

Mothers and Mothering throughout the Life Course

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JoAnna Boudreaux, Kate Golding, Jennifer M. Heisler, Crystal Machado,
Sheila Martel, Ariel Moy, Usoa García Sagüés, Emily Wolfinger,
Diana Aramburu, Rachael Boulton, Marcella Gemelli, Katherine Herrán-Magee,
Mariana Trujillo Marquez, Elisabeth Hanscombe, and more

Notes on Contributors

Editor-in-Chief

Andrea O'Reilly is internationally recognized as the founder of motherhood studies and its subfield, maternal theory, and creator of matricentric feminism, a feminism for and about mothers and matricritics, a literary theory and practice for reading mother-focussed texts. She is a full professor in the School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at York University, founder/editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative* and publisher of Demeter Press. She is coeditor/editor of thirty-five-plus books on many motherhood topics, including *Maternal Theory*, *Monstrous Mothers*, *Maternal Regret*, *Young Mothers*, *Maternal Texts*, *Mothers and COVID-19*, *Normative Motherhood*, *Feminist Parenting*, *Mothers and Daughters*, and *Mothers and Sons*. In 2024, she published the coedited collections *Care(ful) Relationships between Mothers and the Caregivers They Hire*, *The Mother Wave: Theorizing, Enacting, and Representing Matricentric Feminism*, and *The Missing Mother*, and in 2025, *Gone Feral: Unruly Women and the Undoing of Normative Motherhood*. Forthcoming in January 2026 is her coedited collection, *Revolutionizing Motherlines*. She is the author of four monographs, including *(M)otherwords; Writings on Mothering and Motherhood, 2009–2024* (2024) and *Matricentric Feminism: Theory, Activism, Practice, the 2nd Edition* (2021). She has published seventeen chapters with several more planned on mother-centred novels and memoirs that will be published as a monograph in 2027. She is twice the recipient of York University's Professor of the Year Award for teaching excellence and is the 2019 recipient of the Status of Women and Equity Award of Distinction from OCUFA (Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations). She has received more than 1.5 million dollars in funding for her research projects.

Advisory Board

Fiona Joy Green (she/her) identifies as a white cisgender, temporarily able-bodied, straight feminist mother who believes in the power of revolutionary feminist parenting. Her thirty-five-year career at the University of Winnipeg includes the positions of chair, Department of Women's and Gender Studies; associate dean, Faculty of Arts; and founder and first director of the Institute for Women's and Gender Studies. She's the sole author of *Practicing Feminist Mothering* (ARP), coeditor of ten Demeter Press collections addressing ever-changing feminist maternal praxis and pedagogies, author of many encyclopedia entries, and peer-reviewed articles and chapters addressing feminist mothering, matricentric feminism, matroreform, motherlines, female genital cutting, gender fluidity, mommy blogging, and family engagement with privacy and boundary setting related to media and technologies.

Maki Motapanyane is an associate professor of women's studies at Mount Saint Vincent University. Her research spans feminist epistemology and methodology, anticolonial movements, motherhood studies, and cultural studies. Her publications address Canadian childcare policy, EDI in academe, African cinema, Black motherhood, maternal anger, and maternal feminist humour. She is editor of *Motherhood and Lone/Single Parenting* (2016), *Mothering in Hip-Hop Culture* (2012), and coeditor of *New Maternalisms* (2016). Forthcoming books include *Black Motherhoods* (with Delicia T. Greene, 2025) and *Silence to Strength: Intersections of Maternal Anger and Feminist Thought* (2025), with Demeter Press.

Blessing Ogunyemi is a second-year PhD student in the School of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at York University. She earned a bachelor's degree in English language and a master's degree in Literature from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. With interests spanning motherhood studies, African literature, history and representation, memory and memorialization, her research explores the complexities and politics of being and belonging. Blessing also employs creative writing as a method and medium of feminist inquiry, healing, and resistance, enabling the articulation of silenced histories, the reclamation of embodied knowledge, and the imagining of liberatory futures.

Tina Powell is a nationally published journalist, an award-winning communicator, and a bestselling author. She is currently a PhD candidate in York University's Gender, Feminist, and Women's Studies Program, where she also earned a Master of Arts. She has a Master of Communication Management from the University of Southern California, a Bachelor of Commerce from York University, and a BA in English from McMaster University. She has presented at academic conferences in Canada and the US,

and her article on motherhood as an intersectional identity was published in JMI. She also contributed a chapter to *Revolutionizing Motherlines* (2023) by Demeter Press.

