

AMIRCI

Seventh International Conference

Motherhood, Feminisms and the Future

RMIT University

Melbourne

17–20 July 2014

Sponsored by:

- The **School of Media and Communication**, RMIT University
- **Screen Cultures Research Group**, RMIT University
- The **Australian Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (AMIRCI)** formerly ARM-A)
- The **Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement** in Canada (**MIRCI** formerly ARM)
- The **Australian College of Applied Psychology (ACAP)**
- The **Contenders, Design Company, Melbourne**

The Australian Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community and Involvement (AMIRCI)

AMIRCI is a non-profit incorporated association. Initially established in early 2006 as the Association for Research on Motherhood/Mothers/Motherwork (ARM-A), the name changed to The Australian Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (AMIRCI) in 2010.

Our feminist organisation is interested in promoting research into mothering/motherhood/ motherwork and related areas, including maternal subjectivities and identities, cultural representations and differences.

This valuable field of research seeks to raise critical awareness of the particularities and complexities of mothering embedded in Australian society. Our membership is predominantly composed of scholars but we welcome writers, artists, activists, professionals, groups, agencies policy makers, educators and anyone interested in promoting feminist mothering.

We are committed to the inclusion of all, both mothers and those interested in mothers/mothering. We recognise that the experience of being a mother varies through dislocation, discrimination, culture and context

Areas of Interest and Research

Members are drawn from many scholarly fields (e.g. religion, ethics, sociology, nursing, psychology, literature, art, law, and economics) hence areas of interest and research are varied and frequently interdisciplinary. For example;

- The portrayal of mothering in media
- The commonalities in mothering; the diversity in mothering
- Re-thinking and re-imagining the dominant shared understanding of mothering in Australian society
- The social and cultural constructions of motherhood
- Legal and economic inequities
- Philosophies and representations of the maternal body
- The experiences and practices of mothers

For more information about AMIRCI please visit www.mothering.org.au

Past Conferences

2011 - 6th biennial Australian International conference, **Mothers at the Margins**. The University of Queensland, Brisbane.

A selection of these papers will be available in *Mothers at the Margins: Stories of Challenge, Resistance and Love*. Edited by Jenny Jones, Marie Porter and Lisa Raith. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

2009 - 5th biennial Australian International conference, **The Mother and History: Past and Present**. The University of Queensland, Brisbane.

2007 - 4th biennial Australian International conference **The Mother: Images, Issues and Practices**. The University of Queensland, Brisbane.

A selection of these papers can be found in *Mother Texts: Narratives and Counter Narratives* (2010). Edited by Julie Kelso and Marie Porter. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

2005 - 3rd Australian conference, **Representing and Theorizing Maternal Subjectivities**. The University of Queensland, Brisbane.

A selection of these papers can be found in *Representing and Theorizing Maternal Subjectivities* (2008). Edited by Julie Kelso and Marie Porter. Newcastle On Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press.

2002 - 2nd Australian conference, **Performing Motherhood: Ideology, Agency and Experience**. La Trobe University, Melbourne.

2001 - Inaugural biennial Australian conference, **Power/Oppression**. The University of Queensland, Brisbane.

A selection of these papers can be found in *Motherhood: Power and Oppression* (2005). Edited by Marie Porter, Andrea O'Reilly and Patricia Short. Toronto: Womens Press.

Conference programme

Thursday 17 July

2.00 – 4.00 pm	Registration
4.00 – 4.45 pm	Welcome to country TBC
4.45 – 5.00 pm	Welcome to delegates Megan Rogers
5.00 – 5.30 pm	AMIRCI welcome and information Marie Porter and Lisa Raith
5.30 pm onwards	Book launch <i>Mothers, mothering and motherhood across cultural differences: a reader</i> edited by Andrea O'Reilly

- drinks and cocktail food provided after registration

Friday 18 July

8.00 – 8.30 am	Registration desk will be attended
9:00 – 10:30 am	Keynote address: Fiona Green
10:30 – 11:00 am	Morning tea
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	Concurrent sessions A
12:30 – 2.00 pm	Lunch
2:00 – 3:30 pm	Concurrent sessions B
3:30 – 4:00 pm	Afternoon tea
4:00 – 5:30 pm	Concurrent sessions C
5:30 – 6:15 pm	AMIRCI Annual General Meeting
6.15pm onwards	Own arrangements for dinner

Saturday 19 July

8.00 – 8.30 am	Registration desk will be attended
9:00 – 10:30 am	Keynote address: Julie Stephens
10:30 – 11:00 am	Morning tea
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	Concurrent sessions D
12:30 – 2:00 pm	Lunch
2:00 – 3:30 pm	Concurrent sessions E
3:30 – 4:00 pm	Afternoon tea
4:00 – 5:30 pm	Concurrent sessions F
5:30 pm – 6.30pm	Launch of Demeter Press Book: <i>Stay at home moms</i> by Elizabeth Boyd
6.30pm onwards	Dinner at Oxford Scholar Hotel (next to conference location). Food and beverages to be ordered at dinner.

Sunday 20 July

9:00 – 10:30 am	Concurrent sessions G
10:30 - 11.00 am	Morning tea
11:00 am - 12.30 pm	Plenary panel
12:30 – 1:00 pm	Closing remarks/conference reflections

A3	<u>Representations of motherhood</u>	Chair: Lisa Raith
1-A3	Keeping mum: the cyclical nature of family secrets and the endless orbit they repeat	Kate Cantrell Queensland University of Technology
2-A3	Motherhood and feminism: a comparative study of Baby Kamble's <i>The prisons we broke</i> and Lynette Russell's <i>A little bird told me</i>	Parmod Kumar Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi
3-A3	Dead mamas, from <i>Bambi</i> to Olaf's Frozen Nose	Margaret Morgan Artist, Los Angeles

CONCURRENT SESSION B
(2:00 pm – 3:30 pm)

Rm		
B1	<u>Motherhood and technology</u>	Chair: Lisa Raith
1-B1	Another way to end the evening: reading and discussion of personal story-telling in internet discussions of motherhood	Andie Fox Writer and columnist
2-B1	Loneliness of South Korean mothers in their thirties and forties, and social media	Hangsub Choi Kookmin University, South Korea
B2	<u>The maternal body</u>	Chair: Marie Porter
1-B2	Taking account of the material maternal body	Linda Burnett University of New South Wales
2-B2	Birth art as a form of visual activism	Jasmine Salomon Australian Catholic University

3-B2	Women's experience of rechanneling their thoughts following emergency postpartum hysterectomy	Rakime Elmir University of Western Sydney
B3	<u>Mothers, mothering and motherhood in literature</u>	Chair: Fiona Green
1-B3	'They took my milk': the multiple meanings of breast milk in Toni Morrison's <i>Beloved</i>	Barbara Mattar Australian Catholic University
2-B3	A new narrative: construction of the maternal journey	Megan Rogers RMIT University
3-B3	What can we learn from Jean Rhys's novel? Motherhood and oppression in <i>After leaving Mr Mackenzie</i> (1931)	Hou Shu-Hui National Chengchi University, Taiwan

CONCURRENT SESSION C
(4:00 pm – 5:30 pm)

Rm

C1	<u>Personalising motherhood</u>	Chair: Marie Porter
1-C1	'Willie you will live longer than me': reclaiming mothering my first-born	Sue Middlewood
2-C1	Composing maternal identities: The living realities of 'mature' mothers	Jenny Jones Griffith University
3-C1	Silenced voices: post-natal depression, motherhood and the creative process	Diane Humphery
C2	<u>Motherhood and culture</u>	Chair: Lisa Raith
1-C2	Growing men: Reflections from South African Feminist Mothers on raising black sons in a highly racialised context	Emma Arogundade Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa
2-C2	An assessment into the role of rural women in family integration and establishing communication channels: findings of a	Mahaina Jawad Lahore School of Economics

cross-sectional study in Pakistan

3-C2 Motherhood in transnational families: Vietnamese case studies **Tran Phi Phuong**
University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam

C3 **Motherhood and sexualisation** Chair: Sophie Brock

1-C3 Motherhood and sexualised culture **Amanda Kane Rooks**
Central Queensland University

2-C3 Mothers and lovers: The sexual mother in the writing of Silvina Ocampo **Catherine Arnold**
University of Queensland

3-C3 Looking and being looked at: data from focus group discussions **Rhonda Shaw**
Victoria University

Saturday 19th July

Rm **KEYNOTE ADDRESS:** **JULIE STEPHENS**
(9:00 am – 10:30 am)
Chair: Megan Rogers
Robotic seals and i-nannies: maternal care in the era of the ‘outsourced self’

CONCURRENT SESSION D **(11:00 am – 12:30 pm)**

Session Rm	Titles	Presenters
D1	<u>Motherhood and birth</u>	Chair: Megan Rogers
1-D1	Handle with care: negotiating and blaming the fragile maternal body	Evelyn Tsitas RMIT University
2-D1	Birth: the pain and power	Rhea Dempsey Speaker, counsellor and birth attendant
3-D1	The transgenerational caesarean section –	Eva-Maria Müller-

a curse or a chance

Markfort

DFH-German
Professional
Association for
Homebirth

D2

Mothers on the margins

Chair: Lisa Raith

1-D2

Picking up the pieces: mothering a young
adult-child with a mental illness

Jenny Jones
Griffith University

2-D2

'Misfitting' mothers: feminism, disability and
mothering

**Rachel
Robertson**
Curtin University

3-D2

The figure of the mother in Indigenous
women's writing in Australia

Carole Ferrier
University of
Queensland

D3

Queer mothering

Chair: Jasmine
Symons

1-D3

Queer mothering in a straight world

**Elizabeth
Sutherland**
Swinburne TAFE

2-D3

Lesbian motherhood and feminism – a tale
of the baby and the bathwater?

Mel Irenyi

***CONCURRENT SESSION E
(2:00 pm – 3:30 pm)***

Rm

E1

The gender of motherhood

Chair: Sophie Brock

1-E1

Implications for mothers, fathers and the
community on the development of an ethic
of infant care

Gillian Joiner
University of Tasmania

2-E1

Who raises the children? Cross-cultural
perspectives on mothering ideologies and

Karlene Dickens
Occupational Therapist

	child rearing practices	
3-E1	Exploring the role of stay-at-home mothers in family health	Kathryn McGuigan Massey University
E2	<u>Birth and beyond: maternal health and wellbeing panel</u>	Chair: Andie Fox
	This session is set out in a workshop format which includes an extended period for discussion of issues raised. The panel comprises practitioners who are working with women and their families, and who are a critical touchstone between the community and our health and welfare systems.	
	Belinda Horton (Post and Antenatal Depression Association); Virginia Schmied (University of Western Sydney); Ruth DeSouza (Monash University); Nicole Highet (Centre for Perinatal Excellence)	
E3	<u>The art of motherhood</u>	Chair: Lisa Raith
1-E3	Paint is my analyst, motherhood my muse	Jasmine Symons University of South Australia
2-E3	Mamapalooza – annual international festival honouring mothers in the arts	Catherine Walsh and Vee Malnar Mamapalooza
	<i>CONCURRENT SESSION F (4:00 pm – 5:30 pm)</i>	
Rm		
F1	<u>Motherhood and identity</u>	Chair: Lisa Raith
1-F1	‘Having it all, or risking it all?’ Choice, risk and delayed motherhood in the United Kingdom	Kirsty Budds Keele University

2-F1 How much is enough? Exploring the ways women negotiate their own and society's expectations **Robin Shortland-Jones**
Curtin University

3-F1 Between a rock and a hard place: the 'crisis of identity' amongst new mothers **Jane Hasler**
University of Sydney

F2 **Motherhood and breastfeeding** Chair: Kerreen Reiger

1-F2 Occupation hazards of wet-nursing: transmission of syphilis from infected infants and other risks **Virginia Thorley**
The University of Queensland

2-F2 Dis-embodied motherhood and involved fatherhood: feminist debates over infant feeding **Victoria Team**
La Trobe University

3-F2 Failed breasts: the struggle for milk and motherhood **Catherine Robinson**
University of Technology, Sydney

F3 **The 'good mother'** Chair: Jenny Jones

1-F3 The importance of becoming mother: stories of judgement and hope from mothers receiving opioid treatment in the perinatal period **Susan Harvey**
Child & Family Health
Clinical Nurse
Consultant

2-F3 'A lot of women don't talk about it so they aren't judged': negotiating good mothering in the context of smoking during pregnancy **Britta Wigginton**
University of Queensland

Sunday 20th July

CONCURRENT SESSION G (9:00 am – 10:30 am)

Rm

G1 **Disadvantaged motherhood** Chair: Jenny Jones

1-G1	Reproductive and caretaking freedom in marginalised communities – choice, barriers and context	Shatema Threadcraft Rutgers University
2-G1	Mothers and mothering within stigmatised contexts: perceptions and experiences of young women and their mothers in a South African community	Sisa Ngabaza University of the Western Cape
3-G1	Mothers in harm's way: institutional abuse, vulnerability and human rights in childbirth	Kerreen Reiger La Trobe University
G2	<u>Motherhood in academia</u>	Chair: Sophie Brock
1-G2	Mothers at university: what the literature tells us	Cathy Dickson University of Western Sydney
2-G2	Inbetweenness: mothering, academia and creative practice	Angela Clarke and Fleur Summers RMIT University
3-G2	Motherhood in contemporary Germany	Valerie Heffernan National University of Ireland Maynooth
G3	<u>Mother-daughter relationships</u>	Chair: Lisa Raith
1-G3	Intersubjective dynamics between mothers and their infants	Joan Garvan Australian National University
2-G3	The sideways hourglass: the simultaneity of space and time in mother-daughter relationships	Kate Cantrell Queensland University of Technology
3-G3	Mother-daughter relationships and strategies for the promotion of a positive body image for daughters	Julie Cwikel Ben Gurion University of the Negev
Rm	<i>PLENARY PANEL (11.00 am – 12.30 pm)</i>	

Maternal insights: The Q&A of Motherhood,
Feminisms and the Future

Chair: TBC

Panel members: TBC

Structured in a similar manner as the Australian programs *Insight* and Q&A, this closing plenary session is designed as a facilitated forum focusing on the broad overall theme of the conference, 'Motherhood, Feminisms and the Future'. A panel of established scholars will lead the discussion with questions taken from delegates in advance and from the floor. It is hoped that this session will provide delegates with the opportunity to engage in a conversation with scholars whose backgrounds, research and living realities are as diverse as maternal identities and ways of mothering.

