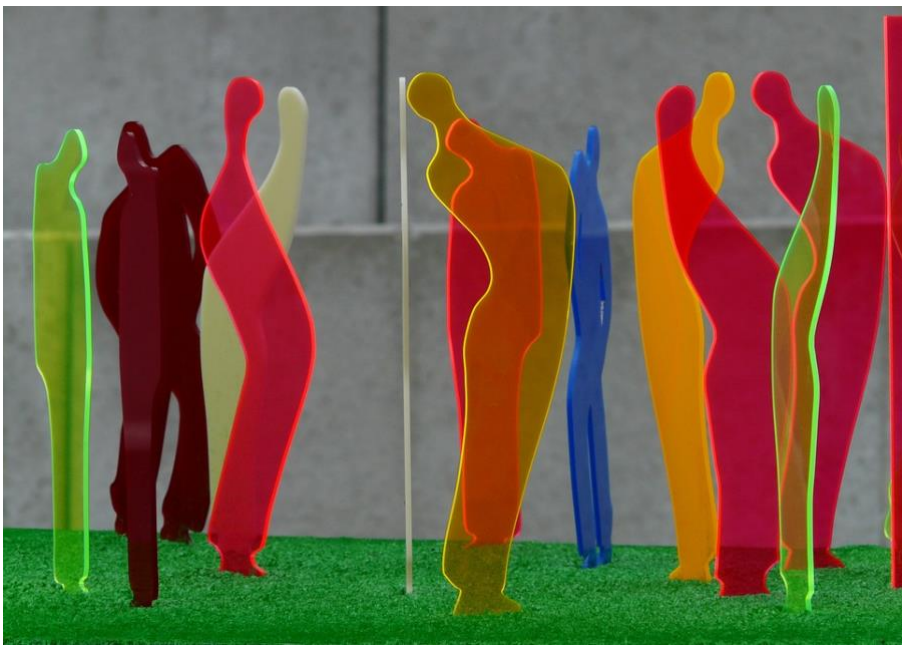

“Discourses on Motherhood”
International Conference

27-28 June 2026
Birkbeck, University of London / Online

Programme

London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research

Programme

Saturday, 27 June
In-person Sessions, Birkbeck

9:00-9:50 Keynote Speech: Andrea O'Reilly, York University (Canada)
'I never wanted to be a mother'; 'There was nothing maternal about her': Maternal Abandonments and Repudiations in selected Contemporary Irish, Mexican, and African-American Women's Fiction

10:00-11:15 Session 1A: Negotiating Motherhood: Ideals, Institutions and Bodily Labour
Chair: Carolina Toscano

Natalia Laverde, Université Clermont Auvergne (France)
Who Is Supposed to Be a Mother in Today's Western Society?

Susanne Kranz, Zayed University (UAE)
Between Emancipation and Instrumentalization: Motherhood in the German Democratic Republic

Amber Frost, University of Greenwich (UK)
Breastfeeding in the Borderlands: The New Age Wet Nurse

10:00-11:15 Session 1B: Mothers, Monsters and Maternal Ambivalence in Literature and Folklore
Chair: Rabia Shamim

Tanya Kainaat, University of London (UK)
Stepmothers and Saints: Representations of Motherhood in World Folklore

Rachel Booher, Middle Tennessee State University (USA)
Duality of Nation: The Masculine Monster and Monstrous Mother in Agatha Christie's Retitled Novel *And Then There Were None*

Emma Domínguez-Rué, University of Lleida, Catalonia (Spain)
(Much) More Than a Thriller: Problematising Motherhood in Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train*

10:00-11:15 Session 1C: Screening Motherhood: Cinema, Television and Cultural Representation
Chair: Derya Alim

Margarida Carnicé Mur, Mariona Visa Barbosa, Gina Plana Espinet, University of Lleida (Spain)
Childbirth on Screen: Hegemonic Narratives and the Emergence of Alternative Representations in Contemporary Cinema

Kaushalya Bajpayee, O.P.Jindal Global University (India)
Mothers in Bollywood – Changing Narratives of Representation

Francesca Medaglia, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)
Ambivalent Mothers: Agency, Constraint and the Reconfiguration of Motherhood in Contemporary Television Seriality

11:15-11:30 Tea & Coffee

11:30-12:45 Session 2A: Motherhood, Politics and Matricentric Feminisms
Chair: Sushree Routray

Kristina Ramksyte-Juszczak (USA)
The Establishment Clause and Its Peculiar Effect on the Contemporary Politics of American Motherhood

Ame Khin May-Kyawt, York University, Toronto (Canada)
Mothers under Patriarchy: An Intersectional Analysis of Motherhood, Ideology, and Care among Migrant and Refugee Mothers from Myanmar in Canada

Carolina Toscano, Saint Louis University, Madrid Campus (Spain)
Madres Cariñosas: Matricentric Feminist Praxis in Minneapolis, USA 2026

11:30-13:00 Session 2B: Maternal Absence, Ambivalence and Unfulfilled Motherhood
Chair: Emma Domínguez-Rué

