meadow. When one of these mothers, Sally Clark, had her conviction quashed in 2003 with the finding that Meadow's evidence was false, Meadow's was found to be an unreliable 'expert witness'. This paper will examine the way in which women, wrongfully accused of infanticide, are represented in the press and how this representation itself reflects the process of manufacturing news, the creation of public opinion and concepts of motherhood.

The Subjugated Voice of the Mother in Enchi Fumiko's The Waiting Years

The use of western theoretical paradigms to support the analysis of non-western narrative is an issue that is fraught with difficulty. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the indisputable validity of notions of difference, the fact remains that there are significant commonalities in the lived experiences of women across cultures. These commonalities can defuse the potentially imperialist project which can otherwise result in applying western theories to non-western texts.

Nowhere are the commonalities experienced by women more apparent than in the realm of maternity. Motherhood can result in the body of the woman being subject to the similar physical and social contingencies in both the west and the east. In fact, it can be argued that reading texts across the two sites can assist scholars working on theories of maternity to understand the similarities in maternal discourses which impinge on women of all backgrounds.

This presentation will discuss the manner in which selected western theories can inform the reading of motherhood narratives written by women in Japan and how those narratives can, in turn, re-inforce the significance of the frameworks so used. Particular attention will be given to the notion of 'transgressive speaking subject,' adapted from the work of Julia Kristeva, and how this theoretical construct permits a valuable re-reading of The Waiting Years (1957, Onnazaka), a modern classic by the writer Enchi Fumiko. In this text Enchi narrates the subjugated voice of her grandmother, a woman caught between the rush to modernise late nineteenth century Japan and the feudal patriarchal practises which continued to prevail. Particular attention will be given to the protagonist's maternal experiences.

Mothering and Narratives: Myths, Reconciliation and Damage

We, as human beings, are embedded and cradled in relationships in much the same way as a set of Russian dolls are embedded within each other. While I exist independently, as a mother, I am also cradled in relationship with my family; in relationship with my community; in relationship with my culture; in relationship with nature and in relationship with the greater
cosmos. One of the ways we reconcile our experience within these relationships is through both popular and dominant narratives. We see, hear, know and speak other narratives and incorporate what we have seen, heard, known and spoken about into our own narratives in order to create and make our personal narratives more meaningful to us and to others. However, running through these relationships is also our relationship in time. The popular and dominant narratives have been formed over time. Our own narrative is also one that has been created through our relationship with our past, as well as within our present, with both these relationships contributing to our future and our future relationships. Thus, the popular and dominant narratives are an inescapable framework from which we find meaning, purpose and direction in our lives. However, a number of myths may arise in the reconciliation of these narratives that may constrict and constrain our present and future narratives. In this paper, drawing on the work of Hilde Lindemann Nelson and Charles Taylor, I explore, through an ethical perspective, the damage experienced by a mother through the reconciliation of personal narrative with dominant and popular narratives of mother, motherhood and mothering.

KENTLYN, Sue  
University of Queensland

“My Mum’s a Dyke”: Maternal Subjectivities in Mid-Life Transition from Heterosexuality to Lesbianism

Kitzinger and Wilkinson documented the ‘seismic shift’ in identity that takes place for women transitioning in adult life from heterosexuality to lesbianism. However they did not look in detail at what happened to their participants’ identity as mothers. Drawing on my own experience, as well as other published accounts, I examine the particular challenges faced by mothers of adolescents in constructing a new lesbian identity. Whether gradual or catastrophically sudden, the collapse of the old heterosexual identity has a profound impact on the woman’s children, and thus on her perceptions of herself as a mother. Constructing a new lesbian identity involves both mother and kids confronting the idea of mum as a sexual being, and going through her own ‘lesbian adolescence’ at a time when they are looking to her for stability and guidance. This is particularly difficult in the context of our culture’s quasi-religious discourse about motherhood as selfless and asexual. The new identity constructed may closely resemble the old, differing only in the new partner’s gender, or may involve a radical rethinking of self and relationships. I demonstrate how Queer Theory provides tools for managing transitional identities and relationships for both mother and children.

