



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

School of Historical and  
Philosophical Studies

# Australian Mothering in Historical and Contemporary Perspective Symposium

**15-16 February 2018**  
**University of Melbourne**

**Theatre 3**  
**Faculty of Business**  
**and Economics**  
**111 Barry St**  
**University of Melbourne**  
**Parkville campus**

# Symposium program

## Thursday 15 February 2018

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### 9.30am–10am: Registration

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### 10am–10.30am: Welcome and introduction

Welcome from Kate McGregor (School of Historical and Philosophical Studies)

Introduction from convenors Carla Pascoe (School of Historical and Philosophical Studies)  
and Petra Bueskens (School of Social and Political Sciences)

### 10.30am–12pm: Anticipating and remembering: Emotional responses to motherhood

Chair: Amanda Cooklin (La Trobe University)

*'Mothers-in-waiting: stories of pregnancy in Australia since 1945'*

Carla Pascoe (University of Melbourne)

*'Reflecting on the past: How contemporary mothers draw on biographical, family and imagined social histories in making sense of emotional experiences in early parenthood'*

Kate Johnson-Ataata and Renata Kokanovic (RMIT University)

*'Family History and the affective ties between mothers and daughters'*

Tanya Evans (Macquarie University)

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### 12–1pm: Lunch

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### 1–2.30pm: Representing the maternal: invocations of the mother

Chair: TBC

*'What Mary Bennett knew – the whispering in her heart'*

Anne Manne

*'Imagined, intended, forsaken: the status of the mother in a century of Australian adoption advertisements'*

Shurlee Swain (Australian Catholic University)

*'Speaking in the name of mothers: the paradigm of maternalism in an Australian context'*

Julie Stephens (Victoria University)

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### 2.30–3pm: Afternoon tea

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### 3–4.30pm: Negotiating family contexts: mothers, fathers, children

Chair: Jennifer Baxter (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

*'Australian mothering in cross-national perspective: time allocation, scheduling, and subjective time pressure'*

Lyn Craig (University of Melbourne)

*'New wave father? Oral histories with Australian fathers from the 1970s and 1980s'*

Alistair Thomson (Monash University)

*'Remembering domestic violence: children's memoirs of their mothers'*

Catherine Kevin (Flinders University)

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### 5.30–7.30pm Symposium dinner

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## Friday 16 February 2018

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### 9–10.30am: The embodied maternal: interactions with health professionals during childbirth and breastfeeding

Chair: Nicole Highet (Centre of Perinatal Excellence)

*'Maternalism to consumerism? Mothers and the politics of care in childbirth'*

Kerreen Reiger (La Trobe University) and Monica Campo (Women's Legal Service Victoria)

*'Breastfeeding and the role of lactation consultants'*

Jennifer Hocking (La Trobe University)

*'Obstetric violence, epistemic violence, and the history of childbirth'*

Paula A. Michaels (Monash University)

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### 10.30–11am: Morning tea

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### 11–12.30pm: Maternal citizenship: participation in the public sphere

Chair: Dina Bowman (Brotherhood of St Laurence)

*'Mothers' rights and children's needs: maternal citizenship in a comparative and transPacific frame'*

Marilyn Lake (University of Melbourne)

*'Using Helen Garner's Monkey Grip to reimagine social citizenship for single mothers'*

Kristin Natalier (Flinders University)

*'Parity of participation: the centrality of mothering to a public sphere identity'*

Karen Lane (Deakin University)

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### 12.30–1.30pm: Lunch

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### 1.30–3pm: Work, welfare and wages: financial survival in a gendered economy

Chair: Jenny Davidson (Council of Single Mothers and their Children)

*'The gender pay gap, mothers and basic income'*

Petra Bueskens (University of Melbourne)

*'Nickled and dimed: The erosion of child support over time'*

Kay Cook (Swinburne University)

*'Child care strategies of wage-earning mothers amidst workplace transformation: Insights from a Victorian oral history project'*

Patricia Grimshaw (University of Melbourne)

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### 3–3.30pm: Afternoon tea

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### 3.30–4.30pm: Responses and policy implications

Facilitated by Bettina Cass, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW

