

Workshop 5: Motherhood, Religions and Spirituality

Participant Biographies

Christine Battersby is Reader Emerita in the Department of Philosophy and an Associate Fellow of the Centre for Research in Philosophy and Literature at the University of Warwick. Central to her research interests is the neglect of female embodiment and natality in western metaphysics, as well as a concern to ask what happens to our notion of identity if we take the 'female' (not 'feminine') subject-position as norm. Her research is thoroughly interdisciplinary, and draws on the visual arts and literature, as well as on some neglected strands of the history of western philosophy, in order to develop a 'fleshy metaphysics'. She is the author of *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (The Women's Press & Indiana University Press, 1989/1994); *The Phenomenal Woman: Feminist Metaphysics and the Patterns of Identity* (Polity/Routledge, 1998) and *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference* (Routledge, 2007), plus numerous articles on feminist aesthetics, feminist metaphysics and the history of philosophy and culture. She was co-editor of *Going Australian (Hypatia, 2000)* and, from 1996 to 2000, General Editor of *Women's Philosophy Review*. In Spring 2013 she will be Visiting Fleishhacker Chair of Philosophy at the University of San Francisco.

Victoria Browne has a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Liverpool, and is currently a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Hertfordshire in the Department of Philosophy. Her main research interests are in feminist philosophy and the philosophy of history and temporality, and her publications include 'Backlash, Repetition and Untimeliness: The Temporal Dynamics of Feminist Politics' (*Hypatia*, 2013), and 'Memory and the Metaphysics of Music: Battersby's Move Away from Deleuze and Guattari' (*Women: a Cultural Review*, 2011). In September 2013, Victoria will begin an Early Career Research Fellowship in the Department of Social Sciences at Oxford Brookes University, and has also recently joined the editorial collective for *Radical Philosophy*.

Mohar Chaudhuri's PhD, entitled 'The Mythical Vision of Jovette Marchessault in the Trilogy *Like a Child of the Earth*', won the Shastri Indo Canadian doctoral award in 2005. She has been writing on the mother-daughter relationship in Quebec and Bengali women's writing, and as Assistant Professor in French, University of Calcutta, India, she has been teaching Francophone Quebec Literature and Women's Writing in French since 2008. Areas of her special interest include: women and spirituality in Francophone and Indian women's writing, re-writing of mythology by women writers in French and in Indian writing in English and Bengali, mother-daughter relationship in contemporary women's writing, the image of the oriental woman in 19th century French poetry. As Visiting Fellow at the Department of French, University of Sheffield, she is currently working on 'The fantastic third-space in the works of Ying Chen and Linda Lê' (2012-13). Her publications include: 'Quest of a feminine divinity in *White Pebbles in Dark Forests* by Jovette Marchessault and *Gandharvi* by Bani Basu' (in *Synergies Inde*, vol 3, 2008); and 'Grand-mother Stories: Language, Subjectivity and Genealogy in *Like A Child of the Earth* by Jovette Marchessault and *The First Promise* by Ashapura Devi' (in *De l'invisible au visible: l'imaginaire de Jovette Marchessault*, ed. Roseanna Dufault and Celita Lamar, Remue-menage, 2012). She has also published a few short stories in English in various journals, the latest being, 'The Money Plant' in *Muse India*, May-June 2013 available at (<http://www.museindia.com/regularcontent.asp?issid=49&id=4208#>), and translated *Les nouvelles orientales* by Marguerite Yourcenar into Bengali, which will be shortly published as *Prachyer Upakatha* (Ananda Press, Kolkata).

Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor is a Post-doctoral fellow at the Centre for Society, Religion and Belief, University of Derby. She specializes in the Sociology of Religion with particular emphasis on democratic research methodologies that seek to work *with* and *for* research participants. She is the author of *Muslim Women in Britain: Demystifying the Muslimah* and Principal Investigator on an ESRC funded project entitled 'Collaborative Partnerships between Universities and Muslim institutions'. Her forthcoming publications for 2013 include *Religion or Belief, Discrimination and Equality: Britain in Global Contexts* (London & New York: Continuum), and 'Researching the Non-religious: Methods and Methodological Issues, Challenges and Controversies' (in Day, A & Cotter, C. (eds.) *Social Identities between the Sacred and the Secular*, Aldershot: Ashgate)

Pauline Eaton (a former senior civil servant) holds an MA in Modern and Medieval Languages from Cambridge University and obtained MAs in Classical Civilisation and in Modern French Studies at Birkbeck, University of London, where she is now working towards a PhD. Her subject is the representation of maternal experience in the work of the contemporary French writer Marie NDiaye. Broadly, the research looks at the narrative techniques

employed by NDiaye to give an inside view of the maternal experience, motherhood as experienced by mothers, and evaluates her writing in the context of other models of motherhood from mythology, psychoanalysis, and other modern female French writers.