ABSTRACTS

Keynote Speakers

Fiona Green

Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Re-conceptualising motherhood: reaching back to move forward

Mothers, mothering and motherhood surround us daily. Yet, the distinction between the institution of motherhood and mothering (Adrienne Rich), feminist understandings of the motherhood mystique (Judith Warner) and maternal experiences of motherload (Andrea O'Reilly) continue to be unsatisfactorily addressed by society at large. Rather than blame feminism for having failed mothers and families, a shift to a more general understanding of the continual patriarchal expectation that mothers 'do it all' and the persistent practice of blaming women for failing to do so is needed. This critical approach may also offer ways to strategically move toward a meaningful liberated future for children, adults and families in social contexts that are increasingly fragmented and uncooperative. Drawing upon the work of various second wave feminists and contemporary maternal theorists, I propose it's time to again shift attention to the significant work involved in raising children and to the role and responsibilities all community members, regardless of gender, have in parenting. Using a matricentric feminist lens, I suggest we may be able to move away from the impossibility of patriarchal institutionalised motherhood towards a rearticulated mothering practice that collectively conceives of parents, parenting and parenthood beyond assumptions and expectations of what constitutes 'good mothering'.

Julie Stephens

Victoria University

Robotic seals and i-nannies: maternal care in the era of the 'outsourced self'

Engaging with the recent work of U.S. sociologist Arlie Hochschild, this paper will argue that the era of outsourcing has extended in a myriad of ways to the purchasing of services that provide relief from strong or difficult emotions. In the ever-expanding definition of what can be bought and sold, paying someone to 'feel for you' has become normalised in some contexts. There are numerous examples of such trends in elder-care, including the technologisation of emotional consolation and nurture. While all forms of caring labour will be implicated in these developments, my focus here will be on maternal care. Austerity measures in Australia, the UK, Canada, Europe and the US are producing new forms of vulnerability and new gendered discourses around unpaid care work and emotional labour. What are the possible consequences for how mothering is viewed and experienced? What

can feminist frameworks offer to our understanding of these processes? Is a feminist ethic of care approach adequate to this new cultural moment where emotional outsourcing makes care itself a questionable value and activity?

Sessions

Karen Williams

1-A1

University of Adelaide

Negotiating the normative – the ‘other’ normal for mothers of disabled children

Positive aspects associated with parenting are often assumed even preached despite awareness of the challenges and responsibility associated with the role. People choose to have children but who chooses to have a child with disabilities? Research into the area of motherhood and disability has tended to focus on what the relationship *is not* rather than what it *is* with the negative paradigm being the dominant theme and an accepted portrayal that goes largely unchallenged. Using a qualitative research approach, this study conducted individual interviews and a focus group with mothers caring for children with disabilities (n=13). The initial purpose of the study was to examine the nature of social exclusion experienced by these mothers. The qualitative nature of the study however also revealed a wide range of negotiation tactics that combated this exclusion as well as both how they had adjusted to this ‘other’ normal and the positive experiences of their lives as mothers with children with disabilities. This study highlights some of the positive aspects and changes regarding the lived experiences of mothers whose experiences of motherhood have ‘failed’ to follow the culturally appropriate trajectory (Landsman, 1998). It reveals how they had dealt with both their own and wider society’s ideals of motherhood. It also reveals how these mothers were not ignorant of the challenges they faced but how the gap between the actual and the ideal was not necessarily negatively geared.

Sophia Brock

2-A1

University of Sydney

Pulling together or pulling apart – mothers of children with disabilities

This paper will draw together two areas of study: ‘motherhood studies’ and the ‘sociology of personal life’ (formerly known as ‘family studies’), in order to pose important new questions about the role of ‘mother’ when raising a child with a disability. Research in the area of ‘personal life’ has recognised that despite an increase in individual freedoms, families and family relationships are not simply biologically determined, but are also constructed through various family practices and expressions of individual choice. However, there still exist circumstances where an individual cannot necessarily walk away from difficult, unsatisfactory or draining relationships to exercise their agency and individualism. This paper is framed by emergent literature in the area of ‘personal life’, and draws on current research that investigates how women

experience the role of 'mother' when they have a child with a disability, and how they manage their kinship relations and ties. I will present preliminary key findings from my research into the impact of mothering a child with a disability on a woman's sense of identity, familial relations and friendships. In doing so, this paper will explicate a new and important context for exploring the comparative significance of individual choice and commitment in defining families today, and the meaning of the 'mother' role.

Marie Porter

3-A1

University of Queensland

Lost in disability: dis-abled by love

In this paper Marie draws on her personal experiences of mothering her third son, who was so severely physically disabled he had life threatening health problems, to argue that mothers in a similar situation carry the caring load to their detriment. Their work is not acknowledged or validated in the socio-cultural context although these mothers are disadvantaged physically, emotionally and financially. Marie relates how the load she carried damaged her identity to such an extent that she became invisible to herself, and spent many months in and out of a psychiatric hospital. It is also a story that demonstrates the intensity of love a mother can have for her disabled child, and the strength that can grow in the face of marginalisation. Although this is a personal story, it is also a story familiar to many mothers. It is a story that refuses, repudiates and contests (Nelson, 2001) the master narratives of motherhood. Marie argues that a future direction for feminism must be to fight for validation and acknowledgement of the unpaid work that mothers/women do. This work is not included in the GDP even though it is of basic importance to the survival of a civilised society.

Kristin Natalier

1-A2

University of Tasmania

Women's child support labour: the gendered work of negotiating child support transfers

Child support is one of the defining and under-studied elements of single mothering in contemporary Australia. It has the potential to reduce the poverty and housing insecurity experienced by single mothers and their children and improve child wellbeing. It is also a symbolic acknowledgement that both mothers and fathers have a responsibility to financially support their children when parenting apart. However, the Australian Child Support Scheme is marked by high levels of debt and unreliable, partial and non-payment, which exacerbate mothers' financial insecurity. These issues are primarily explored through a focus on fathers' willingness and ability to pay child support, with little acknowledgement of mothers' efforts and agency in managing its transfer. In this paper, we re-orient the problematic nature of child support payment by describing mothers' negotiation of the receipt and use of child support, with a particular focus on their interactions with the Child Support Agency and former

partners. We synthesise data from three in-depth interview studies with women who were due to receive child support (sample sizes: n=20, n=30, n=19). These data inform our conceptualisation of women's efforts as child support labour. This labour has four dimensions: emotional work, information work, interaction work and budget work. We argue that mothers' child support labour is an invisible element of provisioning for their families, one that reflects and reproduces gendered dynamics of socio-economic disadvantage in their interactions with both the state and their former partners.

Carla Pascoe

2-A2

University of Melbourne

Mum's the word: advice to Australian mothers since 1945

Motherhood is often represented in essentialist terms: that mothering is instinctive, natural or biologically-based. Historical studies of the ways in which motherhood has changed over time reveal that understandings and experiences of the maternal are not fixed but historically and culturally contingent. This paper will explore the concept of the maternal and the experience of motherhood in Australia from the mid-twentieth century to the present day. Drawing upon oral history interviews and historical child-rearing manuals, the paper will illuminate shifts in the source, content and transmission of advice to mothers. From experiential knowledge shared verbally amongst female relatives and friends, to a profusion of 'expert' information available virtually and instantaneously, the ways women learn about mothering have shifted dramatically over the past sixty years.

Belinda Barnett and Ildiko Keogh

3-A2

Maternity Coalition's Queensland Branch

Metro North Brisbane perinatal health and maternity services forum: Maternity Coalition's advocacy for respectful, woman-centred maternity care

Australian women experience challenges in many areas of their life during the transition to becoming mothers. The Federal and State Governments have recognised some of the challenges facing women's emotional and physical health during the perinatal period, with the establishment of the National Perinatal Depression Initiative and the National Maternity Services Plan (NMSP) 2010–2015. One of the key priorities of the NMSP is to improve women's access to continuity of maternity care, which enables women to develop a relationship with the same care provider (or small group of providers) during pregnancy, labour, birth and for postnatal care. Research evidence shows that accessing a known midwife as a primary care provider throughout the childbearing continuum obtains improved health outcomes and higher maternal satisfaction ratings, while costing less than standard care. Despite Federal and State Government commitments to improving women's access to continuity of care and legislation to improve women's access to continuity with Medicare eligible midwives, few women are accessing this model of care. While there are several reasons for this, research from the

Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies' 2012 *Having a baby in Queensland* survey indicates that one reason is that many women are not aware of their options and that their GPs are not discussing all these maternity care options with them. This presentation will outline how the Queensland Branch of Maternity Coalition (a not-for-profit community organisation advocating for respectful, woman-centred maternity care for Australian women), partnered with stakeholders including the Metro North Hospital and Health Service, Queensland Centre for Mothers and Babies and Health Consumers Queensland, to obtain a grant from the Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local to hold a Perinatal Health and Maternity Services Forum in Metro North Brisbane in March 2014. The aims of the Forum were twofold: firstly, to share evidence-based research and information about new maternity care models with women, care providers and elected representatives, while secondly providing an opportunity for mothers to provide policy makers with information regarding how to improve services supporting their physical and emotional health during the perinatal period.

Kate Cantrell

1-A3

Queensland University of Technology

Keeping mum: the cyclical nature of family secrets and the endless orbit they repeat

This paper is an excerpt from my family memoir, *The Rain Answered*. The subject of the memoir is a secret my father told me that he asked me to keep from my mother. The novel discloses the implications of the secret and the travels I made thereafter. Set across four different countries, and spanning the past and present, the work explores the promise I made my father to keep his secret and never tell anyone. From a critical perspective, the work explores two inextricable questions: what happens when a child is forced to choose between keeping the trust of one parent and breaking the trust of the other? And what role do mothers play in determining the kind of love that a child accepts as an adult? These questions are fixed in the narrative but unlimited by their responses. For Kate, the story's narrator, the questions are exacerbated by the fact that the secret she keeps for her father binds her to him, even after he dismisses her from the family home. Naturally, this gesture causes a rift between father and daughter that raises a second question about a daughter's loyalty to her mother. In turn, the mother-daughter relationship is problematised by individuation difficulties, power structuration and a lack of boundaries. This situation is particularly complex, since the secret in question is not only cross-generational but cross-gender. The story that emerges is an attempt to piece together the fragments of an anxious childhood and to make sense of the overlap between sacrifice and love.

Parmod Kumar

2-A3

Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi

Motherhood and feminism: a comparative study of Baby Kamble's *The prisons we broke* and Lynette Russell's *A little bird told me*

The paper seeks to explore the gendered space and gender consciousness as delineated in Baby Kamble's *The prisons we broke* and Lynette Russell's *A little bird told me*. Looking at Kamble's and Russell's narratives, this paper endeavours to comprehend the lives and the consciousness of women, and also to interrogate the concept of cognitive amnesia. Showcasing lives full of silence and suffering at home, Dalit (lowest rank of Indian society) women writers come with narratives of courage and power to change and grow. Russell employs a new narrative technique, which incorporates psychological and historical perspectives. The paper aims to locate the journey they take to move away from the margins to the mainstream of society. The study will mirror what Butler calls 'gender performativity' (Butler. 1999). As Butler states this is not a singular act but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalisation in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration. Just like Dalit women, Lynette Russell explores the vicious circle which constitutes the severest form of marginalisation; people who exist on the margins geographically as well as socially. Both the categories of women undergo multiple marginalisations both outside their society as well as in it. Using feminist methodology the paper tries to apply the regional, social and gender related issues to a global frame.

Margaret Morgan

3-A3

Artist, Los Angeles

Dead mamas, from *Bambi* to Olaf's Frozen Nose

This paper addresses the avoidance of 'mother' in children's animation. Even as their cinematic narratives employ increasingly multiple and diverse families, even as female roles are more complexly drawn, even as more films pass the 'Bechdel Test', much of the action only begins with the negation of the mother: her evil, her death, her tyranny – old women supplanted by young; moms dying at the outset; girl-power suppressed by a mother's politesse. The protagonist's growth only exists in *that hole* where the mother isn't. This paper addresses historical filmic constructions of the mother, alongside recent cinematic contributions such as *Brave* and *Frozen*. The paper asks the questions: are animated mothers and daughters getting on better these days? What about the mothers of sons? Wherein lies the mother's return? How are these animated films received by critics? Ultimately, I ask, how 'mother' functions, historically and today, in the meta-arc of children's movies.