Discussants: Marion Frere, Victorian Office of Prevention and Women's Equality

Dina Bowman, Brotherhood of St Laurence

Deb Brennan, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW

Workplace Gender Equality Agency TBC

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### 4.30–5pm: Close

# Abstracts and biographies

## Anticipating and remembering: Emotional responses to motherhood

### 'Mothers-in-waiting: stories of pregnancy in Australia since 1945'

Pregnancy is in many ways a physiological experience: a woman's body undergoes dramatic internal and external changes as it grows and prepares to birth a baby. But there are also significant emotional shifts taking place that are just as profound if more difficult to measure. This paper will chart an emotional history of pregnancy in Australia since the mid twentieth century, drawing upon oral histories about the experience of becoming a mother for the first time. These memories of primigravidae – or women experiencing their first pregnancy – are complex and ambivalent sources, full of conscious and unconscious desires, dreams, fantasies and fears. This paper will tease out some of the narrative threads recurring in these 'maternographies', including stories of conception, stories of preparation, stories of anticipation, stories of suffering, stories of generation, stories of loss and stories of transition. In the process of following these threads, the paper will argue that pregnancy is a process of transition into matresence, and is best conceptualised as an apprenticeship for motherhood.

*Carla Pascoe is a Research Fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. Her research has focused upon the history and heritage of women and children in twentieth-century Australia. It has followed three major threads: histories of menstruation, of childhood and of motherhood. Weaving these three histories together has opened up the private lives of women and children, with a particular focus on how oral history illuminates memories, emotions and place-attachment. In 2015 she was awarded funding by the Australian Research Council to conduct a large, six-year project on the Australian experience of becoming a mother since 1945.*

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### 'Reflecting on the past: How contemporary mothers draw on biographical, family and social histories in making sense of emotional experiences in early parenthood and imagining themselves as mothers'

Becoming a mother is often described as a life-changing event, presaging a period of adjustment. Emotional experiences during this time commonly include joy and contentment, as well as stress, worry, impatience and frustration as women adapt to a different and often more challenging way of life. The adjustment to motherhood can be additionally complex for those women who experience emotional distress that attracts a diagnosis of perinatal depression, or those whose expectations of motherhood contrast with their experience. This chapter explores women's personal accounts of emotional experiences as they became mothers, based on narrative interviews from two studies of experiences of the transition to parenthood in contemporary Australia. Mothers were from diverse socioeconomic and ethno-cultural backgrounds and lived in a variety of family arrangements. We found that emotional experiences over the transition to parenthood prompted mothers to look towards the past – to revisit their personal and family histories, and to reflect on sociocultural changes they perceived as having affected mothering. Reflecting on the past performed two functions for mothers; providing a way of making sense of complex emotional experiences in early parenthood, and a way of constructing an imagined future self as a parent. Drawing on Smart's sociology of personal life, we argue that reflecting on the past as a strategy for contextualising the present and imagining the future reveals the significance of memory (personal and collective), biography and relationality as resources for meaning-making in times of personal transition. The findings also expand our understanding of how women draw on personal and family biographies and historically informed knowledge of motherhood in Australia to critique dominant discourses and the materiality of motherhood.

*Renata Kokanovic is Professor of Sociology of Health and Illness at RMIT University and Director of Healthtalk Australia. Renata's research examines pressing contemporary health issues, including experiences diagnosed as mental illness (including perinatal depression), cancer, and early menopause, with an emphasis on understanding lived experience and contributing to more inclusive health and social care.*

*Dr Kate Johnston-Ataata is a Research Fellow at RMIT, currently researching experiences of early menopause. Her interests in early parenthood stem from her doctoral research on experiences of partnering and becoming parents in intercultural relationships, and her previous work as a researcher on the Emotional Experiences of Early Parenthood Healthtalk Australia project.*

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## 'Family History and the affective ties between mothers and daughters'

Using surveys and oral history interviews conducted with diverse communities of family historians in Australia this paper will analyse the relationship between the emotional labour of mothering and the labour of family historians. My recent work has suggested the ways in which family history can empower researchers, linking the past to the present in powerful ways, transforming individuals' understandings of themselves and the wider world. This paper will examine how family historians are motivated to undertake their research by their affective ties to female ancestors. Many family historians begin to produce their family histories because they 'owe' their female ancestors the benefit of their research skills, historical knowledge and the time it takes to reveal their life stories. This paper will discuss how family historians articulate their emotional obligations to their female ancestors, what knowledge they produce about mothering and what impact this has on individuals and society more broadly.