Cristina Santos is an associate professor of Hispanic and Latin American studies at Brock University. Her books *Unbecoming Female Monsters: Witches, Vampires and Virgins* (2016) and *Untaming Girlhoods: Storytelling Female Adolescence* (2023) explore the various constructs of monstrous women and deviant girlhoods. Her research and various publications focus on a multicultural, interdisciplinary, and intersectional feminist perspective of literature, film, television, popular culture, and mythology. Her research combines her specialization on female monstrosity with the perception of political and social deviance and its impact on the construction of a personal and communal sense of identity that challenges official history and patriarchy.

Carolina Toscano has a PhD in comparative literature from the University of Washington. She teaches writing instruction and literature in the English department at Saint Louis University's Madrid Campus and oversees the first-year writing program and the student writing center. Carolina studies feminist maternal theory and migration in contemporary literature from Spain, Latin America, and the US. She is currently working on a coedited book entitled *Mothers, Mothering, and Climate Change* for Demeter Press.

Melinda Vandenbeld Giles is a feminist author and anthropology lecturer at the University of Toronto and Lakehead University. Melinda completed her PhD in anthropology in June 2025. Her publications include her Demeter Press edited volume *Mothering in the Age of Neoliberalism*, her coedited volume *The Routledge Companion to Motherhood*, and her Inanna feminist novel *Clara Awake*. Melinda's work also appears in many Demeter Press edited collections, *Current Sociology*, *JMI (Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement)*, *Journal of the Society for International Development*, and *Canadian Woman Studies*.

Editorial Board

Hillary Di Menna takes up space and paints it pink with her daughter, a trinity of black cats, and a little black dog. She shares her home with a drummer, writes love letters to the moon, dots 'i's with hearts, and makes cat scratches in her notebooks. Hillary has messy hair and can be bossy sometimes (and she prides herself on both). Hillary has contributed to *Demeter Press's* *Gone Feral: Unruly Women and the Undoing of Normative Femininity*, *Are the Kids Alright? The Impact of the Pandemic on Children and Their Families*, and *Mothers, Mothering, and COVID-19: Dispatches from the Pandemic*.

Anna Kennedy is a senior research fellow at the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) in the United Kingdom. Anna is an associate fellow of the Higher Education Authority with training in counselling, social psychology, and communication, having taught undergraduate students at Ulster University, Northern Ireland, and supervised research students at PCI College, Ireland. Anna's PhD research explored motherhood and the mother identity during the middle childhood years of family life, understood through the lens of identity theory. She has published research articles and presented at several international conferences on the topics of motherhood, identity, gender, and mental health.

Debadrita Saha is a PhD candidate in English at Ashoka University. Having completed her MA in English literature from Presidency University, Kolkata in 2022, she briefly taught at Brainware University as an assistant professor in the Department of English and Literary Studies. Her research interests include ecocriticism, graphic narratives, postcolonial studies, translation studies, gender studies, and cinema. She has published in peer-reviewed journals like *Rejoinder* (Rutgers University), *Genre en series* (OpenEditions), and the *Journal of Intercultural Studies* (Taylor & Francis). Her essay on consent and coercion in medieval Bengali literature was published in an edited volume titled *Reconsidering Consent and Coercion in Medieval Literature* by Brepols in June 2025.

Batya Weinbaum earned her PhD in an interdisciplinary American Studies program housed in the Department of English at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her dissertation, *Islands of Women and Amazons: Representations and Realities*, published by the University of Texas Press, explores birthing with a Maya midwife and a doctor and nurse from the local Red Cross on Isla Mujeres, Mexico. It has been widely used in scholarship and is available on Amazon, along with many of her other books of poetry, feminist criticism and fiction. Her art is part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Motherhood in St. Petersburg, Florida, with which she has worked since 2022. She founded and edits the journal *Femspec*, which has been in existence for over twenty-five years. She currently teaches online at the University of Maryland Global Campus and the American Public University System and has published about motherhood in various anthologies and journals.

Contributors

Diana Aramburu is an associate professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of California, Davis. She earned her PhD from the University of Chicago. Her research centers on twentieth- and twenty-first-century Iberian and Latin American literatures and cultures with a particular interest in motherhood studies, contemporary crime and crisis fiction, decolonial studies, and graphic and illness narratives. She is the author of *Resisting Invisibility: Detecting the Female Body in Spanish Crime Fiction* and coeditor of the volume *Crisis Unleashed: Crime, Turmoil, and Protest in Hispanic Literature and Visual Culture* with Nick Phillips. Her current book project is titled *Examining the Madre Rebelde: A Transatlantic Study of Prenatal, Birthing, and Postpartum Care in Contemporary Hispanic and Latinx Fiction*.