KRUG, Karen  
Brock University

Creating ‘Schizophrenia’: How Social Policies Fracture Mothers’ Identities

Mothers are complex subjects, with multiple facets to their identities. As Susan Maushart points out, becoming a mother is a life-changing experience, for which most women are ill-prepared. Confusion over one’s identity is part of the untraveled terrain of new mothers. However inevitable this process of grappling with conflicting views about one’s role and identity is for new mothers, it is not clear whether this serious identity crisis must necessarily continue throughout one’s life as a mother. In this paper I will argue that it is partially a result of the types of social policies that industrialized nations adopt that this schizophrenic reality persists for many mothers. The assumptions made about what counts as work, what is involved in parenting, and what a good citizen is shape the kinds of social policies that influence mothers’ lives. How we structure maternity and parental leaves, how taxation is implemented, what social security nets we provide are all policy decisions with significant implications for mothers. This paper explores the implications for maternal subjectivities of existing social policies, and suggests some alternatives that may reduce the ‘schizophrenia-inducing’ pressures.
This paper examines the representation of motherhood and the maternal body in a select range of Canadian women’s writing from 1990. It argues that a strong theme in this literature is the absent mother figure where issues of abandonment and violence mark private space and characterize the mourned “absenceism” of the mother. The mourned absent mother, however, is also an ideological construct insofar as, from the late-nineteenth-century, a perceived “decline of white matriarchy” has been one of the strongest elegies emanating from a diverse range of powerful cultural commentators and operators. In the work of writers like Jane Urquhart, Dionne Brand, Eden Robinson and Ann-Marie MacDonald, representations of the absent mother work against such highly abstract and ideological figurations of motherhood and, in concretizing the conditions that make her invisible, reflect the wider cultural “forgetting” of particular maternal subjects. They also mark a complex understanding of violence, especially domestic and material violence that is often inseparable from discursive and state violence against the mother. These understandings are integral to conceptualizing and theorizing matriarchy and motherhood in a postcolonial context.

LUCAS, Rose

Monash University

Radical Parturition and Labours of Mourning: limit, possibility, language

The complex experiences of pregnancy and childbirth provide a concentrated, focused view of the paradox of subjectivity - the paradox of viscera and skin, of coming and being called, of mind and body, and primarily, of self and other. It is a sequence of experiences which paradigmatically and dramatically exposes subjectivity as defined, uncomfortably, by the slash, the always being in-between discrete categories, never quite distinct from and yet neither indistinguishable from the boundaries/body of the other. In this sense, motherhood can be seen, as in Kristeva’s discussion of St Theresa, as ecstatic, as drawing out of the body of the mother an almost transcendent thread of connections to an other, both literal and abstract – a jouissance which has been characterised within culture as both eroticised and reified. However, integrally linked to this notion of an ecstatic which reaches toward the divine, the immortal, is the experience of a melancholic loss, the sense that the “production” of the child also leaves the maternal body evacuated, finally unable to rise above the chthonic spheres of corporeality and death. If the child is imagined as the fantasy baby which would externalise the hidden worth of its mother, bringing her into a centralised position of celebration and legitimacy - its actual arrival is most likely to expose such a fantasy; as poet Margaret Atwood writes, “The dreamed sails/collapsed, ragged” as the child journeys away from the helpless mother, into life, toward death. Thus, while in many senses, a life experience of triumph and great joy, the birth of a child also re-enacts a psychic experience of melancholic castration, as the self is not transcended, mortality is not overcome, the safety of and the connection to the child is not assured. This paper will consider this complex of themes in relation to several literary examples: in particular Mary Shelley’s description of Victor Frankenstein’s repudiation of the “child” of his intellectual labours and repressed desires and poet Rita Dove’s rewriting of the Demeter-Persephone myth, Mother Love.
MAHARAJ, Natasha
University of Melbourne

The Social and Cultural Context of Early Motherhood for Migrant Ethnic Indian Women in Melbourne, Australia

In the last few decades, there has been a significant increase in the number of ethnic Indians migrating to Australia, who bring to an existing cultural environment their own beliefs and customs. This ‘difference’ underpins a general assumption that, to be a migrant woman is to be marginalised and disadvantaged. This paper draws from a study that explores, in the Australian context, the cultural and societal contexts of motherhood, and the extent to which these are influential amongst migrant ethnic Indian women from India, Fiji, South Africa and Britain. Women in this study belong to strong, female, familial networks that provide special care and support during early motherhood. I challenge assumptions of disadvantage, and instead, present narratives of motherhood that are positive and embedded in cultural expectation.

MAHER, Jane-Marie
Monash University

Maternal Practice and Motherguilt: At the Crossroads

With my colleague Dr Jo Lindsay (Monash University), I have been working on concepts of maternal practice and how women reconfigure rigid models of motherhood. Here, I examine how the concept of motherguilt is deployed in contemporary Australian discourse, its relationship to maternal practices and to concepts of maternal subjectivity. I suggest that the content of ‘motherguilt’ requires more critical attention and definition and that greater focus on maternal practice offers new ways forward.