*Tanya Evans is a social and cultural historian of motherhood, marriage, the family, sexuality, gender and poverty in Britain and Australia from 1750 to the present and a public historian, specialising in family history. Her books include: (ed) Swimming with the Spit: 100 Years of the Spit Amateur Swimming Club (New South, 2016); Fractured Families: Life on the Margins in Colonial New South Wales (New South, Sydney, April 2015); with Pat Thane, Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England (Oxford University Press, 2012); 'Unfortunate Objects': Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and Bringing Up Baby – Australian Motherhood from the Dreamtime to the Present (National Library of Australia, forthcoming 2018).*

## Representing the maternal: invocations of the mother

### 'What Mary Bennett knew – the whispering in her heart'

This paper will be about the frame-changing insights on indigenous culture from the early twentieth maternal feminist and humanitarian Mary Bennett. Why is it, following the sociologist Stanley Cohen's framework, in his *In Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering* (2001) that some people are able to stand outside their culture and refuse to conform, or to act as bystanders and perpetrators of cruelty? Henry Reynolds raises the same question in a different way in his powerful *This Whispering in Our Hearts* (1998). At a time when A. O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia was responsible for the policy of child removal, the policy of enforced cultural assimilation was anticipated to solve the 'problem' of the 'half caste' and erase the existence of indigenous people from Australia. Mary Bennett's eloquent and passionate writing was one of the few voices raised against him. Neville wanted to 'breed out the colour' and wrote of the objectives of this policy of enforced separation: 'Are we going to have one million blacks in the Commonwealth or are we going to merge them into our white community and eventually forget that there were any Aborigines in Australia?'

Likewise, James Isdell, one of the travelling Protectors, wrote of the practice 'I would not hesitate for one moment to separate any half caste from its Aboriginal mother, no matter how frantic her momentary grief might be at the time. They soon forget their offspring.' In contrast, from the 1920's onward – long before the birth of the now extant body of work known as attachment theory and research started in the late forties by John Bowlby, which showed the predictable and catastrophic effects of such separation – Bennett wrote compassionately and with respectful insight through first person observation about the deep bond between indigenous mothers had with their children. She argued for the superiority of those warm and close attachments to the cooler, more distant, upper-class practices such as the nursery and the nanny, and the early separation from parents in boarding schools. What in the indigenous women's maternal practice did she observe? What were the elements in her character and biography that enabled her to stand outside the prevailing zeitgeist? And what does the whispering in the heart of Mary Bennett teach us about the impoverishment of assimilationist ideas, in relation to what might be learned from indigenous culture and from maternal culture and practice more generally?

*Anne Manne is one of Australia's most penetrating cultural critics. An essayist and social philosopher, she taught in the Politics Department of Melbourne and La Trobe University before becoming a full-time writer. A former columnist for *The Australian* and *The Age*, she now concentrates on longer essays about contemporary culture, especially for *The Monthly*. Her books include *Motherhood*; a *Quarterly Essay* on *Love and Money: The Family and The Free Market* and a memoir, *So This Is Life: Scenes From a Country Childhood*. Her most recent book is the bestselling *The Life of I: The New Culture of Narcissism*. She is now writing a new book on the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. A chapter from that forthcoming book, 'Rape Among The Lamingtons,' appeared in the May edition of *The Monthly* in 2017.*

## **'Imagined, intended, forsaken: the status of the mother in a century of Australian adoption advertisements'**

Adoption has always been a story about competing and conflicting claims to the status of mother. This paper analyses the invocation of the maternal in the more than 35000 classified adoption advertisements published in Australian newspapers from the 1840s through to the 1950s. Paul Bruthiaux (1996) has argued that classified advertisements were models of 'linguistic simplicity', highly coded communications in which authors chose from a well-established repertoire of words and phrases in order to get their message across, but sequenced them in novel ways. The paper examines the different ways in which the word mother was sequenced, contrasting its use in advertisements seeking or offering a child for adoption, looking for evidence of change over time, and locating this analysis in the broader context of debates around the transformation of adoption from a mercantile to an emotional transaction.

*Shurlee Swain is a social historian and recently retired as Professor of Humanities at the Australian Catholic University. She has published widely in the area of child and family welfare and her research has informed several of Australia's inquiries into abuse of children in out of home care.*

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## **'Speaking in the name of mothers: the paradigm of maternalism in an Australian context'**