Gisela Rovira i Gay, Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya (Spain)
Motherhood vs Mothering: Maternity in Maggie O'Farrell's Novels

Eva Patsovska-Ivanova, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (Bulgaria)
The Unrealised Motherhood: Jackie Thomae's Novel *Glück (Happiness)* as an Attempt to Reconcile Different Perspectives

Rabia Shamim, Cybill Salman, National University of Modern Languages (Pakistan)
"O Mother Where Art Thou": Examining Abandonment as a Manifestation of Maternal Ambivalence in Elena Ferrante's *The Lost Daughter*

Mariana Vale Rosado, University of Lisbon (Portugal)
Literary Representations of the Filicidal Mother in *Le Jugement de Léa* by Laurence Tardieu

11:30-12:45 Session 2C: Maternal Bodies, Horror and Cinematic Imaginaries
Chair: Kaushalya Bajpayee

Orlagh Woods, Maynooth University (Ireland) / Vilnius University (Lithuania)
Róisín Freeney, Maynooth University (Ireland)
Mother Ireland Meets Shakespeare: Irish Maternal Hauntings in Chloé Zhao's Hamnet (2025)

Kyla Whetham, York University (Canada)
Birth after Death: Maternal Bodies and Reproduction in *28 Years Later* (2025)

Sami Rafiq, Aligarh Muslim University (India)
The Representation of Motherhood in Hindi Cinema in India

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Session 3A: Madness, Grief and Maternal Suffering
Chair: Emma Domínguez-Rué

Morag Wehrle (Canada)
Birthing Madness: Reproduction, Risk, and the Rise of the 'Insane' Mother in Victorian England

Lucinda Bolton, University of Keele (UK)
The Motherload After Midnight: Maternal Insomnia, Identity and the Performance of the Good Mother

Derya Alim, West University of Timişoara (Romania)
The Deranged Mothers of Noh Drama and The Five Stages of Grief

Sarah Caré, Charles University, Prague (Czechia)
From Mad Woman to Mad Mother: Mothers and Mental Health Disorders in Middle-Grade Fiction

14:00-15:15 Session 3B: Mothers, Daughters and the Burden of Care
Chair: María Laura Arce Álvarez

Maria Ivars Giner, Universitat de València (Spain)
In(Ter)Dependence, Ambivalence, and Conflict: Demystifying the Mother-Daughter Bond in 21st-Century US Literature(s)

Hattie Edwardson, University of Sheffield (UK)
Sad Girls, Bad Mothers?: Resisting Daughter-Centricity in Sally Rooney's *Normal People* (2018)

Elena Nistor, London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research (UK)
The Burden of Care: Reframing Motherhood in Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods* (1986)

15:15-15:40 Tea & Coffee

15:40-16:30 Session 4A: Domestic Labour, Gender Equality and Contemporary Motherhood
Chair: Natalia Laverde

Leandra Pilon-Beaulieu, University of Ottawa (Canada)
Canadian Women's Perceptions of Gender Equality in the Division of Domestic & Emotional Labour

Sushree Routray, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (India)
Curry and Careers: Neoliberalism Dilemmas in the World of Yin and Yang of Indian Millennial Motherhood

15:40-16:30 Session 4B: Maternal Bonds, Migration and Belonging
Chair: Emma Domínguez-Rué

Elisa Fernández Rodríguez, Autonomous University of Madrid (Spain)
The Mother-Daughter Divide: Maternal Relationships in Contemporary US Latinx Fiction

María Laura Arce Álvarez, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain)
Maternal Refugeetude and the Mother-Son Relationship in Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous*

Online Sessions

10:00-11:30 Zoom Session 1: Medicine, Childbirth and Maternal Experience
Chair: Dubravka Dulibić Paljar

Auguste Dementavičienė, Marina Pukelienė, Vilnius University (Lithuania)
"A Successful Birth": Women's Accounts of Obstetrical Care and the Politics of Maternal Experience in Lithuania

Souhir Zekri, University of Tunis (Tunisia)
Helpless Mothers and Medical Care in Two of My Unpublished Micro-stories

Kapeshwar Singh, Central University of Himachal Pradesh (India)
Reconfiguring Motherhood: Race, Trauma, and Medical Authority in *Corregidora*

Anwesha Gogoi, Dibrugarh university, Assam (India)
After the Cradle: Writing Maternal Melancholy Beyond Medical Silence

11:45-13:00 Zoom Session 2: Philosophies and Politics of Motherhood
Chair: Shivalika Agarwal

Merve Arslan, Şırnak University (Türkiye)
Motherhood, Experience, and Existence in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*

Adriana Páramo Pérez, Royal Holloway University (UK)
Reframing Labour: From Spectacle to Embodiment

Leandra Joubert, University of South Africa (South Africa)
Beyond Sacred Suffering: Mater Movens and the Politics of Motherhood in Outlander

13:30-14:45 Zoom Session 3: Reproductive Narratives: Fertility, Surrogacy and Parenthood
Chair: Auguste Dementavičienė