Andie Fox

1-B1

Writer and columnist

Another way to end the evening: reading and discussion of personal story-telling in internet discussions of motherhood

The presentation will include a reading from 'Another way to end the evening', which is Andie's contribution to the recently published anthology, *The good mother myth: redefining motherhood to fit reality*. In an era of mummy blogs, Pinterest and Facebook, *The good mother myth* dismantles the social media-fed notion of what it means to be a 'good mother'. Other contributors to the book include Jessica Valenti, Sharon Lerner, Soraya Chemaly and Amber Dusick, with a foreword by Christy Turlington Burns. Fox will explore the origins of her own contribution to *The good mother myth* as well as critically discussing the use of 'honesty' in social media discussions of motherhood. In the presentation, she will examine some of the limits with this type of discussion, including creeping individualism, the dominance of white voices and neoliberal-led feminism. Finally, Andie's presentation will point to a way forward for motherhood work in digital feminism.

Hangsub Choi

2-B1

Kookmin University, South Korea

Loneliness of South Korean mothers in their thirties and forties, and social media

Korean mothers in their 30–40s are considered to be 'the best mothers' in the world. In South Korea, university entrance exams are so important for one's life, the role of mothers in this process is huge. If a child fails in a university entrance exam, people place all of the blame on a Korean mother. In turn, Korean mothers accept that a good mother cannot tolerate their children being anything but the best in everything that they do (human capital, cultural capital, social capital). They relentlessly and tirelessly serve their children, which makes them exhausted and feel lonely. Many of them decide to quit their job (or are even forced to do it) mostly for the better education of their children. What they experience is disappointment in seeing what they can't have anymore, such as happy marriage or a good job. They often feel overlooked by the fashion industry, and believe they have lost their identity as women by being called and labelled as 'a mother'. Now, in the era of social media, Korean mothers are using social media to find people to talk to. Some mothers are seduced into using social media (such as Facebook) to represent themselves to others in a certain way. They expose only the good part of everyday life (happy dinner in nice restaurant, for example) in order to receive compliments. This kind of behaviour increases the feeling of self-esteem, and makes them forget their loneliness for a while.

Linda Burnett

1-B2

University of New South Wales

Taking account of the material maternal body

What picture of maternal subjectivities emerges if we take account of the material maternal body? Many women feel that the experiences of

pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding and embodied care are central to the construction of their sense of self as a mother. Feminist writings, however, with their emphasis on the social and discursive structuring of maternal experiences, have given relatively limited attention, from a biological perspective, to the effects of these embodied experiences on subjectivity and thus, within these writings, material maternal bodies, flesh and blood, neuronal and synaptic bodies have a minimal presence. Consideration of the material or biological body has been seen as risking essentialism or reductionism. In this paper, I investigate how maternal subjectivities are constructed in the embodied mother-child relationship, and its myriad of invisible connections and countless tiny encounters every day, taking an approach that sees the biological, psychological, relational and social as mutually constitutive. I draw on the neurosciences which, after the developments of the last two decades, can provide a theoretical framework in which to investigate the influence of somatic processes, that is, those of the brain and the body proper, on mental phenomena, on thoughts and emotions, without reducing the latter to the former. Such an approach can enhance understanding of maternal subjectivities in all their multiplicity and individual complexity.

Jasmine Salomon

2-B2

Australian Catholic University

Birth art as a form of visual activism

Images of childbirth in art, as well as the production of images of the maternal, speak to a universal form of maternal feminism. Maternal feminism, at its best, addresses the invisibility of images of birth and the maternal in art and culture. The exhibition of birth art in Melbourne sought to explore the awkward relationship that has developed between birth and feminism in a technocratic culture and to set a new direction for experiences and philosophies of the maternal. Putting a flag in the soil of cultural expressions around childbirth, 'birth.art' produced ideas about the primary event experienced by each person on the earth. It endeavoured to enliven women to courageously rethink the possibilities for the meaning of their own birth experiences, in a cultural context. The success of the 'Birthrites' collection in the UK as well as the online 'Motherhood around the Globe' exhibition (at the International Museum of Women) is indicative of this global language of imagery, and the courageous contemporary start to investigating the aesthetics of the birth in art. The impassioned debates surrounding childbirth in our culture continue to divide health care workers, scholars, governments and the community. The capacity for art as activism to contribute to this conversation is yet to be stated but in my belief, is remarkable. Despite ongoing media and community attention, birth continues to receive minimal representation in the world of art, overshadowed as always by its notorious and high profile primal counterparts: sex and death. Sensationalised media portrayals, 'reality TV', 'exposes', and fictitious accounts of birthing displayed in film or television often trivialise the process of giving birth with overtones of emergency, panic, pain or suffering. In the age of porn and plastic surgery the myriad issues facing feminism and

its juxtaposition to maternal feminism are not well explored. Contemporary art production on birth gestures to a void that has existed for nearly a century, and historical images of birth and breastfeeding (before this time) assert an ease with birth as social and cultural act, which has now been all but forgotten. Thus historical imagery of the maternal, become potent examples that gesture to a void in the present.

Rakime Elmir

3-B2

University of Western Sydney

Women's experience of rechanneling their thoughts following emergency postpartum hysterectomy

Childbirth is generally perceived to be a triumphant and joyous moment in a woman's life. However, current research indicates that it can also be a time of fear, dread and apprehension, particularly when the birth experience is traumatic. Some women attempt to seek the positives of their childbirth experience to be able to cope with their experience. However, little attention is directed towards how women rebuild their lives and grow, following traumatic birth experiences such as postpartum haemorrhage (PPH). This presentation aims to explore women's experiences of severe postpartum haemorrhage and emergency hysterectomy. Data were collected during 2010 with twenty-one Australian women who experienced severe postpartum haemorrhage and emergency hysterectomy between the ages twenty-four to fifty-seven years were interviewed in an in-depth qualitative study about their experience of having a severe postpartum haemorrhage and emergency hysterectomy. Participants were recruited using a purposeful and snowball sampling technique. Data were analysed thematically and participant narratives and exemplars have been identified by use of pseudonyms. One major theme, 'moving forward' and three sub-themes emerged: appreciating life and what you have, accepting it: it's just the way it is, what really counts: learning and growing and reframing the experience: seeking the positives. The ability to make sense, coherence and meaning in life, is central to the individual's engagement in the world. This study has shown women attempted to find meaning in life following a traumatic birth, as a way to move forward in their lives. Health professionals can be in a position to assist women in adapting to life following a traumatic event, such as a severe PPH and emergency hysterectomy by talking and debriefing.

Barbara Mattar

1-B3

Australian Catholic University

'They took my milk': the multiple meanings of breast milk in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

In Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Sethe's eldest daughter was deprived of her mother's milk and a lasting bond with her mother through her murder. She

comes back as a ghost to reclaim that bond. This ghost is so hungry for love, affection and the milk that she was denied that she sucks the life out of her mother and reverses the situation so it is she that is satiated and her mother that is dying. This paper examines how breast milk is a key image in *Beloved*. It explores the multiple meanings of breast milk in one example of a literary text then seeks to ask questions about meanings, interpretations and attitudes our culture has towards this white, creamy bodily fluid that can draw fascination, hunger and disgust at the same time. Morrison's novel cannot be read without taking into account its focus on race, history and slavery and her desire to give a voice to the violence and trauma experienced by three generations of slaves. Yet, Morrison may have drawn on our current culture's ambivalence towards breastfeeding in her use of breast milk as a source of guilt, nourishment and attachment. This paper does not attempt to simplify the complexities of this text by drawing neat lines between breast milk as used in *Beloved* and women's experiences of breast-feeding in a free society. What this paper attempts to do is explore the multiple meanings of breast milk and its implications in both the novel and in the lives of contemporary nursing mothers.

Megan Rogers

2-B3

RMIT University

A new narrative: construction of the maternal journey

The 'madwoman in the attic' became many a twentieth-century writer's muse. Texts such as Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963), Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972) responded to a growing sympathy for the madness-as-rebellion metaphor. In recent times, however, many American feminist theorists (Chesler 2005; Donaldson 2002; Caminero-Santangelo 1998 et al.) have begun to question the non-rational as a resistance strategy. Building on such criticism, this presentation suggests both a new reading of these texts and a new writing of the madwoman in the attic. Employing Maureen Murdock's model of the heroine's journey, the aforementioned narratives are revealed as cutting their protagonists' archetypal journey in half, trapping the madwoman in the darkness of descent. In turn, the twentieth-century madwoman can be seen as, what I term, an 'eternal madwoman': a liminal person who is prevented, by a ruptured narrative structure, from achieving any real personal or political efficacy. Central to the arguments made in the presentation is the importance of reuniting the eternal madwoman's descent with the narrative possibility of ascent. In this way, the study aims to build on the research of Marta Caminero-Santangelo, who poses one of the most important questions of current feminist debate: how can the symbolic resolution of the madwoman in fictional texts open an imaginative space for women to escape madness by envisioning themselves as agents? This paper suggests that the intersection between recent maternal scholarship and feminist myth criticism identifies maternal agency as a possible key to the madwoman's attic and enables us to construct what I call the 'maternal journey'. This framework aims to enable

writers to transform the eternal madwoman from oppressed victim of the patriarchal hegemony to self-realised, self-loving, self-respecting subject.

Hou Shu-Hui

3-B3

National Chengchi University

What can we learn from Jean Rhys's novel? Motherhood and oppression in *After leaving Mr Mackenzie* (1931)

In a society in which full-time, married motherhood was expected and idealised, single motherhood was not only undesirable but also ignored (Noel Whiteside, 93). This exclusion is succinctly demonstrated by Carol Smart who observes how the National Insurance Act, which was introduced in 1911 as a supplement to the Poor Law, 'marked the beginnings of a shift in the way that married mothers were to be treated in the twentieth century [...] The Act gave women the right to a maternity benefit, but this was an entitlement that could only be claimed through an insured husband' (Smart, 50). This meant that single mothers, especially impoverished ones in dire need of financial assistance, were excluded from the Act. Since single mothers were excluded from the prevalent discourses of motherhood in interwar Britain, their plight did not receive sufficient attention from the government. My analysis of single motherhood and the mother-daughter relationships in Jean Rhys's *After leaving Mr Mackenzie* (1931) is informed by the circumstances discussed above, and builds upon existing readings by Elaine Savory and Huma Javed Subzposh. While middlebrow novelists responded to 'the new ideology that offered domesticity [and motherhood] to the middle-class as both stylish and fulfilling,' Rhys explores a single mother's economic and social struggles and her ambivalence towards motherhood through the character of Julia Martin's widowed mother, Mrs Griffiths (Humble, 222). By examining the relationships between Mrs Griffiths and her two daughters, Julia and Norah, and by analysing the mother-daughter bonds, I also demonstrate that the novel reveals inherent resistance to the notion of full-time motherhood, which was idealised and institutionalised in the milieu of the popular novel.

Sue Middlewood

1-C1

'Willie you will live longer than me': reclaiming mothering my first-born

I had three children but none of them lives to share their lives with us. This is one of three stories about them. Each story is elicited by a memento, in this case, Toni's drawing of Willie the cat. Toni, my first child, was born in 1970 and died in 1983. Writing this paper, I researched my own life. With help, I peeled off the layers of resistance, pushing back the guilt, diving into the pain and thankfully allowing glimmers of joy to shine through. Recollections take me on a journey into my own childhood and experience of being mothered. It also takes me into a close friendship with a girlfriend whose life seemed

perfect in contrast to mine. I remembered how overwhelmed with love and joy I was when Toni, my perfect baby girl was born. Isolation, loneliness and anxiety took their toll and were exacerbated by the life and death of my second child who survived just fourteen weeks. Toni was diagnosed with leukaemia when she was nine and died aged thirteen years. During the 70s and early 80s I had no language to express my grief or feelings about being a mother though the burning, unspoken question in my mind was ‘what about my life?’ It was my ambivalence towards motherhood that makes Toni’s death so poignant. Writing has enabled me to reclaim mothering Toni by embracing the pain and joy of our journey together.

Jenny Jones

2-C1

Griffith University

Composing maternal identities: The living realities of ‘mature’ mothers

A common theme mothers hear resoundingly as their children transition to adulthood, particularly in countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States of America, is the need for mothers to ‘cut the ties’ – or, to use the American term, ‘launch’ their children. Perceived failures to conform to these cultural beliefs often result in derogatory comments such as ‘mummy’s boy’ or ‘he’s tied to mummy’s apron strings’ aimed at the young adult son. For many mothers, however, the transition of her children to young adulthood in the early phases of the twenty-first century occurs within a complex range of relational realities and is, therefore, far more challenging than the cutting of the umbilical cord to which it is often likened. This paper highlights the experiences and, in particular, the challenges and central issues encountered by ‘mature’ mothers – mothers whose children are socially and culturally defined as adults. As a mother with young adult-children, my initial framework of interpretation is my own lived experiences, the anecdotes I encounter through family and friends and published autobiographical, and fictional accounts focussed on women’s midlife experiences. These initial interpretations are further enhanced by my scholarly interpretive frameworks of matricentric feminism and applied ethics. Understanding and appreciating the perspectives of ‘mature’ mothers provides us with a unique opportunity to consider the ways that mothers are positioned by others and simultaneously the ways that mothers seek to position themselves (Massey, 2010). In exploring the situated living realities of mothers with young adult children, this paper recognises and acknowledges the social, political and, most importantly, moral context in which ‘mature’ motherhood is entrenched and ‘mature’ mothering is experienced.

Diane Humphery

3-C1

Silenced voices: post-natal depression, motherhood and the creative process.