JoAnna Boudreaux is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Memphis. She teaches a variety of courses on topics including social theory, race and ethnic minorities, gender and society, and medical sociology. She has a PhD in communication studies and a master's degree in sociology. Her research interests include motherhood studies, spirituality and identity, and innovative teaching practices. She mentors students in internships and research, guiding them toward meaningful engagement and self-discovery. Outside of academia, she is devoted to her family, her cat, and pondering the meaning of life.

Rachael Boulton worked in theatre before raising children. Rachael's work as a playwright is published by Bloomsbury, and her work as a director has been staged in the UK and the US, funded by Arts Council Wales, Arts Council England, and the British Council. Rachael co-runs Fork Studio with her family in Ireland. Her research addresses the cultural issues surrounding birth and miscarriage approaches, such as the lack of emotional and practical support following miscarriage, the culture of unacknowledged miscarriage trauma, and the exclusion of women's experiences from research. Rachael is interested in reimagining myths as helpful for women on their fertility journey.

Sanjukta Das is a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Calcutta, specializing in clinical psychology. Her research interests include abuse in childhood, internalized and externalized disorders, mental health crises and psychosocial interventions, children in conflict with the law and those in need of care and protection, psychology and music, personality growth, adult development and aging, and different aspects of positive psychology. Das has led and collaborated on several significant research and consultancy projects funded by such organizations as UGC-SAP, ICSSR, UGC-CPEPA, DST-CSRI, the Directorate of Child Rights & Trafficking, the Government of West Bengal, and UNICEF.

Renée DePalma received her PhD in 2003 from the University of Delaware (USA). She has taught at the University of A Coruña (Spain) since 2010, where she coordinates the ECIGAL research group dedicated to global citizenship education. She is mainly interested in the social construction of marginalization within and beyond schools and the design of counter-hegemonic institutional contexts and classroom practices, and her research has focussed on equalities and social justice in terms of race, ethnicity, language, sexuality, and gender.

Stefany Ferreira Feniman holds a bachelor's and master's degree in the social sciences from the State University of Maringá, Paraná, Brazil, holds a bachelor's degree in social work from Pitágoras Unopar Anhanguera University, and is a doctoral candidate in the Postgraduate Program in Sociology at the State University of Londrina, Paraná, Brazil.

Marcella Gemelli, PhD, is a sociology teaching professor in the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics at Arizona State University. She has published on low-income single mothering in *Gender Issues* and in "New Maternalisms" *Tales of Motherwork (Dislodging the Unthinkable)* and is a regular reviewer for the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. She is emphatically interested in mothering through the life course.

Kate Golding is an Australian of English ancestry based in Naarm, Melbourne. She is an artist, educator, and researcher. Golding completed an MFA in 2018 at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, where her research focussed on critiquing memorialization and settler colonial monuments. Golding has worked as a high school teacher in Japan, England, and Australia and as a master's mentor for Photography Studies College, Melbourne. She currently lectures in Alternative Photographic Processes and is a master's supervisor at RMIT University. She is a regular guest speaker, conference presenter, and primary caregiver to a young child.

Elisabeth Hanscombe, who holds academic status at Flinders University, has published numerous short stories and essays in autobiography, psychoanalysis, testimony, trauma, and creative nonfiction. Her PhD dissertation, *Life Writing and the Desire for Revenge*, was accepted in 2012, and her first book, *The Art of Disappearing*, was published by Glass House Books in 2017. Her second memoir, *The Museum of Failure*, was published in February 2025. She blogs at <http://www.sixthinline.com>. You can also find her writings on Substack.

Ragia Hassan holds a doctorate in education (curriculum and instruction) from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). Her research interests centre on enhancing teaching and learning for disadvantaged and minority students. She also focusses on using immersive technologies to develop effective instructional materials for both young learners and underrepresented student

populations. She has published peer-reviewed book chapters and journal articles. Her most recent contribution, “As if in Their Shoes: Use of Virtual Reality to Enhance Faculty Intercultural Competence,” was published in the *Handbook of Research on Innovative Digital Practices and Globalization in Higher Education* by IGI Global.