Madison Schindele, Freie Universität, Berlin (Germany)
Breaking the Silence: In/Fertility Narratives in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Germany

Giuseppina Scotto di Carlo, University of Naples 'L'Orientale' (Italy)
Solo Mothers, Solo Fathers: A Discursive Comparative Study of Parenthood by Choice

Alessia Cofone, University of Oxford (UK)
The Labour of Reproduction: Surrogacy in Kirino Natsuo's *Swallows*

15:00-16:15 Zoom Session 4: Mothers, Daughters and Monstrous Femininities
Chair: Gitanjali Singh

Shivalika Agarwal, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Bengaluru (India)
Presence of the Absent: Reconfiguring the Mother-daughter Ties in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*

Dubravka Dulibić Paljar, University of Pula (Croatia)
Brigita Miloš, University of Rijeka (Croatia)
Wicked Games of Care: Mothers, Daughters, and the Making of Subjectivity in *La Hermandad de Las Malas Hijas* by Vanessa Montfort

Hayley Phillips, Louisiana State University (USA)
Devouring Mothers: *Hereditary*'s Monstrous Feminine

16:30-17:45 Zoom Session 5: Queering Motherhood and Reproductive Justice
Chair: Kapeshwar Singh

Gitanjali Singh, California State University (USA)
Sikh Women's Representations as Warrior Mothers: Sacrifice, Honor and Heterosexuality

Diana Aramburu, UC Davis (USA)
Writing the NICU Story: Queering Motherwork in Cherríe Moraga's *Waiting in the Wings*: *Portrait of a Queer Motherhood*

Marisa Hollywood, The City College of New York (USA)
Witness to the "Scene of Torture:" The Medicalization of the Pregnant and Conceiving Body in Selected Works by Gilman, Chopin, and Hemingway

Sunday, 28 June
Online Sessions

9:00-10:30 Zoom Session 6: Education, Activism and Maternal Knowledge
Chair: Giorgia Riboni

Mollie Etheridge, University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University (UK)
Making It Work: Mothers and Feminist Activism in 1970s–80s Britain

Margaret Carmody, Australian Catholic University (Australia)
Australian Breastfeeding Association's Natural Approach to Maternal Education vs Scientific Approach on the Web

Sigmund Fletcher D. Tarrayo, University of the Philippines (Philippines)
Mothers Know Best: A Case Study of Mothers' Experiences and Knowledge of Disaster Resilience in MaDiRR Discussions

Amrita Mehta, University of Delhi (India)
From Maternal Destiny to Maternal Choice: Discursive Transformations of Motherhood in Contemporary India

10:45-12:00 Zoom Session 7: Digital Motherhood: Social Media, Community and Surveillance

Chair: Mollie Etheridge

Giorgia Riboni, University of Turin (Italy)
Bakhtin's Echoes: Resolving Conflicts in New Media Motherhood

Haritha V, Pondicherry University (India)
Mothers Online: A Matrifocal Analysis of Selected Indian Women's Vlogs

Vikarun Nessa, Independent University (Bangladesh)
Tools of Surveillance: Digital Panopticons and the Manufacturing of Motherhood in Social Media

12:30-14:00 Zoom Session 8: Cultural Narratives and Literary Representations of Motherhood
Chair: Shaista Irshad

Ruchi Singh, University of Lucknow (India)
Bharat Mata as Maternal Ideal: Cultural Construction of Motherhood in the Novel *Anandamath*

Ali Bahnini, University of Carthage (Tunisia)
Deterritorialisation Versus Reterritorialization: The True Story of Motherhood in Shakespeare's Hamlet

Andrea Urbán, University of Debrecen (Hungary)
Obtaining Integrity – The Representation of Motherhood in Modern Hungarian Poetry

Katiuscia Darici, University of Turin (Italy)
Motherhood Narratives in Spain: A Boom of Creation and Procreation in Twenty-First Century Autobiographical Works by Women and the Case of Laura Freixas

14:10-15:00 Zoom Session 9: Beyond the Human: Ecologies and Reimaginations of Motherhood
Chair: Ruchi Singh

Shaista Irshad, University of Allahabad (India)
Watery Mothers: Hydrofeminism and Maternal Relationality in *The Hungry Tide*

Sultana Musfika Rahman, Independent University (Bangladesh)
Motherhood of the "Non-mothers": Renegotiating Motherhood Beyond Species and Patriarchal Institutions in *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of The Dead*

15:15-16:30 Zoom Session 10: Mothering Otherwise: Disability, Monstrosity and Alternative Maternal Futures
Chair: Sultana Musfika Rahman

Meggie Boyle, University of Cambridge (UK)
Mothering Otherwise: Crip Autobiography and the Rewriting of Maternal Subjectivity

Kalina Janeva, University of Freiburg (Germany)
"What Kind of Mother Would Let It Come to This?": Prodigious Abstinence and Failures of Motherhood in Victorian Fasting Girls and Emma Donoghue's *The Wonder (2016*)

Veronica Membrive, University of Almeria (Spain)
Domestic Experiments: Monstrous Maternity and Posthuman Reproduction in Vivarium