This paper is comprised of two parts. The first is a short story, titled 'Mummy', which explores post-natal depression and the 'mummifying' effect it has on the main character who feels hollowed out and entombed after the birth of her child. The second piece, 'Keeping mum', reflects on the writing process of the short story, and explores the ways in which societal expectations of motherhood can silence a woman's voice. It also examines how women can perpetuate their own silence, as shown by the way in which the author writes about her personal experiences of mothering and depression. By writing in the third person, and speaking through a fictional character, the author perpetuates the positioning of 'self' and 'other,' thereby reinforcing the duplicity sometimes exercised during post-natal depression, when mothers assume the façade of coping. These two pieces look at how women are enculturated into the myth of motherhood, where motherhood is constructed as a wholly positive experience, and where feelings contrary to this are not seen as 'normal'. The short story is drawn from the author's personal experience, and the reflective piece is presented as an effort to understand this experience, as well as to deconstruct the writing process that attempted to articulate an aspect of motherhood often shrouded in shame and secrecy.

Emma Arogundade

1-C2

Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa

Growing men: reflections from South African feminist mothers on raising black sons in a highly racialised context

I was challenged when I was told my child was going to be a boy. I had been hoping and dreaming for a girl-child, and spent the next few months thinking through and trying to imagine the task of raising a boy. I imagined worse case scenarios born out of stereotypes and bogeymen: my child as a rapist, my child as a murderer, my child as someone who takes pleasure in other's pain. These people in my mind were always men. Since my child has a black Nigerian father, and I am a white South African woman raising our child in the context of a country still dealing with the impact of apartheid, I wondered how my boy could navigate the complex task of becoming a man in a world where the colour of his skin is still treated as a limitation and experienced as a barrier in many ways. In order to address these concerns, which bring together intersecting elements of race, class, gender, place, sexuality and violence, I embarked on a journey to interview four feminist mothers of black boys to ask them about their thinking, experiences and practices as mothers. The interviews took the form of narrative enquiries linking their identities, ideology and experiences and took place over the course of three months. Though each story was unique, they presented a common thread of the level of thinking and intent that went into their parenting, the necessity of constant thinking and reflexivity, and their successes and failures at engaging.

Mahaina Jawad

2-C2

An assessment into the role of rural women in family integration and establishing communication channels: findings of a cross-sectional study in Pakistan

It is a woman's duty to create a family and watch over to ensure it remains closely knitted. The woman of the house is solely responsible to build up and retain unification in the family. Throughout her life she develops various formal and informal channels to develop and maintain family integration. The various roles that rural Pakistani women perform and the amount of effort they put into strengthening their family bond is often unnoticed. Women receive delayed or no acknowledgement mainly because of the mind set and beliefs of the majority rural population that demands them to work continuously without any reward and be a constant source of warmth, nourishment and comfort for the household. A mother selflessly devotes her life to child bearing, rearing and development without expecting appreciation. It may seem like a woman finds a way to achieve family unity and happiness effortlessly but what remains hidden are the hurdles and difficulties she faces in doing so. This study examines the extent of a woman's input to her family and home in order to maintain peace and household stability. A comprehensive questionnaire carefully segmented into sections incorporated the physical, emotional and financial contributions of rural women to achieve family solidarity. Female respondents were questioned from the province of Punjab as part of this cross sectional analysis. The results of an ordered probit model reveal that a woman's effort and dedication towards saving, children education and upbringing, maintaining family health, bridging the gap between her spouse and their offspring is positively and significantly related to unity in the family. Results also indicate that women's involvement in family disputes is significantly and negatively associated with family union. Findings reveal a continuation of deep-rooted patterns of considering the woman responsible for care giving in a joint family system without any recognition. The beauty is in the consistency the Pakistani women adopt regardless of their contribution being overlooked.

Tran Phi Phuong

3-C2

University of Social Sciences and Humanities

Motherhood in transnational families: Vietnamese case studies

This paper presents data collected from the field trips in 2004, 2005 and 2006. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with twenty-five professional women in dual-career families in Ho Chi Minh City. Interestingly, half of them have had the experience of participating as members of transnational families during a certain period of their lives as an alternative lifestyle to their career commitments, their husbands' occupations or their children's education. These families maintain two or more separate residences (one in the home country, another overseas) for a period of time ranging from one to a number

of years. The women have lived in many different countries in different parts of the world, for example, Western and Eastern Europe, America, Australia or Asia. In Vietnam after the *Doi Moi* policy, the government piloted programs to send scholars and students abroad for study, with the expectation that they would bring back knowledge and technology that might contribute to Vietnam's economic development. Many private and international companies also sent their staff abroad to work and gain more experience in the market economy. This changing economic social context led to changes in the household structure. Many professional women and men left home for the sake of their career development, their business or education. Also, 'study abroad' (*di du hoc*) became a trend in Vietnam, for the middle class or upper middle class families who can afford to pay the cost of tuition fees and living expenses for their children going to the developed countries to have a better and more advanced education. These families experienced life as transnational families for various periods of time. The paper presents the case studies on the transnational family experiences of female professionals in dual-career families in Ho Chi Minh City during post-*Doi Moi* era, using structural functionalism as a framework.

Amanda Kane Rooks

1-C3

Central Queensland University

Motherhood and sexualised culture

Recent decades have witnessed a dramatic increase in the visibility of sex in Western societies, a phenomenon Feona Attwood refers to as the 'sexualization of culture' (Attwood, xiii). A number of critics have observed in particular the mainstreaming of pornographic imagery in the worlds of art, literature, cinema, television, and advertising in this time (Attwood, xiii-xiv; Levy, 1-2; McNair, 55). The traditional focus on the procreative, reproductive, and, in more recent history, intimacy-fostering aspects of sex have by and large been replaced with the new associations of recreation, consumerism, self-expression, and self-empowerment (Attwood, xv). In this paper, I address the ways in which the sexualisation of culture in Western societies has infiltrated contemporary motherhood representation. My analysis responds to the cultural phenomenon whereby the widespread commodification of sexuality has ostensibly contributed to a significant diminishment in those traditional representations that have long restricted mothers by positioning them as asexual paragons of virtue. This paper takes as its focus those newly popular discursive constructions that imbue mothers with an overt sex appeal, including the by now familiar 'yummy mummy,' the 'domestic goddess,' and even the MILF ('mum I'd like to fuck'). In considering these pervasive cultural figures, this paper illuminates the ways in which mothers' agency is complexly enabled and disabled in sexualised culture. I ultimately contend that these sexualised configurations of motherhood work to remove the energies otherwise available for an adequate critique of social institutions, expectations and practices related to mothering in the twenty-first-century. In drawing attention to the inherently anti-erotic values of these constructions, I further expose how they work paradoxically to reaffirm our attachment to traditional

moral and gender categories where both women's mothering and their sexuality are concerned.

Catherine Arnold

2-C3

University of Queensland

Mothers and lovers: The sexual mother in the writing of Silvina Ocampo

This paper analyses the character of the mother, maternal desire and the sexualised mother figure in the work of Argentinean author Silvina Ocampo. By allowing her mother characters the freedom to pursue a sexual relationship, or at the very least express desire and sexual want, Ocampo creates a maternal figure who departs from the stereotypical – and indeed socially mandated – desexualised mother figure. Looking at two of Ocampo's short stories – *The pleasure and the penitence*, and *The fury* – this paper will explore how the mother protagonists abandon their maternal duty while in pursuit of their own pleasure. If the female and maternal body is a sacred space, maintained solely for reproduction and the nurturing of children, then Ocampo's mothers brashly subvert this paradigm, instead choosing to ignore, neglect, and perhaps even harm their children while seeking pleasurable sexual experiences. Ocampo's women are all sexual subjects, choosing to pursue men, to pursue pleasure, in descriptions that, while not explicit, are challenging a certain literary and societal status quo for their place and time of publication (Argentina in the 1960s). They wilfully abandon their socially prescribed maternal responsibilities in order to reclaim their feminine bodies of instruments and channels of desire. This paper posits that Ocampo, through the fictional spaces she creates, provides for a reclamation of the female body, and a reimagining of sexual acts as not purely for the purposes of reproduction, but also for female subjective pleasure.

Rhonda Shaw

3-C3

Victoria University

Looking and being looked at: data from focus group discussions

This presentation examines the relevance of debates in existential phenomenology and micro-sociology about social conventions of looking and being looked at in the contemporary period. In this presentation the theoretical literature is put to the empirical test by examining experiences of looking at others and being looked at in different situations and contexts. Empirical data for the presentation is drawn from focus group discussions undertaken during 2009–2010 and 2013–2014 with students and one group of middle aged women, predominantly identifying as New Zealand, European or Pakeha. The aim of the presentation is to consider focus group participants' experiences and attitudes regarding the phenomenon of looking in light of debates about post-feminism, preoccupation with the body and the pervasive sexualisation of contemporary culture.

Handle with care: negotiating and blaming the fragile maternal body

The media loves the story of the miracle baby who struggles to survive against the odds of being born premature. However, there is a lack of understanding of the reasons behind such births. The fact that women's bodies fail – and fail regularly – to ensure a smooth passage to a 'normal', 40-week birth reflects a deeper issue that puts them at odds with feminist perspectives of health. In their classic work on risk and reproduction, Kaufert and O'Neill (1993) state that the vocabulary of risk is used by both sides of the medical spectrum – by obstetricians opposed to home birth, and by midwives citing the multiple risks of excessive interventions. The forgotten women in the discourse of reproductive risk are the women who have high-risk pregnancies because of a pre-existing medical condition or complication in pregnancy. Monica Dux, co-author of *The great feminist denial*, writes that there are parallels between Susan Sontag's point about cancer patients in her ground breaking work *Illness as metaphor*, and contemporary attitudes to fertility. This paper draws on thematic analysis of interview transcripts for research undertaken in writing the book *Handle with care* (2008). Findings highlight that within the challenges of a high-risk pregnancy, women admitted to feeling powerless both within the medical system and among other 'perfect mothers'. Yet they emerged with a stronger sense of self-worth, humility and gratitude, forcing us to question why we privilege maternal 'perfection'.

Birthing: the pain and power

Australia's birth intervention rates are well above those recommended by the World Health Organisation and climbing. The standard birth – the socially normal birth – is a far cry from a normal physiological birth. In fact at this time, in what I have come to call the 'labour bypass era', normal physiological birth is almost impossible to accomplish. Despite this, many contemporary birthing women still have a yearning for normal physiological birth. What does the tension between present day birthing reality and this yearning mean for a birthing woman's induction into motherhood? Well, many are left feeling they have failed their first test. Drawing on over thirty years working in birth as an educator, attendant, trainer and counsellor, I have come to see how structural issues within the birth culture; choice of caregivers, support team and birthplace; as well as a woman's life experience and personal attitude to pain, will affect the birth outcome and her sense of self as an emerging mother. For birthing women to fulfil, both their yearning for normal physiological birth and their desire to emerge as powerful mothers, they need to become aware of what they can do to beat the odds. If they become aware of the structural issues impacting on their birthing potential; get savvy about their birth choices;

understand the role of pain in physiological birth and know how to raise their personal pain tolerance threshold, then a pathway to a positive sense of self as an emerging mother can unfold.

Eva-Maria Müller-Markfort

3-D1

DFH – German Professional Association for Homebirth

The transgenerational caesarean section – a curse or a chance

The paper is informed by personal research into the Western obstetric system: preterm labour and repeated or transgenerational caesarean section. I have developed a technique of caring for pregnant women based on imaginative psychotherapy, enhanced by a different way of getting into contact with the unborn child. This has been very successful so far. The paper will focus on and describe the story of one woman. Handed down from grandmother and mother, a primigravida suffers a caesarean section with her first child. During the second pregnancy, she meets a midwife educated in psychology. By means of Guided Affective Imagery the 'curse' of the transgenerational Caesarean is solved. The baby is born spontaneously, yet in hospital. Empowered by this experience, the young mother clears the relation with her mother, and abandons the feelings of guilt towards her mother because of her own caesarean birth. One after the other, she loosens her ties to the patriarchal medical system and father. The next baby is born at home. She recognises that she is able to birth her children autonomously, empowered by her own strength and self-confidence. Later she separates from her husband and shapes her way into a new life as a successful independently working single mother.

Jenny Jones

1-D2

Griffith University

Picking up the pieces: mothering a young adult-child with a mental illness

Mental illness is the term given to a range of illnesses which affect a person's mind. The prevalence of those affected by such illnesses is increasing at a rapid rate with some estimates suggesting that schizophrenia now affects one in every one hundred people (Buchanan 2004, 11). Australian author Jo Buchanan noted in her book *Wings of madness: a mother's journey* that 'although we have sent man to the moon, we still know very little about the workings of one of the most vital organs of his body – the brain' (2004, 11). Even less is understood of what it means to be a mother with a young adult-child with a mental illness. This paper raises awareness of the often treacherous path sufferers of mental illness and their loved ones are forced to negotiate as a result of their illness. Primarily, however, it highlights the demands placed on the family member most often left to pick up the pieces once mental illness has struck – the mother. In terms of its contribution to

understandings of mothers and mothering, this paper refuses, repudiates and contests (Nelson 2001) the beguiling narratives told to mothers, for mothers and about mothers in contemporary Australian society. By drawing on the experiences of a mother (Heather) whose adult son suffers from a mental illness, this paper simultaneously refuses, repudiates and contests the dominant maternal identity currently defined as the 'good mother'. As a counter-story, this paper reveals the ways in which Heather sought to position herself as a mother committed to the demands of mothering: 'the preservation, growth and social acceptability' (Ruddick 1989) of her child. Simultaneously revealed are the ways in which others predominantly positioned her as a mother on the margins. The paper is deliberately left open ended; thereby inviting listeners to this story to make their own interpretations.