MARISKIND, Clare
Massey University

“Like a Second-Class Citizen”: A Narrative Analysis of Identity of Seven Wellington Sole Mothers Receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit

This paper reports on a research project that employed narrative methods to explore how seven sole mothers receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit in Wellington, New Zealand identified and valued themselves. Participants described their experiences, feelings and thoughts of life as a sole mother. From their narratives a number of common themes emerged, including: experiences of mothering; encounters with Work and Income New Zealand; financial difficulties; stigmatisation and stereotyping; stress; and life transitions. The research found that these women are a disadvantaged group who use certain strategies to value themselves and their work as mothers. They drew upon personal and cultural narratives to shape identity and to counter the impact of political ideologies, economic policies and media portrayals. In their narratives, the mothers interpreted their experiences in ways that positioned them as active subjects who negotiated the difficulties of daily life as sole mothers and DPB recipients. They negotiated the pressure to gain employment in various ways and represented themselves as good mothers, hard workers and moral citizens who are stereotyped and stigmatised by others.

MCKAY, Megan
Queensland University of Technology

Remembering Mary and My Other ‘Mothers’

While twenty-first birthdays no longer retain the significance that they once did in Australian society, my twenty-first birthday was an occasion which I eagerly awaited as it was on this date that my grandmother was to bequeath to me the memoirs that she had written of my late mother, Mary. While health reasons have inhibited my grandmother from fully completing this
account, the anticipation of this event led me to deeply reflect upon both my life and the life of my mother and how the connectedness of our lives has shaped my own. These reflections eventually pervaded into my university work, becoming the subject of a meta-autobiography I composed for an Ethics unit. It is this meta-autobiography that forms the basis of my proposed presentation.

An individualistic model of autobiography - termed the Gusdorf model - has dominated life-writing in Western society for centuries (Eakin, 1998, p. 63; Bruner, 1995, p. 166). This model focuses almost exclusively on the life of the individual writing while largely overlooking the relationships and culture in which he or she exists. Feminist critics have posited a countermodel, however, where identity is conceived of as relational rather than autonomous (Eakin, 1998, p. 66, 68).

The mother-daughter relationship is often a primary focus of women autobiographers in their consideration of the influence of others on the constitution of their identity, as is the case with my composition (Sheringham, 2000, p. 189). My identity and life course has undoubtedly been influenced by my mother. The fact that I possess limited memories of the period prior to her passing has prompted me to reflect on this relationship more intensely than I believe I would have were she still alive. While my restricted memories could be explained as a defence reaction to a traumatic event, it also seems plausible that I have constructed my memories so as to remember my mother in the manner that I would like, that is, in good health and in a way that is consistent with my existing view of what a mother is (Parkin, 1997, p. 163; Eakin, 2000, pp. 293 – 294).

While Mary was my biological mother, over the course of my life I have gradually come to conceive the term ‘mother’ in an alternative sense – not just as a biological parent but as a person who cares for you the way a mother does; one who is tender, affectionate, kind-hearted and patient. Thus, I regard myself as being blessed with multiple ‘mothers’. As my primary carer, it is father who has provided me with the most mothering and assumed the majority of the duties characteristically associated with a mother. This arrangement has shaped my sister and I in numerous ways, most notably by instilling us with perceptions of gender and gender roles that differ from those traditionally held in Western society.

I will endeavour to present these themes and issues through an exploration of the memories I possess of my mother and critical reflection on their construction and omissions utilising social scientific theories and concepts. Additionally, I will reflect on the memories I have of my father and examine how his role in my upbringing has influenced my identity.

MILLER, Tina

Oxford Brookes University

Gendered Selves, Emotions and Reflexivity: Doing Mothering

Transition to first-time motherhood provides a rich arena, in which to explore the contours of mothering, motherhood and gendered practices in late modernity. In this paper the findings from research focusing on women’s experiences of transition and first-time motherhood are drawn upon to explore the interplay between gendered selves, emotions and reflexivity practices. This is in order to explore how far, and indeed whether, it is possible to discern and disentangle the ‘unconscious determinants of individual subjectivity’ in relation to new mothering (Elliott, 2001:110). Becoming a mother challenges schema’s of self understanding and can reaffirm its tenuous and enduring dimensions, whilst profoundly emphasising gendered constructions of caring responsibilities and expectations of women ‘being there for others’. In many ways becoming a mother and mothering appear inextricably bound up with essentialism and essentialist claims about women’s bodies and the debates will no doubt continue. Yet at the heart of these debates is the question of what is unconscious or pre-reflexive and instinctive and what is socially constructed. Using the findings from a longitudinal qualitative study this paper will argue that expectations grounded in essentialist ideas are challenged when new mothers find that instinctive, maternal feelings they had anticipated drawing upon are not there. These experiences, which are set against and shaped by a highly gendered and morally underpinned backdrop, are significant for feminist theorising of how selves as mothers are experienced, understood and (reflexively) narrated in late modernity.
MORRIS, Anne  
*University of Adelaide*

**Monstrous Mothers and Fearless Fathers: The Dynamics of Maternal Alienation**

When the Adelaide action research project, the Maternal Alienation Project, was launched in late 2002, a complex and interesting process of change began. Maternal alienation is a concept developed to describe an aspect of gendered violence, whereby perpetrators of abuse deliberately attempt to destroy the relationship between mother and child, with often devastating effects on women and children. As the Maternal Alienation Project influenced service-providers and organisations to become more aware of maternal alienation and develop practices to respond to it, a political struggle ensued between the men's rights groups and the project, that projected onto a public screen the dynamics of maternal alienation.