Anna Fedele is a Research Fellow of the Center for Research in Anthropology (Lisbon University Institute) and a chercheure associée of the Groupe de Sociologie Politique et Morale (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales). She holds a PhD in social and cultural anthropology and an MA in German and English Literature. Her dissertation has recently been published: *Looking for Mary Magdalene: Alternative Pilgrimage and Ritual Creativity at Catholic Shrines in France* (Oxford University Press, 2013) and she has co-edited *Encounters of Body and Soul in Contemporary Religious Practices* (Berghahn, 2011) and *Gender and Power in Contemporary Spirituality* (Routledge 2013). Her Master thesis focused on the feminist interpretation of the mythological figure of Medea in Christa Wolf's homonymous novel.

Adalgisa Giorgio is Senior Lecturer in Italian and Italian Language Convenor in the Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies at the University of Bath, where she is also Chair of the Equalities & Diversity Network. She studied at the Istituto Universitario Orientale, Naples, and the University of Reading. Her main areas of research are Italian contemporary women's writing and post-war narrative on Naples. Her publications include articles on Fabrizia Ramondino, Elsa Morante, Natalia Ginzburg, Edith Bruck and Marosia Castaldi. She has worked in particular on the mother-daughter bond and has edited the summative collection *Writing Mothers and Daughters: Renegotiating the Mother in Western European Narratives by Women* (2002). Her interest in women's writing within the European context continued with the publication of the volume, co-edited with Julia Waters, entitled *Women's Writing in Western Europe: Gender, Generation and Legacy* (2007). She is currently preparing an edited volume on Fabrizia Ramondino and working on a monograph on contemporary Neapolitan writing. She is the recipient of an Erasmus Mundus grant which will take her to Wellington (NZ) in 2013, to research Italian and Maori-Italian identities in relation to European identity.

Roberta Guerrina is Senior Lecturer and Head of the School of Politics at the University of Surrey. She is a European policy analyst with a particular interest in European social policy, citizenship policy and gender equality. She has published in the area of women's human rights, work-life balance, identity politics and the idea of Europe. She is the author of *Mothering the Union: Gender Politics in the EU* (Manchester University Press, 2005) and *Europe: History, Ideas and Ideologies* (Arnold, 2002).

Emily Jeremiah is a Lecturer in German at Royal Holloway, University of London, whose research interests include gender, ethics, mothering, translation, and transnationalism. She is the author of *Troubling Maternity: Mothering, Agency, and Ethics in Women's Writing in German of the 1970s and 1980s* (Maney/MHRA, 2003), and of a forthcoming monograph, *Nomadic Ethics in Contemporary Women's Writing in German: Strange Subjects* (Camden House, 2012). With Frauke Matthes, she is currently co-editing *Ethical Approaches in Contemporary German-Language Literature and Culture* (*Edinburgh German Yearbook* 7, 2013). Emily is also an award-winning translator of Finnish poetry and fiction. Her translations include Eeva-Liisa Manner, *Bright, Dusky, Bright* (Waterloo Press, 2009), and Asko Sahlberg, *The Brothers* (trans. with Fleur Jeremiah, Peirene Press, 2012).

Rachel Jones is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at George Mason University, Virginia, where she is also affiliated with the Women and Gender Studies Program. She is the author of *Luce Irigaray: Towards a Sexuate Philosophy* (Polity Press, 2011) and co-editor of a volume of *Hypatia* on Australian feminist philosophy (with C. Battersby, C. Constable, & J. Purdom, Spring 2000). Her research interests include philosophies of sexual difference as well as the philosophical implications of birth. She has published a number of articles and chapters on Irigaray, Kant and Lyotard, with a particular emphasis on materiality and the sublime, as well as the metaphysical implications of birth and infancy. Her most recent publication is 'Fear, the Sublime and Sheltered Difference', in *Relational Architectural Ecologies: Architecture, Nature and Subjectivity*, ed. Peg Rawes (London: Routledge, forthcoming June 2013).