While the federal institutions of the Australian state were implicitly founded on maternalist principles, namely the recognition of the public importance of mothering and the care of children, the ideals and ethics associated with maternal care have been increasingly privatised, individualised and commodified since the last decades of the twentieth century. Maternalism as a paradigm for understanding the way values usually considered 'maternal' can be applied to the society as a whole, remains an idea central to studies of the welfare state and women's participation in the public sphere in the US. By contrast, this paradigm is marginalised and even repressed from theoretical consciousness in Australia. This paper will argue for the renewed relevance of a reconfigured feminist-maternalist politics and a cultural remembering of maternalisms of the past. It will present an interdisciplinary case study analysis of two recent manifestations of maternalism: the public role of the concerned 'moral mother' of the 2017 'No Campaign' for marriage equality and the activism of mothers and grandmothers in the 'Let Them Stay' and 'Bring Them Here' campaigns to enable asylum seekers, who have been illegally detained on Manus Island and Nauru, to be able to settle safely in Australia. The case study will address questions about the disavowal of public maternal ideals in Australia today, as well as strategic uses and abuses of maternalist activism (for and against feminism). It will propose a different way of speaking in the name of mothers, without returning to the 'selfless and helpless' mother of the past or reproducing the media image of the empowered, entitled, 'alpha mother' of the present.

*Julie Stephens is an Honorary Professor at Victoria University. She is author of *Confronting Postmaternal Thinking: Feminism, Memory and Care* (Columbia University Press, 2011). Her publications investigate areas of cultural activism and memory, changing meanings of the maternal, the social dimensions of mothering, feminist oral history and the reshaping of emotions and care under neo-liberalism.*

## **Negotiating family contexts: mothers, fathers, children**

### **'Australian mothering in cross-national perspective: time allocation, scheduling, and subjective time pressure'**

Motherhood brings significant change in the way women spend and experience their time. Having children is an intensely personal experience, yet much of the practical impact upon mothers' time is shaped by the social organisation of work and care. Some countries, such as the Nordic social democracies, conceptualise child-raising as a shared social responsibility, and provide extensive supports for work-family reconciliation, which lessens the direct burden upon women and facilitates more-equal gender divisions of labour. In other countries, such as Australia, social and economic policy frames managing work and family as a private issue, including leaving non-parental childcare largely to the private market, which tends to potentiate gender divisions of labour. Notwithstanding sparse public support and costly services, many social and economic policies are now predicated on the assumption that all adults will be life-long earners. This incongruity potentially undermines mothers' efficacy as both workers and carers, and puts their economic and emotional wellbeing at risk. This paper uses nationally representative time diary data from five countries (Australia, UK, Finland, Korea and Spain) to compare parents' overall workloads, when paid and unpaid work is scheduled over the day and week, gender divisions of work and care, and the subjective time pressure associated with transitions to parenthood. It discusses how the findings relate to family policy, national work time regimes and social attitudes towards gender roles, mothering and fatherhood.

*Lyn Craig FASSA is Professor of Sociology and Social Policy and ARC Future Fellow at the University of Melbourne. Her interests include the time impacts of children, care, and social reproduction; the division of domestic labour, work-family balance, social and economic participation over life course transitions, and comparative family and social policy.*

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## **'New wave father? Oral histories with Australian fathers from the 1970s and 1980s'**

In response to second wave feminist politics, increasing economic pressures and rising rates of married women's employment, and the changing circumstances of intimate family relations, by the 1970s and 1980s some Australian men were beginning to take seriously a family role that transcended that of the breadwinner and engaged them more seriously in childcare and domestic work. This paper will examine Australian Generations Project oral histories recorded in the 2010s with Australian men who became fathers in the 1970s and 1980s, and will investigate the circumstances that encouraged or required some young fathers (though not all, and perhaps not many) to reconsider their paternal role and take on a wider range of responsibilities within the home. What factors motivated or forced such role shifts, and what factors continued to work against men increasing their contributions within the home? How did men who tried out new ways of fathering experience their role and how were they impacted by the responses of partners, family members, other parents, work colleagues and the wider society? What can we learn from their example that might contribute to current debates about family roles and relationships?

*Alistair Thomson is Professor of History at Monash University. His books include: Anzac Memories (1994 and 2013), The Oral History Reader (1998, 2006 and 2015 with Rob Perks), Ten Pound Poms (2005, with Jim Hammerton), Moving Stories (2011), Oral History and Photography (2011, with Alexander Freund), and Australian Lives (2017, with Anisa Puri).*

*Website: <http://profiles.arts.monash.edu.au/alistair-thomson/>*

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## **'Remembering domestic violence: children's memoirs of their mothers'**

This paper draws on published memoirs by those who witnessed domestic violence inflicted on their mothers, a violence they were often (but not always) subjected to themselves. I use these to both piece together histories of mothers living with domestic violence and to examine the changing constructions of motherhood and domestic violence over the course of the twentieth century. The paper will engage with the fields of memory studies and life writing as well as situating the auto/biographical accounts in relation to historiographies of domestic violence, motherhood and the family in twentieth century Australia. Seeking to contribute to a cultural history of domestic violence in Australia, this paper will be an experiment in using memoirs of childhood to advance historical understandings of mother's experiences of domestic violence.