Rachel Robertson

2-D2

Curtin University

'Misfitting' mothers: feminism, disability and mothering

This paper will develop some of the intersections between feminist theory and critical disability studies in relation to mothering and maternal subjectivity. Recent scholarship in disability studies has called for a closer analysis of the relationship between feminist theory and disability and the need for disability as a category to be included within feminist scholarship. Disability, like gender, is a concept that pervades all aspects of culture as well as our experience of embodiment. Disability studies critiques what Alison Kafer (following Rich's analysis of compulsory heterosexuality) describes as 'compulsory able-bodiedness' and questions the necessary cultural linkage of dependency with inferiority. Both feminist and disability studies approaches explore identity, the ethics of care, bodily differences, reproductive technology, and the private/public split, all aspects that relate to the experience and institution of mothering. My paper will explore how feminist disability theory might approach certain aspects of motherhood, using in particular Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's critical terms of 'misfit' and 'misfitting'. As the mother of a child with a disability, I have a particular experience of 'misfitting'. Following Jane Gallop's notion of anecdotal theorising, I will use my own experiences as a starting point for my paper.

Carole Ferrier

3-D2

University of Queensland

The figure of the mother in Indigenous women's writing in Australia

The paper will discuss mothers in some fictional texts by Indigenous women in Australia, among them, Alexis Wright's *Plains of promise*; Vivienne Cleven's *Bitin' back*; Marie Munkara's *Every secret thing* and some earlier writers including Ruby Langford Ginibi, in the context of a past but still present history of stolen wages, stolen children, and Intervention. It will talk about how styles of resistance to a postcolonialisation and patriarchal state are

demonstrated by the marginalised characters in this environment. A continuing preoccupation in the more recently published texts can be seen to be the achievement of agency in a context of unequal social power.

Elizabeth Sutherland

1-D3

Swinburne TAFE

Queer mothering in a straight world

This paper will examine the experience of being a queer mother in a heteronormative world. Drawing upon my lived experience as a queer feminist mother of a five-year-old girl, I will critique the ways in which institutions associated with the family, such as schools, exert heteronormative pressure upon not only children themselves but families and the broader community. As a feminist mother, I am engaged in the work of trying to help my daughter make sense of the world's hostility towards her queer and trans parents. In her formative years my daughter's family structure — mum, dad, kid — was represented in almost every picture book, almost every television programme, and was replicated in almost all of the suburban homes around her. Our family was visible, in that we were allowed to be seen anywhere, and invisible in that we appeared so normal as to be entirely unremarkable. As queer theorist Sara Ahmed writes, 'to follow the rules of heterosexuality is to be at ease in a world that reflects back the couple form one inhabits as an ideal'. In contrast, when my female partner and I hold hands at school, there is a palpable lack of ease with our presence. To ask the school to stock *Heather has two mummies* in the library, so that my daughter may see *her* family structure replicated in a text, was to set off a ripple of discomfort. This paper will therefore explore the ways in which the school environment is oriented towards the comfort of heterosexual families at the cost of the comfort of queer families. Feminist motherhood for me is an attempt to shield my daughter from the pain of the constant devaluing of her relationships with her parents. It is also an exercise in hopefulness, as we try to forge a future where queer children and families are no longer damaged by the weight of heteronormativity.

Mel Irenyi

2-D3

Lesbian motherhood and feminism – a tale of the baby and the bathwater?

This paper is a stepping off point for conversations about the extent to which – if any – contemporary lesbian mothers engage with feminist ideas. In it, I explore some of the history of twentieth century lesbian feminism, its impact on the possibility of lesbian mothering, and on lesbian mothering praxes. I ask questions about what feminism actually looks like in the early twenty-first century, what legacies of second wave feminism continue and what has been discarded or lost? In particular I focus on critiques of hegemonic gender socialisation that formed a cornerstone of second wave feminisms and their

absence or presence in the day-to-day lives of lesbians with children. The paper rests on important intersections and divergences among different types of lesbian mothers, and draws on my own doctoral research with women who became lesbian mothers in different contexts. It is intended as a conversation starter about the myriad aspects of being a lesbian mother with the question of the use and or relevance of contemporary feminism thrown into the mix.

Gillian Joiner

1-E1

University of Tasmania

Implications for mothers, fathers and the community on the development of an ethic of infant care

We know that the infant brain grows by 101% in the first year of life and 14% in the second. We also know that our environment influences the neural patterning being developed and that it has long-term effects on our later mental well-being and ability to flourish. My PhD thesis seeks to gather data on infant focused neuroscientific research and attachment theory and to develop an ethic of infant care based on these findings. The heart of the research is revealing that good neuronal development is supported by conveying love in such a way that the infant gains a sense of contentment most of the time. Given that it is estimated that up to 45% of infants do not gain this sense of contentment there is, I argue, a need to document what measures parents can take to ensure a greater level of infant contentment, particularly given infants are vulnerable, dependent and voiceless. However, understanding what kind of nurturing is needed, such as having unrushed time with our infants, breastfeeding etc, have many implications for mothering in particular. It challenges: the status of motherhood; how long we spend at home raising infants; at what age it is appropriate to use childcare; how we balance infant need and our own; and how we gain the emotional and financial support we need. Finally I will put forward the question, is it just a perception that time out of the paid workforce is detrimental to our careers, and sense of self?

Karlene Dickens

2-E1

Occupational Therapist

Who raises the children? Cross-cultural perspectives on mothering ideologies and child rearing practices

The practice of child-rearing is a singularly powerful vehicle for socialising the individual in how to think, act and behave. It initiates human young into the specific cultural blueprint of their elders; teaching them what to value and what to disregard and shapes their definitions of normality, morality and deviancy. But whilst raising children is universal, the translation into everyday patterns are not; specific cultures raise children in highly varied ways, both in beliefs and practices. However, one key area that can be generalised across many cultures is the shared (but gendered) nature of infant care-giving that

exists. Indeed, anthropological literature is rich with examples of collaborative care-taking roles, whereby children may develop close relations with numerous individuals. This contrasts with the prevailing model in Western cultures of mother exclusive care, with its rigid set of expectations and demands around maternal behaviours with significant consequences for non-conformance. This model of mothering can also serve to strengthen existing gender inequality and division, and restrict women's identity to defining them relationally to their children and motherhood. Arguably, this may be one of the great limitations of the Western model. Ultimately, mothering behaviours as well as child-rearing practices, operate and evolve in a cultural context with multiple external factors at any given time, and thus it is beneficial to appreciate the underlying cultural beliefs implicit in this process.

Kathryn McGuigan

3-E1

Massey University

Exploring the role of stay-at-home mothers in family health

Family health can be defined as care of family members in maintaining health, preventing ill health and dealing with illness. In many families the responsibility of family health falls mainly to the mother. The main aim of this research was to explore the complexity of the mother's role across family health including food, sleep, exercise, medications, hygiene, health prevention such as immunisation, safety, and illness events. Two interviews, household mapping, timelines of illness events and health diaries were used to uncover embedded aspects of the mother's everyday role. The main finding revealed by analysis was that while family health was overseen by mothers predominantly it was practiced as a family, within a family health philosophy. This philosophy was a set of beliefs, ideals and practices, unique to each household, which were developed over time and continually negotiated as a family. This philosophy influenced how family health was practiced across all areas in family health. The analysis also revealed that the mother's role as overseer of family health involved surveillance, provisioning and teaching. The mother positioned herself as the 'mother expert' in these processes based on her unique, embodied, historical and current knowledge of the family's health history, genetics and illnesses. This expert position worked alongside the family health philosophy and the family to resist health promotion, medical advice and healthisms. The 'mother expert' position empowered the mother with family health knowledge but it also constrained her into the position of 'expert' carer of family health.

Yvonne Low

1-E3

University of Sydney

Women's dual (triple) roles: Indonesian women becoming artists

The academic route is one of many in which a person may enter the art world and for women institutional training in Indonesia has been critical to one's formative and subsequent development as an artist. In Indonesia, the far

more challenging task for women artists, is not gaining access to learn but to circumvent the gendered constraints that arise from the moral code, kodrat wanita (women's destiny). This mutable and all-encompassing moral code is legitimated by notions of women's nature and by reference to religiously-inspired symbols and norms, and remains a salient source for regulating Indonesian women's behaviour. Both presidents, Sukarno and Suharto, had at various points in their political careers asserted their paternalist position when defining women's kodrat in modern Indonesian society – as the 'Great Mothers of Indonesia' or as the productive woman defined as the mother in a household (ibu rumah tangga). The political rhetoric insisted that women's emancipation in relation to the right to an education was couched within nationalist terms, with the view that Indonesia's future depended on how well women performed their pre-determined role as mother and wife. This paper discusses the impact the institutionalisation of motherhood has on aspiring women artists, and explores the ways in which women artists have used available resources to transform the knowledge gained, subtly subverting the hegemony of male tradition. This paper presents a case study, examining women's dual roles in the modern world, exploring the rise of women-centred exhibitions as a means to address the disproportionate effect institutional training has on women.

Panel session**E2****Birth and beyond: maternal health and wellbeing**

This session is set out in a workshop format, which includes an extended period for discussion of issues raised. In a short five to ten minute presentation members of the panel may respond to one or more of the questions below, but importantly will outline key issues identified through their work. The panel comprises practitioners who are working with women and their families, and who are a critical touchstone between the community and our health and welfare systems.

- How are mothers supported in Australia: structurally, socially, economically, historically?
- How are 'different' mothers supported in their mothering (i.e. indigenous, classed, raced, sexed mothers)?
- Where are the gaps? How do these gaps contribute to maternity becoming a challenging time? How could the gaps be addressed?
- What are the limitations of current models of maternity/motherhood/mothering in the health system?

[insert names]

Jasmine Symons**1-E3**

University of South Australia

Paint is my analyst, motherhood my muse

Painting is an important vehicle through which I understand myself as a mother, and how I position the role within a broader family, social, historical and creative context. I also understand myself as a painter via the experience of being a mum because my painting practice is a surrogate relationship through which I can safely explore the puzzles of family life. My painting and the experience of my family life interact in a sensory domain that transcends any fixed state of feeling, knowing or individual being. An articulation of how this sensory interaction works is the focus of my research project and is framed by the theories of Julia Kristeva and Bracha Ettinger. Painting opens up a psycho-social and physical space for me to communicate with myself when language doesn't offer enough, and when I'm not sure about where to begin to unpick what I find perplexing. As a fluid, paint seems to drag my thoughts along with it. It helps me find the in-between spaces of my thinking, the unacknowledged or repressed, and new ways of understanding. Through painting I think about family life because both are layered and complex, and oscillate between the known and unknown. Painting makes use of my imagination to explain the sensation of a merging between myself and my children, and my past with my present. Paint as a medium, its action, and the continual transition within a family life seem to make sense to each other. Both exist in a space that's not entirely translatable because their context isn't static and therefore might continue to open up new meaning. A painting, like an episode in family life, is never quite finished.

Catherine Walsh and Vee Malnar

2-E3

Mamapalooza

Mamapalooza – annual international festival honouring mothers in the arts

Following in the footsteps of Joy Rose of New York, Vee Malnar, with Catherine Walsh, organised and hosted the first Mamapalooza Sydney in 2012. Aiming to celebrate mothers in the creative and performing arts, the festival was located mainly at Tap Gallery at Darlinghurst, with events also at Parramatta and Kings Cross. There was an art exhibition, singer songwriter nights, a stand-up comedy show, a play reading and a literary forum. We believe that creative work is therapeutic to mothers themselves, helping a woman maintain her identity and cope with, or critique, the demands of mothering. It is important for our culture. It is important that people see mothers in a range of roles. When a woman becomes a mother her identity shifts. It is important at this confronting time that women see themselves reflected truthfully in the culture so they can reconstitute a new self. It is important for mothers to know they are not alone. We want to support mothers in the creative and performing arts, and encourage people to experience their work, and engage with their creative expression. 'Mamapalooza 14' was run out of Tap Gallery in May 2014. Events included an art exhibition, and a Variety Night incorporating performances by stand-up comediennes and singer/songwriters, and a night of short plays produced by Joy Roberts.

*Keele University***‘Having it all, or risking it all?’ Choice, risk and delayed motherhood in the United Kingdom**

Over the past few decades in the UK the number of ‘older mothers’ – women who begin their families at age thirty-five or over, has markedly increased. Concerns about rising numbers of older mothers have been expressed by health professionals, who have warned of the risks of infertility and health risks to mother and baby that increase with advancing maternal age. This paper presents findings from a study where twenty-six newspaper articles about older motherhood, and eleven in-depth interviews carried out with older mothers were analysed using a critical discursive psychological approach. A central aim of this research was to explore societal understandings of delayed motherhood and the subsequent implications these meanings may have for women who are positioned as older mothers. It was found that the media predominantly position older mothers as selfish – as those who choose to delay motherhood and therefore position them as responsible for putting themselves and their babies at risk. The older mothers in this study did not identify with this representation and often worked to resist it through challenging the notion that their timing of motherhood was a choice, negotiating their degree of personal risk, and constructing themselves as ‘good’ mothers. Moreover, it is argued that far from a selfish choice, older motherhood is shaped by societal definitions of the ‘right’ or ‘ideal’ situation in which to become a mother, in addition to current ideologies of ‘good’ motherhood that effectively define when a woman is ready for motherhood.