Indrani Karmakar's research interests include motherhood and its related concerns namely, gender, sexuality, female embodiment etc, especially in the context of postcolonialism. She has a MLitt in Women's Studies from the University of Dundee, and her interest in motherhood was ignited by her MLitt dissertation entitled 'The Value of Motherhood: A Critical Exploration in Philosophy and Literature'. Addressing the issue of motherhood in philosophy and literature, her dissertation constructed a new constellation of concepts which argued for performative mothering grounded in situation. Through the analysis of contrasting theoretical perspectives (drawing on de Beauvoir, Sara Ruddick, Adrienne Rich and Lisa Baraitser), which were interpreted in relation to selected literary

texts, she attempted to produce a constructive framework allowing motherhood to be taken up positively. Presently, she is preparing to commence doctoral research which will focus on Motherhood in South Asian Women's Writings. This project will attempt to identify the particular ways in which motherhood has been treated by selected authors (Ashapura Devi, Mahasweta Devi, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande Monica Ali and Jhumpa Lahiri), and consider whether their visions provide different understandings of motherhood (which is in turn intimately linked to our understanding of womanhood) from the dominant Western feminist discourse.

Samantha Langsdale is currently completing her PhD in the Study of Religions at SOAS, University of London. Her research explores how soteriological doctrines have necessitated the simultaneous materialisation of female bodies as 'damaged' with women's desires for their bodies to approximate a normative ideal. She investigates this essentially performative process of discursive negotiation by means of a case study of fourteenth-century Florentine ritual art. Additionally, in her spare time, Samantha is the Managing Editor for a popular feminist publication, GEEKED Magazine www.geekedmagazine.com<<http://www.geekedmagazine.com>>.

Abigail Lee Six is Professor of Spanish at Royal Holloway, University of London. She has published on a wide range of Spanish writers dating from the 19th century to the present day, but most recently has been working to bring the usefulness of Gothic studies to the attention of Hispanists and to demonstrate the relevance of Hispanic texts to Gothic scholars beyond the Pyrenees. This research has produced several articles and two monographs so far, one on the fiction of the contemporary novelist Adelaida García Morales, *Haunting Words* (Boydell & Brewer, 2006) and the other, *Gothic Terrors* (Bucknell University Press, 2010), on a selection of mainstream writers including Galdós, Pardo Bazán, Unamuno, and Cela.

Dawn Llewellyn is Lecturer in Christian Studies in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Chester. Her doctoral thesis (Lancaster, 2010) qualitatively examined Christian and post-Christian women's spiritual reading practices, using this data to explore and subsequently connect third wave feminism and feminist theology - two modes of gender analysis that rarely enter into dialogue. She is currently leading a project that investigates Christian women's choices around motherhood and voluntary childlessness, and the impact these experiences have on women's faith lives. These projects reflect her publications, which include *Reading Spiritualities: Constructing and Representing the Sacred* (co-edited with Deborah Sawyer), and contributions to *The Journal of Feminist Theology*, and the volumes *Feminist Spiritualities: The Next Generation* (Klassen, 2009), and *Religion and Knowledge* (Guest and Arweck, 2012).

Helia López Zarzosa has a degree in Sociology from the University of Concepción, Chile, an MA in Sociology of Education from the Institute of Education, and a PhD from Oxford Brookes University. Her PhD thesis was entitled 'Chilean Voluntary Repatriation, 1978-2002: How Voluntary, How Gendered and How Classed?', and her publications include: 'Internal Exile, Exile and Return: A Gendered View' (*Journal of Refugee Studies* 11(2), 1998); 'The Impact of Return Migration: The Case of Chile', (*RPN*, Issue 21, 1996); and the monograph *La problemática de la adaptación escolar en los hijos/as de las familias retornadas en la VIII Región* (FASIC Publications, 1995).

Sheridan Marshall received her PhD in German from Royal Holloway, University of London in 2009 (as Sheridan Burnside). Her thesis examined connections between Judaeo-Christian forms of remembrance and literary responses to the Holocaust and will be published as a book, *Forgetting to Remember*, with Valentine Mitchell in 2013. Sheridan currently works as a freelance translator and as editorial consultant for the publication *New Books in German*. She is mother to three boys, aged 5, 3 and 2.

Frauke Matthes is Lecturer in German at the University of Edinburgh. Her research interests include contemporary German-language literature, particularly by authors of non-German origins, transcultural literature and culture, migration and travel writing, and masculinity studies. She is the author of *Writing and Muslim Identity: Representations of Islam in German and English Transcultural Literature, 1990-2006* (2011); and co-editor, with Emily Jeremiah, of *Ethical Approaches in Contemporary German-Language Literature and Culture* (Edinburgh German Yearbook 7, forthcoming 2013). Her current monograph project, which was funded by the Leverhulme Trust with an Early Career Fellowship, examines constructions and discourses of masculinity in contemporary German literature and culture.