*Catherine Kevin is a Senior Lecturer in History at Flinders University. She has published on the histories of pregnancy and miscarriage, feminism and maternity, post-WWII refugee women and the making of the film Jedda (1955). Her work has appeared in a range of journals including Women's History Review, South Atlantic Quarterly and History of the Family.*

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## **The embodied maternal: interactions with health professionals during childbirth and breastfeeding**

### **'Maternalism to consumerism? Mothers and the politics of care in childbirth'**

In contemporary Australia, the imagery of women as 'providers' of the next generation has less resonance than during the early and mid-twentieth century when overt racialized eugenic discourses shaped maternity care and activism. Instead, the cultural constructions of (white) motherhood now reflect images of consumption of goods and services, and indeed political action has become dominated by consumerist discourse on the one hand and by that of 'disadvantage' on the other. In this paper, we draw on our historical and sociological research and activist experience to assess the implications of this process of reconstruction of reproductive work.

We first consider the historical development of Australian maternity service provision and its relationship to population policy, before turning to contemporary evidence. We consider several debates in recent years about care provision and 'consumer' choices: those over home birth which indicate a 'moral panic' over women who opt out of the dominant medical system, and over midwifery models of care offering an alternative to medical management. Drawing on interviews with health professionals and white middle class women, we explore ideas about birth, women's need for care and consumer 'choice'. Common assumptions stand in marked contrast to the former maternalist discourse, but also neglect the diversity and complexity of contemporary mothers' lives.

Although an alternative framing in terms of women's human rights in childbirth has emerged in recent years, discussions with local care providers suggests it has yet to influence mainstream Australian services. Some innovative exceptions in indigenous communities and the Birth for HumanKind Program for socially disadvantaged mothers offer a way forward. Importantly, to support such practice, we can draw on contemporary feminist theoretical developments which provide more nuanced interpretations of embodiment and of 'maternal subjectivity-as-encounter' with another. They can support development of a policy and professional framework built on recognition of the challenges of mothers' lives, including those of marginalised women, one which can better reflect what Marilyn Waring has analysed as the social and economic value of reproduction without re-categorising women in maternalist terms.

*Kerreen Reiger is a historical sociologist who has published widely on cultural change in Australian families, on women's struggles for changing birth through maternity care organisations, and on the challenges of professional work in neoliberal universities and hospitals. She taught for many years at La Trobe University in Sociology and in the Gender, Sexuality and Diversity Studies (GSDS) program and is currently writing a biography of Dr Murray Enkin, a leading birth reformer and Canadian midwifery advocate.*

*Monica Campo works in family violence research, policy and practice and is currently an Education and Engagement Coordinator at Women's Legal Service Victoria. Monica's PhD critically examined contemporary childbirth debates, discourses and policies through an analysis of key discursive sites where knowledge about childbirth is produced and contested. Monica has taught in sociology, gender, and public health and has also undertaken consultancy work for community not-for-profit organisations such as Our Watch.*

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## ‘Breastfeeding and the role of lactation consultants’

Breastfeeding initiation rates in Australia rank with the highest in western societies. It has not always been this way, and early weaning rates from the first days onwards are still significant. In 1985 a new profession of credentialed breastfeeding specialists emerged called Lactation Consultants. In Australia there are now more than 2,000 International Board Certified Lactation Consultants – the most per capita of any country worldwide. My research examined the nature of the work that Lactation Consultants do in their work of supporting women to breastfeed. Lactation Consultants engaged in a relational style of care when they supported women with breastfeeding difficulties. They were often working ‘at the bottom of the cliff’ with women who had struggled to find supportive help for breastfeeding in the maternity care system. Their central concern was for the mother-baby relationship, with breastfeeding as a part of that. Breastfeeding women in Australia live in a broader context of ambivalence about breastfeeding and Lactation Consultants acknowledged that this context does not always support women to breastfeed according to national recommendations. As an ethical extension to their role as relational carers there is the potential for Lactation Consultants to move beyond the face-to-face support that they do to nudge the current social context into one that is more supportive of breastfeeding mothers and babies.