Perpetrators of maternal alienation use a web of strategies to persuade their children, families and communities that mothers are mad, malicious and monstrous. At the same time they convey a picture of themselves as rational, sane, heroic and victimised. These images resonate with wider socio-cultural discourses of mothers and fathers, which explains why services and practitioners can unwittingly replicate the dynamics of maternal alienation, undermining the mother-child relationship, and bolstering perpetrators' authority and power. When the men's rights groups attacked the Maternal Alienation Project, it was possible to recognise the tyrannical strategies of maternal alienation being used publicly. Similarly, their campaign manipulated the gendered images created within maternal alienation. While the project changed practice and attitudes at one level, on the political front it appeared to come to represent the mad, malicious and monstrous mother of maternal alienation.

This paper discusses the positive change generated by the project, and analyses the political response to it.

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MORRIS, Anne  
*University of Adelaide*

**Too Attached to Attachment Theory?**

Attachment Theory began with John Bowlby's work in the 1950's, claiming that a parent's (meaning mother's) responses to its child create a particular quality of attachment, which predetermined that person's patterns of relationships from birth to death. From the 1980s Attachment Theory experienced an enormous revival within the U.S. and Australia, and now forms the basis of many early childhood programs as well as counselling and therapeutic interventions with individuals, couples and families. Despite this popularity, there has been little written that critiques these approaches and presents alternative points of view.

Attachment Theory accords with common-sense views of mothering, and accepts women's nurturing role as natural and inevitable. It does nothing to challenge expectations that mothers should be constantly available to their children, their gratification of children's 'needs' being paramount. Further, it concurs with a model, common in the recent history of mothering, whereby experts of all types tell mothers how to raise their children.

This paper will explore some of what Attachment Theory problematises and what it ignores. How is attachment theory being used, and is it helpful to women and children? How does it relate to discourses of mothering, and to a feminist agenda of creating a more just society?

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MULLER, Vivienne  
*Queensland University of Technology*

**"Age Shall not Weary Them" – The Old Maternal Body and the Case of Adriana Iliescu**

Adriana Iliescu is the 66-year-old Romanian woman who gave birth to a baby girl in the Giulești Maternity Hospital in Bucharest on January 16th, 2005. This event, cause of much
media attention, has generated interest and debate around issues relating to the reproductive female body, to mothering and motherhood. These responses have ranged from humorous veneration of Iliescuc as a “role model for revisionists” who are “forever telling women they can have it all”, a poster pin-up for the elderly females “those toasting life-sequencing as the bright new/old solution to the problems of balancing work and family”; to the view of Iliescuc as a selfish woman, depriving her child of healthy parenting. The bio-medical view of her decision and the subsequent birth of her child held that given her age, her situation was potentially dangerous to her health and to that of her child. The mostly negative reactions underpin a not-unfamiliar discourse of the good and proper maternal body, a discourse which relegates it to a specific and acceptable subject position within the symbolic and social orders. Moreover, as an older maternal body, Adriana Iliescuc’s act is doubly abject - the aging and the maternal body in Kristeva terms participates in the unacceptable and disturbing processes of boundary crossing.

This presentation will analyse some of the responses to Iliescuc’s situation, arguing that despite much social condemnation with its accompanying denial of female subjectivity, Iliescuc’s “happy event” allows for the leakage of “subordinate” centres of maternal power into a “healthy” contamination of the mainstream.

NÄTKitIN, Ritva
University of Tampere

Finnish Women’s Autobiographies: Answer to the Invitation to be a National Agent

I have read and interpreted the autobiographies of Finnish women written in the year 1991, which told about mothering in the decades from 1940’s -1980’s. These autobiographies are unpublished stories, gathered for research purposes, and stored in the Folklore Archive of Finnish Literature Society; collection is named ’Satasärmäinen nainen’ (Women with a hundred angulars and wheels). I chose for my dissertation 30 stories out of 651 in order to separate ‘a story of mothering’ from them.