Máire Ní Annracháin was appointed Professor of Modern Irish in University College Dublin, having lectured for many years at the National University of Ireland Maynooth. Her academic interests are modern Irish and Scottish Gaelic literature and the development of literary theory for the analysis of Gaelic literature. Her particular focus is on

the figurative language of Gaelic poetry in the post-bardic period, and the recuperation of tradition in modernist and postmodernist Gaelic literature. Most of her publications have been in Irish. Recent articles have analysed the work of Brian Merriman, Sorley Maclean, Biddu Jenkinson, Máirtín Ó Cadhain and Seán Ó Ríordáin, as well as the recently renewed connections between Irish and Scottish Gaelic literature. Her most recent article in English is 'Affinities in Time and Space: Reading the Gaelic Poetry of Ireland and Scotland' in *Modern Irish and Scottish Poetry* (Cambridge UP, 2011). Her doctoral dissertation was on the poetry of the twentieth-century Scottish Gaelic poet Sorley Maclean, published as *Aisling agus Tóir: an slánú i bhfilíocht Shomhairle MhicGill-Eain* (Má Nuad: An Sagart 1992). An early article, 'Ait liom bean a bheith ina file', published in 1983, is acknowledged as having introduced feminist criticism into Gaelic literature. She sits on the Irish Language committee of the Royal Irish Academy and is a director of the Gaelic college on the Isle of Skye, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Awards include a senior fellowship from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, two Royal Irish Academy travel awards, and most recently a Caledonian Foundation European Visiting Research Fellowship from the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Sarah-Jane Page is a Lecturer in Sociology at Aston University, UK. She completed her PhD at the University of Nottingham in 2009, which focused on the experiences of clergy mothers and male clergy spouses in the Church of England. She has undertaken a number of postdoctoral research posts (e.g. an ESRC-funded project on clergy fatherhood in the contemporary context at Durham University, and an AHRC-ESRC-funded study on religion, youth and sexuality, undertaken at the University of Nottingham). Her research interests include the study of religion in relation to clergy and clergy families, gender, sexuality, embodiment, feminism, young people and parenthood. Articles specifically pertaining to her work on clergy have been published in journals such as *Feminist Theology*, *Feminist Review* and *Travail, Genre et Sociétés*. She also has a forthcoming chapter in an edited collection entitled *The Faith Lives of Women and Girls*, edited by Nicola Slee, Fran Porter and Anne Phillips, and due to be published by Ashgate in November 2013. She has also just co-authored a book with Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip entitled *Religious and Sexual Identities: A Multi-faith Exploration of Young Adults* (Ashgate, 2013).

Julie Rodgers is Lecturer in French in the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures at the National University of Ireland Maynooth. Her PhD was awarded by Trinity College Dublin in 2008 and examined the mother-daughter relationship in Quebec Women's Writing. Her current research interests include: emerging feminist theorists; maternal counternarratives; contemporary women writers in French; Quebec literature; and migrant writing. She has written a number of articles related to the field of motherhood studies, the most recent one being a study of the maternal experience in Ying Chen's *Un enfant à porte*, published in the *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, (no. 45-46, 2012). An article discussing Eliette Abécassis' *Un heureux événement* as a maternal counternarrative will appear in the next issue of the *Irish Journal of French Studies* (no. 12, 2012).

Gill Rye is Emeritus Professor and Associate Fellow at the Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of London. She is Director of the Centre for the Study of Contemporary Women's Writing and directs the AHRC-funded Motherhood in post-1968 European Literature Network. Her research centres on contemporary women's writing in French and she has convened the Contemporary Women's Writing in French seminar since 2000. Her main publications include *Narratives of Mothering* (2009), *Reading for Change* (2001), *Women's Writing in Contemporary France* (co-edited with Michael Worton, 2002), and 'When familiar meanings dissolve ...': *Essays in French Studies in Memory of Malcolm Bowie* (co-edited with Naomi Segal, 2011), plus numerous articles and chapters, and several edited and co-edited journal special issues. Forthcoming are three publications on 21st-century women's writing in French, co-edited with Amaleena Damlé, a special issue of *Dalhousie French Studies* on the author Marie Darrieussecq, co-edited with Helena Chadderton, and an edited special issue of *Forum for Modern Language Studies* on writing childhood.

Eleanor Tiplady Higgs is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Gender Studies, SOAS University of London. Her doctoral research is an exploration of the construction and contestation of Christian identity at the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Kenya. Her focus is interrogating the activities of Kenya YWCA as a site for the constitution of a Christian identity, particularly the organisation's ethical reflections regarding its interventions to improve young women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.