*Jen has worked as a midwife in the Australian public health system for twenty years. She trained as a breastfeeding counsellor with the Australian Breastfeeding Association when her two children were small and was the leader of her local ABA group for five years. She qualified as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant in 2008 and continued to work across the continuum of midwifery practice. Jen studied and completed a Masters of Midwifery in 2012 which included a qualitative study of women’s experiences of postnatal care in the home. Jen commenced her PhD studies in 2014. She devised an ethnographic study that examined via participant observation and interviews, the role of IBCLC’s practising in Melbourne, Australia. She is hopeful that her research will be able to articulate some of the ways that women may be supported to breastfeed their babies. Jen blogs at <http://jjenhock.com>*

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## ‘Obstetric violence, epistemic violence, and the history of childbirth’

In 2007, Venezuela outlawed ‘obstetric violence’, defined in the statute as ‘the appropriation of the body and reproductive processes of women by health personnel, ... expressed as dehumanized treatment, an abuse of medication, and [conversion of] the natural processes into pathological ones, bringing with it loss of autonomy and the ability to decide freely about their bodies and sexuality’. Acknowledging the unique vulnerability of birthing women, obstetric violence has emerged in birth activist and medical literature as a useful construct for understanding the manifold and devastating ways that woman’s dignity and empowerment are sometimes compromised in childbirth.

Can ‘obstetric violence’ be a generative lens through which to understand Australian women’s historical experiences of labour and birth? Setting contemporary debates about obstetric violence in a longer chronological trajectory offers the opportunity to see continuity and change in how medical professionals over time enacted physical and psychological violence on the women in their care. It also has the potential to demonstrate women’s resistance to, but also acquiescence to and collaboration in this violence.

Taking Australian obstetric practice as a case study, this paper explores obstetric violence in maternity care at two points in time: the mid-twentieth century, amid the post-war baby boom, and today, when this concept has gained currency. Theorising obstetric violence in a way that moves beyond the legal definition to a conceptualisation of historical utility, I draw on Gayatri Spivak’s understanding of epistemic violence in an effort to understand how medical authority (often inadvertently) wields psychological violence against women. I analyse women’s birth stories in the popular press, as well as recent in-depth interviews gathered as part of sociologist Renata Kokanovic’s recent project on pregnancy, childbirth, and early parenting experiences.

*Paula A. Michaels is an associate professor of history at Monash University. She is the author of two prize-winning books, most recently *Lamaze: An International History* (2014). Michaels is co-editor (with Renata Kokanovic) of *Paths to Parenthood: Emotions on the Journey through Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Early Parenting* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2018).*

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## Maternal citizenship: participation in the public sphere

### 'Mothers' rights and children's needs: maternal citizenship in a comparative and transPacific frame'

Citizenship has always been a gendered condition, an understanding made explicit by feminist and non-feminist advocates of 'maternal citizenship' in the early 20th century. My paper will locate feminist mobilisations in the name of maternal citizenship in a comparative and transPacific frame. I suggest that in Australia, in the context of a politics often called 'state socialist', feminists developed the radical idea that motherhood entailed rights - economic, social and political, whereas in 'individualistic' United States, there was more of a focus on 'children's needs'. Hence the different orientations of the Australian Maternity Allowance and the US Children's Bureau, both established in 1912.

Arguably, the different emphases also reflected the different class composition of feminist maternalist movements in the two countries. It was Labor women in Australia, enfranchised in 1902 ('she votes in Australia') who lobbied for and celebrated the achievement of the Maternity Allowance as an 'instalment of the mothers' maternal rights', whereas in the United States, where women didn't win the franchise until 1920, it was predominantly professional middle class Progressive reformers, such as Florence Kelley and Julia Lathrop, who were more influential. When New England suffrage leader, Maud Wood Park visited Melbourne, in 1909, on the invitation of Vida Goldstein, whom she had met in Boston in 1902, she and her companion Mabel Willard were invited to afternoon tea at parliament house by leader of the federal Labor party Andrew Fisher and his wife Margaret, an event also attended by Goldstein and a number of Labor women. The American suffragists were impressed at the respect with they were accorded by political leaders. Park wrote that the 'sense of the political equality of women in a country where they are enfranchised was a deep-rooted conviction'. She noted in particular 'women's equal standing in the industrial and political organization of the Labor party'. It was these women who expressed appreciation of Prime Minister Andrew Fisher's recognition of 'mothers' maternal rights' three years later in 1912.