I asked the data, how did the Finnish mothers answer the invitation to be a national agent and respond to the nationalist discourses in their narratives of motherhood, by the conventions and plot structures used in their narration. After the Second World War, Finland favored population growth and the unity of the nation, and it is seen in the autobiographies. Plot structure analysis revealed three narratives in the autobiographies written by Finnish women: familialist, maternalist and individualist narrative. They comprised balancing between the triangle of the child’s good, the woman’s own welfare and the upholding of the couple relationship. Especially the maternalist answer, given usually by single parenting mothers, is the most interesting.

PAtTerson, Lesley
Massey University

Narrating the (Lone) Maternal Subject: The Validation Stories of ‘Ordinary Women in Extraordinary Circumstances’

Women negotiate their subject positions as mothers within a hierarchy of maternal legitimacy in which not all mothers are equal. With this in mind, this paper describes the concept of ‘validation stories’. This concept was developed as a result of a research project that examined how women parenting alone made sense of their lives in the context of dominant discourses that construct ‘lone mothers’ as ‘other’. In talking of their lives, the women drew upon similar narratives to position themselves as ordinary women in extraordinary circumstances. In effect, their validation stories repaired the disjuncture between the idealised maternal subject and what actually happens in women’s lives. The paper concludes with some general remarks about narrative research as a feminist research methodology, and the potentials and limitations of narrative research for transforming contemporary gender relations.
PLITT, Tatjana

RMIT Media Arts

The Mother Figure as a Cultural Construct within Images

The Mother is a series of photography and video art works exploring the mother figure as a social construct that is not fixed, but changing with the cultural values and political forces of the time. The mother figure has numerous contradictory associations attached to her and society has conflicting expectations of her and her identity. As one the most revered figures of our culture, she has become one of the most scrutinised. This work aims to make viewers aware of their own assumptions about mothers and question their basis.

By creating 8 highly constructed portraits referencing the way the Madonna figure has historically been represented in paintings, I am highlighting our construction of her identity and challenging the ideals traditionally associated with her. On the other hand, through our culture’s excessive obsession with careers and achievement, motherhood has become less valued and respected. In these portraits, by removing her from any context by which she could be judged (eg socio-economic status, work), I am disallowing the viewer to ‘weigh up’ the mother in any identifiable terms, other than herself.

Not being a mother myself, I have carried out extensive research, including in depth interviews with 12 Melbourne mothers.

PORTER, Marie

University of Queensland

The 1950s White Australian Mother as Subject?

ROSEWARNE FOSTER, Julie

Monash University

Visual Narratives: Self Depiction and Maternity in Women’s Art

This paper presents an aspect of my on-going research which investigates the representation of maternal subjectivity in artworks by women. The themes of absence, loss, ambivalence, and abjection are frequently encoded in art by women when they depict themselves as mothers or represent the maternal body. I contend that an examination of these themes through visual representation and analysis can extend existing notions of maternal subjectivity beyond religious or sentimental versions. My research combines recent feminist psychoanalytic theory, cultural context and formal visual analysis.

SHAW, Rhonda

Victoria University, Wellington

The Question of Gift Relationships in Donor Assisted Reproduction

This paper explores the rhetoric of gift-exchange as it pertains to the donation of ovarian eggs and participation in surrogate pregnancy arrangements. The discussion is supplemented by qualitative research, which involves the analysis of in-depth interviews with New Zealand women engaged in these practices. A number of commentators have argued that giving reproductive gifts, especially oocytes and surrogate pregnancy services, does not constitute altruism, but reproduces gender inequality. However, the narrative experiences of donors involved in my research tend to suggest that, as well as constructing new kinship forms, women’s moral identities as autonomous agents are created in the donative process. Despite
this, many anxieties and contradictions involving the exchanges of donor-assisted reproduction remain. This paper discusses some of those complexities in light of theorisations of the gift relationship.

VAN LAAR, Carla

RMIT University

Session 3-A3

“Bereaved Mother’s Heart”: A Subjective Arts Inquiry into Being a Bereaved Mother

This research is about two very significant aspects of my life; being a bereaved mother, and my creative work. These aspects of my experience are intermingled; being a bereaved mother has informed my creative work, and the processes of engaging in creative work have transformed how I experience the loss of my son. This art-based study provides insights into maternal bereavement and therapeutic processes, and is relevant to the fields of bereavement, loss, trauma and creative arts therapies.

The project theorises core aspects of traumatic loss, and provides an example of how creative processes can transform grief, fear and guilt. It also provides a documented, in-depth subjective analysis of a devastating life event that affects more mothers than we commonly assume.