*Curtin University***How much is enough? Exploring the ways women negotiate their own and society's expectations**

This post-structuralist feminist interpretive study explores how women with professional qualifications negotiate contemporary discourses of motherhood. Sixteen women who completed tertiary studies prior to motherhood, and now have pre-school aged children, were interviewed to investigate women’s experience of the liminal space of motherhood. Women were also invited to engage in reflective correspondence with the author, following the interview. Key aims included the exploration of how women negotiate subjectivities of self-as-professional and self-as-mother within the changing expectations of society, and their own fluid understandings of their subjectivities. Key themes that are emerging include: mother history; guilt; nature; waiting; intuition; constant negotiation; post-natal depression; support; judgement; embodiment; humour and empathy. This presentation will discuss these themes in terms of a multiplicity of understandings of self, family and society.

**Between a rock and a hard place: the 'crisis of identity'
amongst new mothers**

Most women in Western society are in the paid workforce on a full-time basis before they have children. In contrast, when they have a baby, a high percentage of them stop paid work for a period, which is a primary expectation of the pervasive 'good mother' ideology. Research has found that numerous women experience a significant sense of loss and grief upon leaving paid work and their 'life before' becoming a mother. A critical means by which we maintain our identity is mirrored in the relationships with our friends, family and work colleagues. The lack of interaction that many mothers experience can cause them to experience a strong sense of loss in relation to identity. This qualitative study, which involved in-depth interviews with twenty Australian mothers, aged twenty-five to forty-five, was conducted to investigate the relationship between demands associated with the 'good mother' gender identity and the development of postnatal depression (PND) in Western society. The 'good mother' and the 'good father' ideologies are central to the gender division of labour underpinning the gender order within the contemporary Western world. In broad terms, these ideologies position women as the primary 'unpaid' carers of their children, 'happily' available 24/7 to them, and men as the primary financial providers or 'breadwinners'. A significant finding of this research was that numerous mothers experience a 'crisis of identity' when shifting from the paid labour force to the unpaid work of childcare and housework, the latter remaining low in societal value. This crisis is manifested by experiences of grief, depression, anger, low self-esteem and a sense of failure. The widespread belief that paid work is 'real work' as opposed to the low status of unpaid work was found to contribute to this distress. Returning to paid work on a casual, part-time or full-time capacity, or not returning yet refusing to adhere to the 'good mother' ideology, were found to alleviate the 'crisis of identity' that many mothers experience.

**Occupation hazards of wet-nursing: transmission of syphilis from
infected infants and other risks**

Most accounts of wet-nursing focus on the employer's child. The wet-nurse was herself a mother, whether her child was born alive or stillborn. Yet her motherhood was subsumed in the nature of her employment and the existence of her own baby ignored, her only value being her milk. Her workplace was the employer's home or her own home, or institutional employment. Occupation conditions were far from homogenous. The unmarried wet-nurse was either deplored ('fallen woman') or sought after (no husband to make trouble). Occupational health issues were: contracting

syphilis from the infant; being dosed to 'cure' an infant of this or other sickness; being blamed for illness; the health and survival of her own child; separation from her infant and family; surveillance of her behaviour and diet. Transmission of syphilis from infant to wet-nurse was first described in 1498. However, this was disputed by the medical establishment in England in the mid-19th century and a vitriolic debate raged in the *Lancet*. Medico-legal opinion of the time protected the baby's father. Some infants with congenital syphilis were a-symptomatic at birth. The unwitting wet-nurse could carry the infection home or to the next baby she wet-nursed. Cases are cited and treatment with mercury and its toxic effects are described.

Victoria Team

2-F2

La Trobe University

Dis-embodied motherhood and involved fatherhood: feminist debates over infant feeding

In the academic literature, infant feeding by fathers and gender roles are highly debated with paternal involvement frequently dichotomised. Liberation feminists and some equality feminists who support women's equal participation in paid employment viewed shared parental involvement in infant feeding as beneficial to the feminist movement because it has the potential to increase women's choices, improve their career prospects and reduce the burden of care. In contrast, equality feminists who study gender power relationships viewed paternal involvement in infant feeding as controlling and oppressive. There are calls from the maternalists for contemporary organised feminism to take into account women's experiences of and their interests in paternal involvement in breastfeeding. In this presentation, we discuss women's experiences of breast milk expression and paternal involvement in infant feeding identified from in-depth video interviews with forty-nine breastfeeding women conducted in the UK in 2005 and 2006. Women's experiences form part of the Database of Individual Patient Experiences (DIPEX) of health, illness and life stage transitions that informs the website www.healthtalkonline.org. The results indicated that most participants believed that: fathers of breastfeeding infants were uninvolved and detached; fathers desired feeding experiences; breastfeeding mother needed a break/s – personal time, studies and work; and paternal involvement was promoted as a good practice by the NHS and antenatal education providers. Women's experiences varied from rewarding to unsatisfying. They reported physical issues, such as oversupply, engorgement and mastitis, and emotional issues, such as guilt, worry and a feeling that expressed breast milk feeding was not what the baby wanted. Women's experiences will be supported by illustrative video clips from the interviews.

Catherine Robinson

3-F2

University of Technology, Sydney

Failed breasts: the struggle for milk and motherhood

In the contemporary moment, breastfeeding discourse of 'breast is best' is central to the emotional geography of early motherhood in Western nations such as Australia and the UK. Women in particular must negotiate the positioning of breastfeeding as pivotal to 'good' motherhood and are encouraged to evaluate their own mothering practices against the ideal yardstick of fully successful breastfeeding. For many women this presents no particular issue and their breastfeeding work is happily augmented by the broader identity work it supports. For other women for whom, for a myriad of reasons, breastfeeding is only partially successful or non-existent, the experience of 'second best', 'artificial' feeding practices and conflicted maternal identity emerge. Drawing on autoethnographic material, this paper examines the production of new and distressing bodily and emotional geographies in the context of the fight to establish breastfeeding. In particular I focus on the ways in which the maternal body is recast as a failed site of milk production and as unable to establish connection and communion with the newborn child. In this, the mother negotiates the unfamiliar physical and physiological geography of her own breasts and of her own baby whilst attempting to grow into a new relational geography which must endlessly and generously encompass *both* maternal and infant body. This drive for corporeal connection, however, is shattered by the experience of dissociation effected through pain and through the separate struggles by health professionals to successfully attach baby and maternal breast. In this a new and negative interior and exterior cartography of the self is generated. As such, the fight to feed becomes a fight for motherhood, into which, in the face of 'low supply' and 'poor attachment', the mother carries a transformative experience of 'failing' her child.

Susan Harvey

1-F3

Child and Family Health Clinical Nurse Consultant

The importance of becoming mother: stories of judgement and hope from mothers receiving opioid treatment in the perinatal period

The presentation outlines a study, which examined how mothers receiving opioid treatment in the perinatal period made meaning of their interactions with health and other services. The study provides the opportunity to hear the 'voice' of a highly vulnerable, and seldom heard, group of mothers in our community. A qualitative approach and narrative methodology guided data collection and allowed participants the greatest opportunity to 'tell their story'. Participants were recruited through methadone clinics in a large metropolitan Area Health Service in Sydney, Australia. Six mothers participated in a face-to-face interview on two separate occasions, two to six months apart. Two main themes of judgment and hope were woven within the mothers' stories. Judgment correlated to their identity as a mother whilst being under surveillance during opioid treatment. Although the mothers faced a high level of adversity in their lives, resilience and hope for a better future for themselves and their children was of paramount importance. Becoming a 'good mother' was the motivating factor for change and seeking support from health services. Listening and responding to the mother's needs provides the

opportunity for services to support women in recovery, and also has implications for a better future for the children in their care. The presentation concludes with a five-minute video clip of a dynamic and unique 'Sand Art Montage' of the mothers' collective story. The telling of 'Nina's Story', through the creative art of Lee Sturgess, provides time to reflect on the perspective of the mothers and how they can be supported in a positive way.

Britta Wiggington

2-F3

University of Queensland

'A lot of women don't talk about it so they aren't judged': negotiating good mothering in the context of smoking during pregnancy

What counts as a 'good mother' receives much attention in popular and academic writing. By definition, a good mother is often portrayed as white, middle-class, heterosexual and the biological mother of the child. More specifically, good mothers are considered self-disciplined, protective of their child and self-sacrificing, where they provide limitless care and attention towards fulfilling the child's needs and desires, above their own. For women who don't fit the stringent criteria of a good mother, either by no fault of their own or because their 'choices' are deemed inappropriate, their experiences may not be considered 'hearable' in this specific discursive context. Motherhood is one example of how certain discourses are taken for-granted as 'normal', 'common-sense' experiences, and consequently marginalise or silence the experiences or identities of women who do not fit within this discursive space. Drawing on interviews with Australian women who smoked in pregnancy, a public account in the media of smoking in pregnancy, and online forum discussions, we explore the ways in which the good mother discourse was negotiated, or absent, in accounts of smoking in pregnancy. Our concern is that by silencing women's experiences of smoking in pregnancy, we are reinforcing narrow ideals of good mothering and encouraging a zero-tolerance approach to smoking in pregnancy. Such an approach is problematic as it overlooks women's harm reduction efforts, prioritises the health of the baby over the woman, and ultimately presents smoking as an individual choice, overlooking the socio-cultural context which compromises women's cessation efforts.

Shatema Threadcraft

1-G1

Rutgers University

Reproductive and caretaking freedom in marginalised communities – choice, barriers and context

In this paper I draw on Nancy Hirschmann's feminist revisions to the concept of freedom to develop a theory that affords women in disadvantaged, spatially

isolated communities the opportunity to reproduce and provide adequate care for their dependents. Hirschmann's theory of freedom seeks to dismantle both overt obstacles to women's freedom – which for many marginalised women have included institutional phenomena such as 'sterilisation abuse' – but also diffuse cultural forces that impede women's reproductive freedom that mainstream theorists of freedom ignore. Those concerned with increasing women's freedom must counter dissuasive cultural forces that inhibit marginalised women's free exercise of their capacities for reproduction and care, in addition to economic forces that serve to inhibit those capacities. The cultural forces include broadly held beliefs that marginalised women are irresponsible reproducers and caretakers that may discourage them from seeking enabling aid, just as sexist institutional contexts dissuade victims of domestic violence from seeking aid. The forces also include distinct reproductive and caretaking geographies across communities – a working mother's distance from centres of employment and reproductive health care – that function to inhibit or dissuade reproduction. All women should live in contexts that support their reproductive and caretaking freedom.

Sisa Ngabaza

2-G1

University of the Western Cape

Mothers and mothering within stigmatised contexts: perceptions and experiences of young women and their mothers in a South African community

Adolescent pregnancy and motherhood continues to be a common feature in many communities and responses to pregnant young women vary with contexts. In South Africa adolescent pregnancy continues to be a social, health and cultural concern, with pregnant young women and mothers experiencing various forms of stigma that highlight their own and society's entrenched prejudices about young motherhood. Young motherhood always transforms the mothering terrain within families in which it occurs in different ways. In some cases the stigma attached to it has a spill-over effect to the mothers of the young women. Drawing from a social constructionist perspective and working within a qualitative feminist framework, four focus group discussions were held with twenty-four young mothers aged between eighteen and twenty-two years. Eight in-depth interviews were also conducted with some of the mothers of the young women from the focus group discussion, in Cape Town, South Africa. The study focused on how the young women and their mothers perceived stigma associated with young motherhood and how this stigma impacted on their daily lives. Findings revealed that young mothers and their mothers' lives were transformed not because they had children but because of the stigma associated with young motherhood. This paper draws from this study and unpacks the challenges of mothers and mothering within stigmatised contexts in certain communities in Cape Town, South Africa. The paper argues that intervention strategies on young motherhood should consider the hidden experiences of their own

mothers and draw from these as a way of strengthening support for the young mothers.

Kerreen Reiger

3-G1

La Trobe University

Mothers in harm's way: institutional abuse, vulnerability and human rights in childbirth

Women's stories of being traumatised, violated and abused while giving birth in hospital settings have rarely received public attention. Those already socially disadvantaged by poverty or race/ethnicity are especially vulnerable when becoming mothers. Yet, institutionalised maltreatment and power plays in maternity care are not well understood, including within feminist discourse. Recent international and local Australian developments have, however, brought a critical human rights lens to interpersonal interactions and institutional practices in childbirth. The US-based 'Respectful Maternity Care' initiative linked abuse in birth to wider patterns of gendered violence and to maternal morbidity and mortality. A landmark human rights and birth conference in Amsterdam in July 2012 gave rise to the film, *Freedom for birth* and, in effect, to a social movement to contest the poor care given to birthing women. In light of these developments, this paper reports discussion at human rights and birth forums held in Sydney and Melbourne in 2012–2013 and explores the experiences of some Australian mothers. It argues that women's journey into motherhood can be scarred by professional tensions and under-resourcing within a highly medicalised maternity system. Both mothers and midwives tell stories of women at times being treated with lack of dignity and respect and even with outright abuse. When even affluent white women are mistreated, the vulnerability of poor, refugee and indigenous women, those who have been sexually abused or are adolescent mothers, is further compounded by badly managed birthing.

Cathy Dickson

1-G2

University of Western Sydney

Mothers at university: what the literature tells us

Increasing numbers of women who are mothers are undertaking tertiary education – particularly in the field of nursing. There is a vast range of women who are studying nursing, these include (but are not limited to); teen mothers, mothers who have raised their children and are now pursuing careers outside the home, and solo mothers. Previously identified as non-traditional students, the experiences of this cohort are not well understood. The literature examining these experiences is limited, and Australian perspective is particularly scarce. In order to better support mothers who choose tertiary education, there is a need to better understand the challenges and sustaining

factors they experience. This study seeks to generate understanding of mothers who are enrolled in a Bachelor of Nursing degree, ultimately enabling the development of clear strategies to support their success.