Jennifer Heisler (PhD, Michigan State University) is an associate professor of communication at Oakland University in Michigan. Her research focusses on family communication, specifically the “difficult conversation topics” mothers and children discuss (or don’t!), such as sexuality or religion. Recently, she has expanded this inquiry to academic hallways by collecting stories of work-life (im)balance from faculty, administrators, and students. Teaching across the undergraduate curriculum from first-year public speaking through the senior capstone, her favourite courses are Communication Theory and Family Communication.

Katherine Herrán-Magee is a part-time PhD student at York University’s Gender, Feminist, and Women’s Studies Program. She has worked for the federal public service since 2010. Katherine has a graduate degree in public and international affairs and an undergraduate degree in international studies and modern languages, both from the University of Ottawa. During her undergraduate studies, she completed a one-year exchange programme with Sciences Po Paris in France. Katherine is a neurodivergent third culture kid and grew up in Canada, Zimbabwe, Guatemala, and Brazil. She is fluent in French, Spanish, and Portuguese, and speaks some Hindi. She is a mother to two young children.

Kathleen Turner Ledgerwood is an assistant professor of English at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Worldwide Campus, where she also directs the Virtual Environment for Communication: Teaching, Outreach and Research (VECTOR) within the College of Arts & Sciences. Kathleen studies narratives, culture, writing, and communication. She believes that stories are one way in which we can begin to make sense of our human experiences. She teaches a variety of humanities courses that focus on popular culture and media, as well as writing and communication courses. She is also a loving mother and bonus mom to three kids: twenty-one, eighteen, and two.

Crystal Machado is a professor in the Department of Professional Studies in Education, Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), where she teaches preservice and in-service teachers, faculty, and K-20 administrators. Before joining IUP, Crystal worked as a K-12 teacher, a middle and high school administrator, and an adjunct professor in Pakistan. Crystal helps minoritized students and faculty navigate the hidden curriculum in the US. She started and led a mentoring program for women and male faculty of colour at IUP.

She coauthored this paper with her student. In 2023, Crystal was named Affordable Learning Champion. She also received the University Senate Distinguished Faculty Award for Teaching.

Mariana Trujillo Marquez is a PhD student in English at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Her research examines early modern English and colonial Mexican texts through the lens of gender, sexuality, and the rhetorical displacement of Indigenous and maternal bodies. She explores how folklore and legal narratives construct infanticidal mothers, revealing cultural anxieties about female agency, criminality, and betrayal across the Atlantic world.

Sheila Martel's work has been published in *The Riverdale Press*, *Nexus*, *Connections Literary Magazine*, *Demeter Press's* book of essays on mothering at midlife, and *Rehoboth Beach Writers Guild's* poetry chapbook. She was awarded a writing retreat at Norcroft. Sheila has participated in many poetry open mics, sharing her original work. She wrote and produced *Sketches of Motherhood* at Mercury Café. A former educator, she holds a master's degree in liberal studies, an advanced certificate in education, and a certificate in spiritual guidance. Sheila grew up in Nova Scotia and Montreal and currently lives in Maryland.

Lenore D. Maybaum is a professor of English at William Penn University, where she teaches classes in grant writing, creative nonfiction, and genre studies. She earned her PhD at the University of Iowa in language, literacy, and culture and later completed an MFA in creative writing at Cornell College. Her publications focus on motherhood and grief. She is currently at work on a collection of lyric essays that take up the question: "What happens when a loss goes unmourned?"

Ariel Moy is a teacher, doctoral supervisor, and arts-based researcher at The MIECAT Institute in Naarm/Melbourne, Australia. She has a private arts therapeutic practice specializing in mother-child relationships and has published, presented, and facilitated workshops nationally and internationally on arts-based research and the mother-child "us." Emerging from her doctoral research, the "us" is a term generative, strange, and precious. It speaks to becoming more than mother and child and to a relational ontology made real in everyday intimate mother-child encounters.

Favour Esinam Normeshie is a feminist scholar and qualitative researcher whose work examines the intersections of motherhood, technology, and care within neoliberal and intersectional frameworks. She holds a PhD in rhetoric, theory, and culture from Michigan Technological University, where her dissertation analyzed how breast pumps mediate maternal labour, subjectivity, and caregiving. Her research engages feminist technoscience, digital health, and maternal wellbeing, with emphasis on structural inequality and policy

change. Drawing on ethnography, autoethnography, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), and participatory design, she has conducted community-based research in Ghana and the United States. She is committed to decolonial, care-centred scholarship and justice-oriented maternal health advocacy.