*Marilyn Lake is a Professorial Fellow in History at the University of Melbourne. Her next book, Progressive New World: How Settler Colonialism and TransPacific Exchange Shaped American Reform will be published by Harvard University Press in 2018.*

### 'Using Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip* to reimagine social citizenship for single mothers'

Helen Garner's first novel, *Monkey Grip* has become an icon of the Australian literary scene, and a touchstone in the lives of many women. It was published in 1977 to ambivalent critical reviews, and rather more enthusiastic public responses. It has been described as a book about "junkies, actors and single mothers" (Anne Summers), the "battleground of a full-scale war between socio-sexual conditioning and the ideologies of feminism and counter-cultural communal living" (Rosemary Creswell), and "the sensations of life in feminist, alternative life-style Melbourne" (Suzanne Edgar). More systematically, Brophy (1992, 271) has categorised four dominant reviewer readings of the subject of *Monkey Grip*: "the love story, the feminist-in-love-story, the story of sex and drugs in the counter-culture, and finally, the story of Helen Garner's life". In this paper, I offer an alternative, and more expressly political approach to the work: I use the activities and orientations of Nora, the protagonist of *Monkey Grip*, as tools for imagining how a more expansive conceptualisation of social citizenship might be acknowledged and available in the contemporary lives of single mothers.

As a sociologist, my approach grows from the recognition that fiction writers may throw into relief the often taken for granted flows, meanings and experiences of everyday life that shape the contours of social as well as personal identities. To apply these insights, I locate Nora's experiences in their historical context, and then use the representation of that context to 'render the present strange' (Harris 2001, 6) and offer alternatives to the policies and discourses that constitute and manage single mothers.

I suggest that Nora's contributions to her households and broader community encourage a movement beyond the dominant framing of single mothers as mothers or employed workers. While acknowledging the critiques of social citizenship, I explore how Nora's life reorients us to women's experiences, contributions and claims as active and meaningful contributors to social spaces beyond family and labour markets. Can *Monkey Grip* assist in the reimagining of and advocacy for a fuller appreciation of and support for single mothers sharing in communities?

*Dr Kristin Natalier is an Associate Professor in Sociology in the School of Social and Policy Studies, Flinders University, and Treasurer of The Australian Sociological Association. She is also an editorial board member of the Journal of Family Studies. Kristin's work addresses people's negotiations of money and intimacy in times of personal and social change. She is currently researching single mothers' experiences of government services.*

## **‘Parity of participation: the centrality of mothering to a public sphere identity’**

Public policy governing successful resettlement of migrant and refugee families is couched simply in terms of the three E’s – English, Education and Employment. Yet nowhere in policy documents or studies of migrant resettlement is there a recognition of the centrality of what Fraser (2003) calls ‘parity of participation’, briefly expressed as a personal belief in one’s own capacities to enter into public life as a socially autonomous actor. This foundational kind of ontological security is ideally fostered initially, not in public sphere activities, but in prior social processes typically experienced in loving families. Civic participation, for example, can only be achieved when individuals believe that what they want to say is worthy of public consideration and that any disagreements and/or rejections may be faced from a position of personal equanimity and resilience. Good citizenship, in other words, relies not just on service providers in public sphere institutions but in the first instance and in an ongoing way on private-sphere caring, namely mothering. Honneth (2003) recognises this when in reprising Hegel’s tripartite foundation for social justice he attributes moral autonomy to a life-long trajectory stretching from the family, to legal rights (citizenship) and finally to the reward system (employment market). All spheres provide different bases to moral autonomy.

At the ground level, however, is othering used in the broadest sense to encapsulate ‘the work of primary caregiving, being responsible for the economic, educational, and social care of another human being’ (Giles 2014:2) undertaken by anyone of any gender or generation. In practice, mothering is in most societies performed by women who act as primary unpaid carers for families, communities and nations throughout the life cycle. Qualitative data from 49 interviews with refugee and migrant mothers from a range of ethnic identities, class and status locations, NGO providers and government agencies shows the key role of mothers as they navigate the challenges of settling themselves and their families into a new nation and acquiring new hybrid identities. The argument is not that families have been forgotten by policy-makers but that neoliberal concepts of the worker and citizen fails to acknowledge gender, ethnic identity, class and status locations, all of which position women as key to successful resettlement while their care-work remains unrecognised and undervalued. As a double jeopardy, traditional discourses of mothering rule out the development of moral and social autonomy posing formidable challenges from within the family, the community and from many Australians. This solution requires a different orientation to service provision; one that conceptualises mothers as the lynchpin to government definitions of success and as among the most vulnerable of the migrant and refugee population.