Angela Clarke and Fleur Summers

2-G2

RMIT University

Inbetweenness: mothering, academia and creative practice

This paper explores how two women uncover the spaces between being mothers, academics, artists and students. We discuss the development of a professional friendship that recognises the need for genuine dialogue concerning the complexities of family and professional life and their influences upon one another. We discuss our critical engagement with education and creative practices and how we have worked together to enhance the art school experience. We consider the centrality of the kitchen table space and explore how its proximity to the family makes it a site for simultaneous professional, creative and nurturing activity. Within the boundaries of school hours, part-time academic work and full-time study we explore the ways in which we claim the time and space to authentically encounter our respective creative practices. We consider the humbling, challenging and rewarding lessons learnt from mothering and reflect upon how the important choices we make as mothers can be career limiting and artistically demanding. We track, describe, map, theorise and document our physical and metaphysical spaces to help make meaning of the choices we make. In a social and professional context that continually points toward binaries (male/female, stay at home/working, commercial/independent, teacher/researcher) we discuss the need for plurality, openness and flexibility. In the dialogical space between the social and professional roles we play we embrace ambiguity, welcome paradox and normalise the co-existence of opposites. In so doing we have discovered a wellspring of support that is mutually empowering and nurturing to us as mothers, academics, artists, students and friends.

Valerie Heffernan

3-G2

National University of Ireland Maynooth

Motherhood in contemporary Germany

Declining birth rates in the majority of European countries have put motherhood centre-stage on the European research agenda. In Germany, a country perceived by many as the major economic force in contemporary Europe, the consistently low birth rates have led to media discussions asserting that the German population is dying out. Alarmist as these claims might seem, they are borne out of statistical evidence; since the early 1990s, the birth rate has hovered around or below a total fertility rate of 1.3, a rate which implies a halving of the stable population every forty-five years. As researchers, policy makers and media pundits alike debate the reasons why Germans are not having babies, motherhood is a hot topic on the German cultural landscape. Academic motherhood is something that has come under

particular scrutiny. Recent studies have shown that the percentage of professors at German universities who are female is less than twenty per cent, and the percentage of professors who are mothers is far lower. Why do German women perceive an academic career to be so at odds with motherhood? And how do mothers who have made it to the top of the academic ladder explain their success? This paper will consider both public perceptions of academic motherhood in Germany and the lived experience of women who have 'made it' both as academics and as mothers. This paper is part of a broader project that explores the cultural representation of mothers, mothering and motherhood in contemporary Germany. My research examines the images of mothers that are presented in German television, film, literature, the media and political discourse and considers the dominant messages they convey about what it means to be a mother in Germany today.

Joan Garvan

1-G3

Australian National University

Intersubjective dynamics between mothers and their infants

The single most significant development in the second part of the twentieth century has been changes to gendered roles. Most often women are having their first child when they are in their early thirties, at a time when many have furthered their education and have extensive workplace and life experience. While at the same time a significant body of international research on the transition to parenthood (both qualitative and quantitative) demonstrates high levels of depression, high levels of marital dissatisfaction, and there are legendary issues related to identity for women-as-mothers. In the face of very real twenty-first century tensions there is very little Australian research on the transition to parenthood, and the related early years' health and welfare services remain patchy. It is a truism that the health and wellbeing of infants and children is connected critically to that of their parents. Australian research by Kerry-Ann Grant et al. (2012) identified the significance of intergenerational factors in the mother-infant dyad which was linked with raised levels of anxiety and depression. The relationship between mothers, in particular, and their infants is foundational, laying the basis for the rest of life. In light of these findings this paper surveys an important body of research on this interpersonal dimension of care while introducing the notion of 'intersubjectivity' that can enhance our understanding of complex mother-infant dynamics to the benefit of both mother and infant/child.

Kate Cantrell

2-G3

Queensland University of Technology

The sideways hourglass: the simultaneity of space and time in mother-daughter relationships

This paper explains how the lemniscate works as a space-time continuum in Jeanette Winterson's semi-autobiographical novel, *Oranges are not the only fruit*. Specifically, Winterson endows her story with a non-linear temporality that merges the past, present and future into a uniform whole. This collapse of temporal dimensions disrupts the laws of causality and chronology, and creates a non-linear temporality that binds Jeanette to her mother. This bind not only represents Jeanette's movement through the world, but the shape encapsulates the complexities of her relationship with her mother. Mrs Winterson, a fundamentalist Christian, rejects Jeanette when she falls in love with another woman and eventually comes out. When Jeanette refuses to repent, her decision undermines the discursive power of her mother's faith and consequently breaks the alliance on which their relationship is based. As Jeanette, reflecting on her childhood, says, 'I had been brought in to join my mother in a tag match against the Rest of the World'. In *Oranges*, this collapse of the mother-daughter relationship evokes the multiplicity of selfhood by alternating between the mimetic and marvellous modes of discourse. Specifically, Winterson employs the lemniscate as a space-time continuum that allows Jeanette to oscillate between the story of her adoption and the story of her mother's conversion to the Pentecostal Church.

Julie Cwikel

3-G3

Ben Gurion University of the Negev

Mother-daughter relationships and strategies for the promotion of a positive body image for daughters

Mother-daughter (M-D) relationships are pivotal in the development of eating behaviours and body acceptance; however scant attention has been directed to the M-D relationship as a resource protecting against disordered eating behaviours that are promoted by pervasive media messages. Four data sets were obtained using in-depth interviews and grounded theory: twenty-two Jewish-Israeli self-identified fat women, twenty-four Jewish-Israeli mother-daughter pairs from six different cultural/ethnic groups, eleven American-Jewish mother-daughter pairs of normal weight women, and a focus group of five American-Jewish college female college students. M-D relationships both transmit hegemonic media-influenced, and alternative, counter-hegemonic body-related messages with regard to body-image and demonstrate specific strategies for resisting eating disorders. We found five strategies for resistance to media messages that were mentioned by mothers and daughters as effective in helping them resist pressure to be thin, lose weight and disconnect from their bodies. Mothers using alternative strategies for managing the discourse on bodies, weight and eating can have a significant impact on their own and their daughters' attitudes and behaviours, offering psychological resources to maintain a positive body image.

BIOGRAPHIES

Catherine Arnold

Catherine is currently pursuing her PhD in Hispanic feminist literature at the University of Queensland. Her present doctoral and previous Honours research has focused on representations of the transgressive mother in the work of Argentinean author, Silvina Ocampo.

Emma Arogundade

Emma is a PhD candidate at the University of Cape Town, South Africa and a Senior Researcher in the Human and Social Development Unity of the Human Sciences Research Council. Her areas of research interest include identities, race, diversity, sexual violence, social justice and restitution.

Belinda Barnett

Belinda is a psychologist/career development practitioner and a committee member on the Maternity Coalition's Queensland branch. Belinda became interested in maternity services reform while having her own children, Zoe at a private hospital and Matthew at home with a private midwife. Belinda is currently a provisional PhD Candidate with the School of Education at the University of Queensland, studying the application of postmodern career development theories to support women's journeys during pregnancy, birth and beyond.

Sophia Brock

Sophia is a PhD candidate interested in the concept of the 'good mother' for mothers of children with disabilities. She is investigating the concept in the context of family and motherhood studies, to examine how mothers' sense of self and identity, familial relationships, friendships, and employment are impacted by their role in mothering a child with a disability.

Kirsty Budds

Kirsty is currently a Lecturer in Psychology at Keele University, UK. Her broad research interests are in gender, health and parenting. Most recently she has been interested in understanding discourses and ideologies of motherhood and how they may impact upon women's experiences as new mothers.

Linda Burnett

Linda has completed a study of maternal subjectivities and embodied maternal experiences for a PhD, and is currently writing a book on the same topic. She teaches academic writing at the University of New South Wales, and is the mother of a grown-up daughter.

Kate Cantrell

Kate is a Brisbane-based writer. Her creative writing has been published by *The Sunday Mail*, *Swamp*, *Stilts*, *The Lifted Brow*, *Bradt Travel Guides*, *Wet Ink*, *Island*, and *Voiceworks*. Kate is a lecturer in the school of Creative Writing and Literary Studies at Queensland University of Technology. In 2013, Kate was the Katharine Susannah Prichard Emerging Writer-in-Residence.

Hangsub Choi

Hangsub is associate professor, department of sociology in Kookmin University, Seoul, South Korea. He has a PhD of sociology of culture. His major is sociology of culture, sociology of media and communication and futures study. Recently, he published several papers and books on social media and social integration.

Angela Clarke

Angela is a Senior Research Fellow at RMIT University. She has twenty years experience as an arts educator and is a singer/songwriter who leads a group of women musicians in the band *Luminate Ensemble*. She has two children and is currently undertaking a PhD at Monash University in theatre performance.

Julie Cwikel

Julie is the founder and co-director of the Centre for Women's Health Studies and Promotion at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel. She is a social epidemiologist and directs 'Mum to Mum' providing support to new mothers. She is mother to seven and grandmother to nine.

Rhea Dempsey

Rhea is a highly sought after speaker, counsellor and birth attendant with experience at over a thousand births across thirty-five years working with women, their partners, support people, midwives and medical practitioners. She is an expert on the topic of working with pain in childbirth and its connection to normal physiological birth.

Ruth DeSouza

Ruth has a clinical background in maternal mental health, having set up a service with two other clinicians in 1995 in Auckland, New Zealand. She has also taught Maternal and Child Health Nurses (Plunket) about maternal mental health for almost twenty years and has contributed two chapters to the Plunket National Resource manual. Ruth developed a brochure on postnatal depression for the New Zealand Mental Health Foundation in collaboration with parents, consumer organisations and health professionals, which has been the most reprinted publication they have ever produced. Her PhD was about migrant maternity and the ways in which health professionals are complicit with state goals of managing populations, particularly those that are

visibly different. Ruth is now a Senior Lecturer and the Course Co-ordinator of the Bachelor of Nursing at Monash University (Berwick).

Karlene Dickens

Karlene is a proudly feminist mother with two young daughters, and with a background in Occupational Therapy. She currently works in the community mental health sector for a not-for-profit organisation where (amongst other things), she co-organises key events for Mental Health week each year. She has recently completed a Masters in Gender and Anthropology and is considering doing a PhD (time permitting!). She also facilitates adult education classes in personal development, and occasionally blogs about feminism and pop culture.

Cathy Dickson

Cathy has been a lecturer at the University of Western Sydney (UWS) in the School of Nursing and Midwifery for the past ten years. During her tenure at UWS she has taught both undergraduate and postgraduate nursing students who are mothers, and noted many of them complete their nursing studies successfully facing multiple adversities.

Rakime Elmir

Rakime is a lecturer at the University of Western Sydney in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. She recently completed her doctoral work in 2012 around women's experiences of severe postpartum haemorrhage and emergency hysterectomy. Following on from her doctoral work, she completed a study on father's experience of traumatic birth. Rakime's research interests are qualitative research, women's and children's health, and traumatic birth experiences.

Carole Ferrier

Carole has taught at The University of Queensland for the past forty years, especially in the areas of gender, race, class and sexuality in relation to cultural production. She has published one hundred articles and book chapters, and a number of books including the edited volumes, *Gender, politics and fiction: Twentieth century Australian women's novels*; the socialist history, *Radical Brisbane*; letters between six earlier twentieth century Australian women novelists, *As good as a yarn with you*; and the biography, *Jean Devanny: Romantic revolutionary*. She has been editor of *Hecate: A Women's interdisciplinary journal* since its inception in 1975, and also edited the *Australian women's book review* since 2000.

Andie Fox

Andie is a contributing author to *The good mother myth: redefining motherhood to fit reality*, which was recently profiled by *TIME Magazine* over the course of a week. One of her essays also appears in *The 21st century*

motherhood movement and she has written for *The Guardian*, various Fairfax publications and *The Wheeler Centre* on feminist motherhood. Fox regularly appears on ABC radio as a guest on their parenting panel and she is the author of the popular feminist blog, *blue milk*.

Joan Garvan

Joan's research is in Sociology and Gender. In December 2010 she was awarded a doctorate from the Australian National University for her thesis titled: *Maternal ambivalence in contemporary Australia: navigating equity and care*. Since completing her studies, Joan launched an internet site which offers online professional development courses. She has four years' experience working with the Australian National University as an Online Moderator for a unit on Gender and Development and completed a semester with the Australian Catholic University as a Lecturer on Introduction to Sociology.

Fiona Green (Keynote)

Fiona is the feminist mother of a twenty-something gay son, and currently holds the position of Associate Dean of Arts, and Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada. She's the author of *Practicing feminist mothering* (2011) and *Feminist mothering in theory and practice, 1985–1995: A study in transformative politics* (2009). She is also the co-editor of *Maternal pedagogies: in and outside the classroom* (2011), *Chasing rainbows: exploring gender fluid parenting practices* (2013), and the forthcoming *Men, mothers and mothering*, all with Demeter Press.

Susan Harvey

Susan (Sue) is a Child and Family Health Clinical Nurse Consultant from Sydney with extensive experience in community health. In 2012, she completed a Master of Nursing (Honours), which reflected her interest in a strength-based and partnership approach to care. Sue is a facilitator of family partnership training and reflective clinical supervision.

Jane Hasler

Jane was awarded her doctorate from the University of Sydney in 2010. Her PhD research involved an investigation of the relationship between postnatal depression and the strong demands associated with the 'good mother' and 'good father' ideologies, which are central to the gender order within contemporary Australia. Jane has taught in a number of Australian universities and her particular research interests are the concepts of gender, identity and gender identity.