Antía Pérez-Caramés is a senior lecturer in sociology at the University of A Coruña. She is a member of the research team in migration studies, ESOMI, and at the Centre for Gender and Feminist Studies. She has specialized in the intersection of migration studies with feminist and gender studies. She is currently leading a research project on the impact of crises on the living conditions of essential migrant workers in Spain. She is also involved in two research projects with the Cape Verdean migrant women's community.

Deepshikha Ray is a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Calcutta, with a specialization in experimental studies within social, clinical and positive psychology. Ray's research interests include schizophrenia, autism spectrum disorders, trauma, gender studies, and social cognition. She has led and collaborated on several significant research projects funded by such organizations as the University Grants Commission (UGC), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). Her professional affiliations include serving as a reviewer for such journals as the *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, *Sage Open*, and the *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*.

Verónica Robles García is an associate professor at the Faculty of Physiotherapy. From 2017, she has been the main investigator of DISEMINAR project, funded by Xunta de Galicia (Spain), a program which consists of addressing the issue of childhood disabilities in Nicaragua and motherhood, working in a multidimensional team of investigators within the education, social and health fields. She is a member of the research team, Neuroscience and Motor Control (NEUROcom) and is involved in research projects related to the healthcare of children with disabilities and their families.

Tanaya Roy Chowdhury is a research scholar at the Department of Psychology, University of Calcutta. Her academic foundation comprises an MSc in psychology and an MPhil in psychiatric social work. She is currently associated with the District Mental Health Program, West Bengal, and is engaged in various community-based mental health initiatives, addressing psychological needs at the grassroots level. Her research interests particularly focus on cultural and sociopolitical contexts and the psychology of ethnic groups. Her research is not only an academic inquiry but also a reflection, a resistance, and a reclamation of the multifaceted realities of being a mother in contemporary Kolkata.

Usua García Sagüés is a Spanish-British artist based in London, currently studying textiles at the Royal College of Art (RCA). Her practice explores an alternative motherhood story through textile sculpture with collections, including *Mother Earth*, *Mother Interrupted*, and *Mother-Infant*. Her main materials are yarn, fibres, copper, aluminum wire, and recycled fabrics. Her tools are a domestic knitting machine, a rigid-heddle loom, a sewing machine, crochet hooks, and needles. Current shows include *House of Haberdash* at the Torriano Meeting House. She curated a twelve-artist exhibition this year on motherhood and has participated in *Textile Landscapes*, *TEKHNE*, and *draw_a_line* gender violence installations at the RCA, *Veridical* at LumiNoir Art Gallery, *je m'amuse SOLO* at RuptureXIBIT, *Murmuration* at J/M Gallery, and *Artnumber23* in Prague. She also has a biochemistry BA from Corpus Christi, Oxford and a previous career in pharmaceutical investing. You can follow her at <https://usoasculptedtextiles.com> and on Instagram @usoa_textileartist

Verónica Verdía Varela has a degree in sociology and a PhD in social science from the University of A Coruña, where she is a member of the research group ECIGAL (Global Citizenship Education, <https://www.ecigal.gal/en>). She has worked in a variety of nonprofit organizations specialized in the field of migration, education for global citizenship, mental health, and social and labour inclusion of people in vulnerable situations. She is currently working as a project technician with the Asociación Parkinson Galicia-Coruña.

Kyla Whetham is a second-year PhD student in the Cinema and Media Studies Program at York University. She is also an alumnus of the University of Ottawa Theatre Theory and Dramaturgy Program and the University of Toronto Cinema Studies Program. Whetham's doctoral dissertation will explore representations of motherhood in Canadian cinema. Beyond her research, she regularly works in community and regional theatre, both on stage and behind the scenes. When not writing about film or putting on theatre productions, she spends her time walking through Toronto's neighbourhoods and taking far too many videos of her cat.

Emily Wolfinger is an associate lecturer in the School of Social Sciences at Western Sydney University, Australia, and the sole mother of three children. She completed a government-funded PhD in sociology under COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. Emily's research examines institutional and public discourses on sole mothers and critiques the undervaluation of caregiving in late-stage capitalist societies. Current projects include an international collection on policies and practices that enable the work of caregiving.

Margaret T. Wood is a doctoral student at the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University. Her research primarily investigates the gendered dimensions of the criminal justice system, with a particular emphasis on reproductive health, maternal incarceration, and the intersection of criminological theory and women's lived experiences. Her work seeks to address longstanding gaps in research concerning justice-involved women and to inform evidence-based policy reforms that promote health equity, family preservation, and successful community reintegration. Through her scholarship, she aims to advance a more nuanced understanding of women's pathways through the justice system and their unique needs.



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