The creative project represents the essence of this inquiry. I have endeavoured to create, in Tolstoy’s words, “a truly artistic impression” of my experiences of being a bereaved mother as revealed to me through artwork and narrative. This project aims to provide the type of “accurate portrayal” that has been identified as lacking in clinical literature. The book “Bereaved Mother’s Heart” is due for publication this year through St Luke’s Innovative Resources, Bendigo.
BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Sharon Abbey is the Director of Women’s Studies at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario Canada and a professor in the Faculty of Education. She teaches courses in Images of Mothering, Gender and Education, and Feminist Research Methods as well as supervising thesis work as the graduate and doctoral level. Dr. Abbey’s current research interests include embodied knowing and arts-based research as well as gender factors in school literacy and educational administration.

Dr Helena Austin is lecturer in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University. Her research has used Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorisation Analysis to examine the enactment of the category ‘child’ in the school context. The recent book Schooling the Child: the making of students in classrooms (Austin H, Dwyer, B and Freebody, P 2003 Routledge Falmer) reports on much of that work. Her postgraduate teaching examines issues of identity and categorisation in institutional contexts. Dr Carpenter and Dr Austin are collaborating on the project Motherhood in the Margins. This project examines issues around motherhood particularly in the context of ADHD.

Dr Brydie-Leigh Bartleet lectures and conducts at the School of Music at the University of Queensland, and is the Senior Research Assistant in the Research Centre at the Queensland Conservatorium at Griffith University. She recently completed her PhD in Music and her research focussed on the lives of female conductors.

Elaine Bernstein is a 25 year-old mother of two completing her PhD through the faculty of Media, Society and Culture at Curtin University of Technology in WA. She is the recipient of the Divisional Postgraduate Award for the top Humanities doctoral candidate. Her thesis, “Reconceiving the Maternal,” theorises feminist strategies aimed at shifting western motherhood beyond the patriarchal discursive framework that defines it.

Helen Bowcock is a final year PhD student at School of Sociology, University of Kent, UK. She is a Bachelor of Arts, Durham University and Graduate Diploma, Department of Industrial Relations, University of New South Wales. She returned to academic research after fifteen years in information technology industry and was formerly Director of Human Resources for an Australian software company.

Lisa Brindle is a social worker and mother of three children. Since the birth of her son, Sean, who has Down syndrome, she has been actively involved with disability advocacy and parent support organisations in Queensland, Australia. Lisa’s doctoral research study, ‘Stories of Choice: Mothers of Children with Down Syndrome and the Ethics of Prenatal Diagnosis’, examined the ethical issues presented by prenatal testing for disability. Lisa currently works for Queensland Advocacy Inc. as a bioethics advocacy project worker.

Petra Büskens is a lecturer in the Sociology Programme at the University of Melbourne, Australia. Her current research engages with questions of maternal identity in the contemporary west with a specific empirical study on mothers who leave. She has published essays on motherhood, social structure, individualism and sexuality. In 2001 she was visiting scholar at the Centre for Research on Mothering, York University, Toronto. She has been awarded the Australian Federation of University Women Foundation Bursary for her research. Petra lives in Daylesford, Australia with her ten year old daughter Mia.

Linda Burnett is currently working on a study of maternal subjectivity for a PhD. Within a psychoanalytic and feminist framework this project includes in-depth interviews with a diverse group of women who are mothers. Linda works at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, and is the mother of a daughter, aged sixteen.

Dr Lorelei Carpenter is a lecturer in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University. Her teaching is in the area of inclusive education and educational
counselling. Her research areas have involved examining the concepts of difference, disability and oppression. As well, she has explored the notion of research as therapy through using narrative methodologies.

Sheree Cartwright holds a BA (Hons) degree in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Newcastle, and is currently undertaking the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Social Science and Planning at RMIT University. Sheree is currently exploring “What are the key factors which influence the ways in which women make decisions about paid work and family after childbirth?” Sheree is also employed as an ARC Research Assistant at the Centre for Applied Social Research focusing on work-life integration in two Australian organizations, and tutors in Qualitative Social Research at RMIT University. Her current research interests include: paid work/family, gender, and qualitative research methodology.

Heather Douglas has conducted two major research projects while working for the University of Queensland. One project investigated the Queensland community services system, the other was a large disability study. After several years in academic research, Heather enrolled for a PhD to study community leaders at Griffith University, Brisbane. While maintaining a career, studying, and keeping the socks washed, Heather also engaged in extensive voluntary social development to assist people with hidden disadvantage, including people with disabilities and mental health problems. The independent action research projects based on her voluntary development work has provided material for several presentations at national conferences and academic papers. One of Heather’s very significant claims to fame is being the mother of three fine young men, including one with autism.