*The focus of Karen’s research over the past 27 years has been the mother/child dyad, first through research into multi-dimensional aspects of the sociology and politics of maternity care. Second, and more recently, Karen’s research has extended to the role of mothering in successful resettlement of migrant and refugee families in regional and suburban Australia. In addition to mothering, Karen’s interests include theories of knowledge, power and professional interests, as well as governmentality and theories of identity. She single-mothered, with the help of the constructed village, two delightful mature daughters.*

## **Work, welfare and wages: financial survival in a gendered economy**

### **The gender pay gap, mothers and basic income**

In this paper I examine the gender pay gap and the specific ways it is misrepresented when we consider mothers and, moreover, why the size of this gap leaves mothers particularly vulnerable to poverty, especially those outside male income support (marriage). Universal basic income has been gaining traction in recent years as an alternative means for redistributing income in the context of declining employment, rising automation and the declining welfare state in contemporary western societies. For women as mothers, I argue, basic income settles a social problem that is neither recent nor bound up with new technologies, but takes us back to the origins of modern industrial-capitalist society. This is the lack of remuneration for unpaid family work and the consequent vulnerability to poverty and associated dependence marriage this produces for women. A related problem for mothers is that marriage has become a much more unstable institution, especially for those with lower incomes and unstable employment. Basic income opens up the possibility of a hitherto unseen equality that includes freedom from dependence on a male wage and the alleviation of rising rates of poverty for women and children.

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### **‘Nickled and dimed: The erosion of child support over time’**

This paper traces the history of child support in Australia, foregrounding the valuation of mothering therein. It begins with the original aims of the child support scheme and formula design considerations before turning to examine more recent review processes and legislative changes that have since occurred. For example, in 2003 a highly controversial and acrimonious inquiry was held to examine the role of the family court and child support in post-separation family life. The 2003 inquiry recommended significant reforms to the child support formula that were refined by a Ministerial Taskforce in 2005 and enacted in 2006-08. In both the conduct and outcomes of the reform, mothers and mothering were devalued. As a result, low-income single-mothers in particular found themselves financially worse off. Since then, however, other more ‘minor’ reforms have been implemented without fuss or fanfare that have also diminished the valuation of motherhood. These include changes to Family Tax Benefit calculations and tax provisions. Taken together, the direction mothers and their children living in poverty – which is directly anathema to the original purpose of the child support program.

*Kay Cook is an ARC Future Fellow and Associate Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at Swinburne University. Her work explores how new and developing social policies such as welfare-to-work, child support and child care policies, transform relationships between individuals, families and the state. Her work seeks to make the personal impact of these policies explicit in order to provide tangible evidence to policy makers to affect more humanistic reform. Her research has contributed to the development of the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010 General Social Survey, the Australian Law Reform Commission inquiry into Family Violence and Commonwealth Law, and the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Child Support Program. She is the current Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Family Studies and Co-Director of the International Network of Child Support Scholars. Kay’s ARC Future Fellowship examines the personal, practical and institutional barriers to child support faced by women in Australia, the UK and USA. This project will build on her gender critique of child support policymaking, data practices and implementation in order to strike a more equitable balance between women’s responsibility for managing child support payments and the social, administrative and political context in which this responsibility exists.*

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### **‘Child care strategies of wage-earning mothers amidst workplace transformation: Insights from a Victorian oral history project’**

The federal Australian Labor Party’s landmark Sex Discrimination Act of 1984 and Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity in Employment Act) of 1986 provided impetus to contemporary transformations in the gendered profile of the Australian workplace. Women who were mothers of young children, however, continued to face numerable obstacles in their quest to access waged work, as this ALP government and its successors continued a reluctance to assume responsibility for supporting the participation of mothers in the formal workforce. How mothers managed to straddle the gap between the competing demands of family and workplace in the absence of reliable support structures is a complex story. Insights into mothers’ strategies that form the basis of this paper are drawn from accounts of participants in a collaborative oral history project conducted in Victoria, focused on the experiences of urban and rural women engaged in diverse arenas within professional, white collar, farming and factory jobs following this legislation into the early 21st century. The paper explores how mothers with multiple imperatives for seeking wages deployed a variety of strategies to sustain a place in public waged work in a context of widespread political ambivalence about this notable shift in gender expectations.

*Patricia Grimshaw is Professor Emeritus at the University of Melbourne where over several decades she taught Australian and United States history and contributed to the Gender Studies programme. From her book, Paths of Duty, based on her doctoral thesis and published by the University of Hawaii Press in 1989, she has sustained an interest in women’s experiences within families and in changing representations of motherhood from the nineteenth century. This current paper draws on research for a collaborative book on working mothers in twentieth-century Australia.*

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