Valerie Heffernan

Valerie is Head of German at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Her research and teaching encompasses twentieth and twenty-first century German-language literature, feminist literary theory and cultural studies. Recent research projects focus on German-speaking Swiss writers and emerging women writers. She has ongoing research interests in the representation of mothers and motherhood in contemporary German literature and culture.

Nicole Highet

Nicole is a leading Australian expert in perinatal mental health. Having completed a doctorate in the perinatal area, Nicole has furthered this work over the last twelve years at *beyondblue*. This has included overseeing the national depression research program, which identified the high prevalence of these conditions, and the development of the *beyondblue National Action Plan*, which resulted in the government funding the \$85m *National Perinatal Depression Initiative*. Nicole also co-chaired the development of the Perinatal Clinical Practice Guidelines, endorsed by NHMRC and expanded this to include online accredited training programs and education resources for health professionals, women and their families.

Belinda Horton

As an Occupational Therapist, Belinda completed studies in a Master of Health Science in Occupational Therapy in 1998, exploring maternal and family health and perinatal depression. After ten years as a Breastfeeding Counsellor with ABA Belinda qualified as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant in 1999 and completed a Graduate Diploma in Family Therapy in 2001. In 2004 she joined PANDA as CEO. PANDA provides the National Perinatal Depression Helpline, funded by the Australian Government. Ten years of organisational leadership in the perinatal mental health sector has provided Belinda with a strong foundation for the next chapter of PANDA's ongoing growth in Australia.

Diane Humphery

Diane lives in Canberra and works at the Australian National University. She has a Masters in Education from the University of Southern Queensland and has had a number of short stories and academic articles published. She has two adult children who continue to be the steady lights which always help her steer a clear course.

Mel Irenyi

Mel's doctoral thesis addressed differences between the coming out and motherhood narratives of lesbian mothers, and theorised a hierarchy based on maternal proximity to heterosexuality. Subsequent to completion she has worked in research in child protection and, most recently, facilitated a parenting program for incarcerated fathers. Her paper builds on ideas first

considered in a blog for *Ideas at the house*, titled 'When the L word meets the F word'.

Mahaina Jawad

Mahaina's comprehensive research as part of her economics and finance degree allowed her to produce two papers, titled *The role of international aid politics in Africa* and *The general hospital of Lahore*. She graduated in April 2014 and intends to continue her research on feminism and gender studies. She lives with her parents in Defence Housing Authority, Lahore, Pakistan.

Gillian Joiner

Gillian's interest in the development of the self was sparked in her teenage years between family conversations about mothering, media-related feminist dialogue, and psychology classes. As a single mother, she attended university, majoring in psychology, philosophy and journalism. She later worked in mental health before embarking on a PhD exploring the conditions infants require to become flourishing adults.

Jenny Jones

Drawing on a matricentric and applied ethics framework Jenny completed her doctoral studies in 2012. She was awarded a 2012 Outstanding Doctoral Thesis award for her thesis *Composing maternal identities: the living realities of mothers with young adult children in 21st century Australia*. She now works as a Clinical Ethicist in Brisbane, Queensland. Jenny is a married mother with three adult children and one granddaughter. In her 'spare' time, she is Treasurer of the Australian Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement.

Ildiko Keogh

Ildiko is a Mother, who has worked as a high school drama teacher and creative arts therapist. After experiencing the benefits of continuity of midwifery care, she joined Maternity Coalition in 2009 to advocate for women's rights as mothers and consumers of maternity services. Having volunteered as a consumer representative in maternity care services, she would like to see consumer engagement become an essential component in the education for all health care providers.

Parmod Kumar

Parmod is presently Assistant Professor in the Faculty of English at Indira Gandhi National Open University. He has done his doctoral research on the domestication and insurrection of marginalised voices in Indian English literature. He also edits an e-journal *Sangharsh*, which has at its centre all academic and social issues related with Dalit discourse. He has been a proud recipient of an Australia India Council Fellowship and has worked extensively on the perspectives in indigeneity in India and Australia.

Kathryn McGuigan

Kathryn is a PhD candidate at Massey University. She is a mother of three daughters, so is passionate about empowering mothers and daughters. She is also interested in social understandings of health and illness, particularly how these relate to mothers and families.

Vee Malnar

Vee worked as an actor before turning to writing and visual art. Recently her short plays have won at Crash Test, and Short and Sweet drama festivals. Vee's visual art is a pictorial domestic landscape.

Barbara Mattar

Barbara is a PhD candidate at the Australian Catholic University. She had the empowering experience of birthing two children, however found many new mothers around her lacked confidence in their birthing and breastfeeding bodies. Her thesis explores the varied representations of pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding in contemporary literature.

Sue Middlewood

Although Sue's presentation discusses her 'ambivalence to motherhood', she has been driven all of her adult life by her experience of love and grief for her children. In her working life she found her niche when she worked in palliative care within Canberra Hospital. She is in her final year of a Masters in Counselling at UNE.

Margaret Morgan

Margaret is an artist living in Los Angeles whose practice includes drawing, writing, photography, video and teaching. Her work explores the residues of the twentieth 'American' century and its fascination with hygiene. Her work is exhibited internationally, including Zürich, Amsterdam, Los Angeles and Melbourne. Her writing is published in *Plumbing, Sounding Modern Architecture* (Princeton Architectural Press); *Women in Dada* (MIT Press); as 'The Plumbing of Modern Life' in *The Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (Routledge) and in *The M Word, Real Mothers in Contemporary Art*.

Eva-Maria Müller-Markfort

Although a native German, Eva-Maria got a degree as Nurse-Midwife at Brussels Free University in 1968. Working in Belgium, France and Saudi Arabia, where her two children were born, enriched her knowledge about other cultures. Home birthing since 1992 back in Germany, she took on further education mainly on the psychological level to change the usual, medicalised system of prenatal care in her daily work to ensure a better birthing outcome in cases of prenatal contractions and repeated or

transgenerational caesareans. Co-founder and president of the German Association for Homebirth (DFH) she engages herself to keep the old art of midwifery alive.

Kristin Natalier

Kristin uses an interpretive frame to analyse how people make sense of the joys and challenges of negotiating intimate relationships in the context of personal and social change. Her current research agenda addresses the expressive dimensions and gendered power dynamics of child support as a financial transfer and policy regime.

Sisa Ngabaza

Sisa works as a lecturer in the department of Women and Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. Apart from publishing on school-age pregnancy and motherhood in South Africa, her research interests include gender, motherhood, youth and adolescent sexuality, adolescent pregnancy, parenting relations and power.

Carla Pascoe

Carla is a Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne. Her research has investigated the cultural history of menstruation, historical geographies of childhood and the cultural heritage of children. Since becoming a mother in January 2013 she has been researching the history of mothering in Australia.

Tran Phi Phuong

Tran is currently a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Sociology, Ho Chi Minh City (HCHC) University of Social Sciences and Humanities; teaching Sociology of the Family. She was awarded her PhD in 2008 at the University of South Australia, and researched balancing work and family roles among professional women in HCMC. Her research interests are gender and family issues. She is currently doing research on transnational families as a new structure of household in the market economy in Vietnam.

Marie Porter

Marie is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the School of English, Media Studies and Art History, at the University of Queensland. Her monograph *Transformative power in motherwork* examines Australian mothering in the 1950s/1960s. Marie was a founding member, and President, of ARM-A, which is now the Australian Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (AMIRCI).

Kerreen Reiger

Kerreen is a social historian and health sociologist and a founder of the Maternity Coalition. She has strong interests in maternal consumer advocacy,

and is the author of *The disenchantment of the home: modernising the Australian family, family economy, and Our bodies our babies: the forgotten women's movement*. In recent years, her research has focused primarily on the management of childbirth, especially inter-professional relationships and culture change in maternity hospital workplaces. She is a mother of four, stepmother of two and granny to nine.

Rachel Robertson

Rachel is a Lecturer at Curtin University, Western Australia. Her memoir, *Reaching one thousand: a story of love, motherhood and autism* (Black Inc, 2012), was shortlisted for the 2013 National Biography Award. Her most recent scholarly publication is a chapter in *Motherhood memoirs: mothers creating/writing lives* edited by Dymond and Willey (Demeter Press, 2013).

Catherine Robinson

Catherine engages in interdisciplinary research within sociologies and social geographies of place, embodiment and emotions. Her work has focused on the felt experience of the body and of place within the contexts of homelessness and trauma, and is currently broadening to include examinations of feeling, technology and selfhood in the context of intensive motherhood and breastfeeding struggle.

Megan Rogers

Megan completed her PhD at RMIT last year and focuses her study on the intersection between maternal studies and creative writing. In 2011 Drusilla Modjeska selected her as one of two Victorian writers to mentor for six months and she has had short stories and poetry published. She is currently the Secretary on the Board for the Australian Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement and writes about motherhood in her blog motherode. She is expecting her second little girl in September and lives in Melbourne with her husband and two-year-old Ava.

Amanda Kane Rooks

Amanda is currently completing a PhD in Literary and Cultural Studies at Central Queensland University. Her work has been published in a number of literary, film, and cultural studies journals and her current research interests include fictional representations of motherhood and female sexuality since the mid-nineteenth century. She lives with her family on the central Queensland coast, where she works as a high school English teacher.

Jasmine Salomon

Jasmine is midwife, curator, artist and mother. She is fascinated by costume, ritual, adornment and the capacity of art to influence cultural change. She is influenced in her practice by uncouth feminisms, environmental sustainability, humanist politics and community craft.

Virginia Schmied

Virginia is Professor in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Western Sydney. She is a midwife whose work extends across clinical practice, education, research and consultancy. Virginia leads a program of research on transition to parenthood, perinatal mental health and infant feeding decisions with a particular focus on professional-client interactions and relationships, effective models to support vulnerable families across maternity, and child and family health services. She is the first CI on a number of Australian Research Council linkage grants.

Rhonda Shaw

Rhonda is a sociologist. She teaches in the School of Social and Cultural Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her research area of interest is the sociology of ethics and bioethics.

Robin Shortland-Jones

Robin is a social work lecturer for the School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work at Curtin University in Western Australia. She is a mother of two boys, and has worked in the fields of mental health, family work, health, drug and alcohol and corrections.

Hou Shu-Hui

Hou is a PhD student at National Chengchi University in Taiwan. Her research interest lies in feminisms, gender studies, women studies and cultural studies.

Julie Stephens (Keynote)

Julie is an Associate Professor in the College of Arts, Victoria University. Her research is informed by feminist theory, social movement theory, memory studies and the emerging area of maternal studies. Her publications include investigations of cultural activism and memory, changing meanings of the maternal, the social dimensions of mothering, feminist oral history and the outsourcing of emotions and care. Her latest book is *Confronting postmaternal thinking: feminism, memory and care* (Columbia University Press, 2011).

Fleur Summers

Fleur is a Lecturer in Sculpture, Sound and Spatial Practice at RMIT University. She has shown her sculptural work in Australia and overseas. She has three children and is currently undertaking a PhD concerning the sculptural encounter as a neurocognitive experience.

Elizabeth Sutherland

Elizabeth teaches Liberal Arts at Swinburne TAFE. She is the author of the feminist blog *Spilt milk* and her work on motherhood and fat acceptance has been featured elsewhere online, including at *Feministe*. She lives in Melbourne with her partner and daughter.

Jasmine Symons

Jasmine is a mother of two, an art educator and a full-time PhD student in the School of Art, Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia. Her practice led research is situated in the field of contemporary painting, and is based in a studio at home amongst the domestic and family life from which it draws its impetus.

Victoria Team

Victoria is a Research Fellow in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University. Her research interests are in the area of women's health. Her publications focus on breastfeeding, reproductive screening, ageing, caregiving, disability, and body image.

Virginia Thorley

Virginia is a cultural historian of the history of medicine with an interest in women's experiences in sharing their milk. Her publications have included wet-nursing, peer-to-peer milk sharing, and milk banking. An issue that has arisen in previous research is milk sibblingship, whether religious or secular. She is currently collaborating with Dr Tomasz Sioda, in Poland, on wet-nursing as an occupation. Virginia is an Honorary Research Fellow in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at the University of Queensland.

Shatema Threadcraft

Shatema is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and a member of the graduate faculty of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University. She teaches courses in Gender and Political Theory and Afro-Modern Political Thought. Her article, 'Intimate injustice, political obligation and the dark ghetto' is forthcoming (*Signs*, Fall 2014).

Evelyn Tsitas

Evelyn is a journalist, author and communications consultant at RMIT University, Australia. She has published the health book *Handle with care* (2008) and is the recipient of the 2008 Scarlet Stiletto Award for Crime Writing and the 2007 and 2008 Dorothy Porter award for Innovation in Crime Writing.

Catherine Walsh

Catherine is the writer and producer of 'Rock Chikz' a staged musical (2005) and short sit-com, and is also a festival organiser of Mamapalooza Sydney.

Catherine blogs at motherhugger.com. She has published about mothering, and won songwriting awards. She has a degree in English and Drama and is training to become a teacher. She has three daughters.

Britta Wigginton

Britta is a PhD student at the University of Queensland, St Lucia, in the School of Psychology, where she completed her BA (Honours). In addition, Britta is a qualitative Research Assistant on a national project examining the contraceptive practices of young Australian women.

Karen Williams

Karen is currently working on her PhD at the University of Adelaide in the school of Gender Studies & Social Analysis. Her current research involves taking a feminist approach to understanding the lives of mothers of autistic children, particularly surrounding issues regarding whether they have become an object of care and judgement.