Pamela Douglas is a mother of two, a Brisbane general practitioner of eighteen years experience, and author of a recently completed memoir, milk river journal. The paper Milk Mother is a thesis she is completing for her Masters of Philosophy in Creative Writing at the University of Queensland. It is a counterfoil to a clinical analysis she published in 2004 (in the journal Medical Hypotheses) entitled Excessive crying and gastro-oesophageal reflux disease in infancy: a misalignment of biology and culture, at the completion of a research fellowship with the Centre for General Practice.

Anne Else, a Research Associate and PhD student in the Gender and Women’s Studies programme at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, has published widely on aspects of motherhood, including A Question of Adoption: Closed Stranger Adoption in New Zealand, 1944-1974 (1991); False Economy: The Conflict between Paid and Unpaid Work (1996); and (with Sandra Coney) Protecting Our Future: The Case for Greater Regulation of Assisted Reproductive Technology (1999).

Helen Farley is a PhD candidate within the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at the University of Queensland. Her thesis is an exploration of tarot symbolism from the fifteenth century until the present day. Helen is currently teaching about the history and practice of divination. She is also the author of a popular monograph on divination and is the editor of Khthónios: A Journal for the Study of Religion.

Denise Ferris, a visual artist, lectures in Photomedia at the School of Art, Faculty of the Arts, The Australian National University, Canberra, and is currently a Doctor of Creative Art candidate in Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney. Recent exhibitions and her forthcoming dissertation Maternalism, the last ism centre on photographic representations of the maternal and the anxieties generated by the ubiquity of the child image in picturing maternal relationships.

Joan Garvan was a mature aged student and completed a Master of Arts, in Women’s Studies and Human Geography aged 42, and became pregnant for the first time in the same year. Now the two children are 9 and 11, she has set out on a PhD study at the Australian National University looking at gender differences in ‘transition to parenthood’. The topic and experience of motherhood has become all consuming while endeavouring to absorb and include dimensions like music, art, walking, friends, and fun.
Fiona Giles is a lecturer in the Department of Media and Communications at Sydney University. Her most recent book is Fresh Milk: The Secret Life of Breasts (2003).

Nicola Goc is a lecturer in Journalism and Media Studies at the University of Tasmania. Her research area is the media representation of women, in particular motherhood and deviancy. Recent work includes 'Mothers and Madness: The Media Representation of Postpartum Psychosis' Twohig, Peter and Vera Kalitikus, eds., Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Health, Illness and Disease. New York: Rodopi, 2004, and 'Monstrous Mothers', Niall Scott, ed., Monsters and the Monstrous Media Inter-Disciplinary Press: Oxford, United Kingdom, 2005. She is currently completing a PhD on Infanticide News and the Medical Expert Witness.


Jackie Huggins AM is the Deputy Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at the University of Queensland and is currently the Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia. She is a Council Member of the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and was a member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Review Panel. She is a Director of the Telstra Foundation and Chain Reaction Foundation. She was a former Executive Member on the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1994-2000), the former Chair of the Queensland Domestic Violence Council (2001) and Board Member of the State Library of Queensland. Jackie was a Commissioner for Queensland for the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. She is also a member of the Indigenous Forum of the Australian Youth Foundation. Jackie has published widely on Australian Indigenous issues, in particular history and women’s studies. She authored Auntie Rita (with Rita Huggins 1994) and Sistergirl (1999). In 2000 she received the Premier’s Millennium Award for Excellence in Indigenous Affairs and in 2001 was awarded an AM for her work with Indigenous people, particularly reconciliation, literacy, women’s issues and social justice.

Jenny Jones holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) and was awarded a university medal from the Queensland University of Technology for her Honours dissertation “Ties that Bind: A mother’s voice on love, loss and the paradox of separation and dependency”. She is currently tutoring within the Ethics discipline of Humanities and Human Services at QUT, Carseldine. She is also working on a paper, “Life within a Fairground”, for an edited book on maternal subjectivities.

Sue Kentlyn is doing post-graduate study at the University of Queensland in Sociology, looking at domestic labour in same-sex households. Formerly a pastor’s wife and missionary, she commenced study in 1996, and ‘came out’ in 1999. She has a 23 year old daughter and a 25 year old son.

Karen Krug is a full-time mother of two girls, and a full-time associate professor in the Centre for the Environment at Brock University, Canada. She lives in an urban location in Ontario, but after twenty years away still calls her family farm in Saskatchewan home.

Dr Rose Lucas works in the School of Literary, Visual and performance Studies at Monash University. She has published widely in the areas of feminist theory, representations of the maternal, poetics, and psychoanalysis. She is currently working on a project entitled "The
Labours of Mourning: Loss and language in the poetry of Gwen Harwood, Anne Sexton and Margaret Atwood.*

Megan McKay is currently completing her final year of a Bachelor of Arts degree at the Queensland University of Technology. Her passion concerning issues of human rights, notably access to university education and the impact of continuing warfare in the Middle East, prompted her to choose Human Rights and Ethics as her degree major.

Natasha Maharaj was born in Durban, South Africa. Her family later migrated to New Zealand, where she obtained B.Sc., B.A and M.A. (Hons) degrees from The University of Auckland. She is currently completing a Ph.D. at the Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, School of Population Health, at The University of Melbourne. Her research examines identity and the social and cultural context of early motherhood among ethnically Indian migrant women in Melbourne. This year she has presented her research at the Fifth National Women's Health Conference in Melbourne, in April and at the Australian Society for Psychosocial Obstetrics and Gynaecology Conference in Melbourne, in August.

Jane Maree Maher has degrees in Law and Arts (Hons) (University of Melbourne 1991) and a PhD from La Trobe University 1999. She works at Monash University in the Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research as a lecturer and researcher. Her current research is focused on women, family life and work and new models of motherhood.

Clare Mariskind is a Masters student at Massey University, New Zealand. Her main interests are human development, adult education, and narrative research. Her experiences as a sole mother have led her to question the social construction of sole mothers as particular types of persons, and resulted in this research project.

Tina Miller is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Social policy at Oxford Brookes University. Her research and teaching interests include mothering and caring responsibilities, selves and identity construction, health and illness experiences, narrative, and qualitative research methods. Her recent publications include ‘Making Sense of Motherhood: A Narrative Approach’ (2005: Cambridge University Press) and ‘Ethics in Qualitative Research’ (2002: Sage) which she co-edited with other members of the women’s workshop. Her doctoral work explored women’s journeys into first-time motherhood and was entitled “An exploration of first-time motherhood: narratives of transition”. Tina has three daughters and lives in the UK.

Amanda Montague is the Director for the San Francisco Child Care Providers’ Association, and a contributing author to the Children’s Advocate, a news magazine covering public policy issues affecting children and families in California. She received her B.A. in Economics from Smith College and her Ed.M. in Risk and Prevention from Harvard University.

Anne Morris is conducting her doctoral research (University of Adelaide) on the Maternal Alienation Project, an action research project she implemented across a number of sectors and organisations to develop service responses to ‘maternal alienation’, the deliberate undermining of mother-child relationships within gendered violence. With a background as a practitioner and manager, she has published and presented widely, and educates practitioners on maternal alienation and women-centred practices.

Dr. Vivienne Muller teaches in the School of Creative Writing and Cultural Studies. She has an abiding interest in cultural representations and theorisms of the mother and has written a number of articles on the topic. She has also co-edited a book on masculinities (Manning the next Millennium) and recently received her doctorate from the University of Queensland. Her thesis was on “Imagining Brisbane, narratives of the city, 1975-1995”.

Ritva Johanna Närki is Finnish, and a Doctor of Social Sciences, University of Tampere, Finland, 1997 (social policy) and a Docent in Social policy, University of Tampere, Finland, 2001. She has four children and is unmarried. She is currently an Acting Professor.
Lesley Patterson is a senior lecturer in the School of Sociology, Social Policy, and Social Work, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand. Her research interests include gender and domestic life, social inequalities, narrative analysis, and social identities. Currently Dr Patterson is beginning a project investigating the negotiation of parental identities by new first-time parents, and has recently completed research with a group of lone mothers exploring their sense-making strategies in relation to dominant liberal welfare discourses.

Tatjana Plitt is a multimedia artist in her final year at RMIT Media Arts. She is particularly interested in promoting issues women in the arts are pursuing. She is one of the creators of the online publication Devoid Magazine, whose focus is women in the arts.

Marie Porter, from the University of Queensland, has almost completed her PhD on the topic of Australian mothering in the 1950s. She is co-editor, with Patricia Short and Andrea O'Reilly, of the recently released book *Motherhood: Power and Oppression*, published by Women's Press, Toronto. This book is a selection of papers from the first Australian International Academic Conference on Mothering held in 2001. At present Marie is the Chairperson of the Organising Committee for the third such conference. She has presented numerous papers both here and overseas and has published several articles. She is a mother and grandmother herself.

Julie Rosewarne Foster lectures in Art Education at Monash University in Melbourne Australia. Her research interests include recent cultural theory, contemporary art, and arts pedagogy.

Rhonda Shaw is a lecturer in Sociology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. She is currently undertaking research on ethics and bodily gifting in the areas of cross-nursing, ovarian egg donation, and surrogate pregnancy.

Carla Van Laar is currently undertaking Doctoral research and has a Master's Degree in Creative Arts Therapy. She is a practicing artist and teaches postgraduate students at RMIT University in Melbourne. She specialises in working with people who have been traumatised. She is mother to Henry and loves road trips and surfing.