

## Editor's Introduction: Motherhood in the Arts and Humanities

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The spring 2020 issue of *Interdisciplinary Humanities* examines the representation of mothers and motherhood in theatre, fiction, medical texts, TV series, science fiction, and films as well as how motherhood impacts artistic work and educational attainment. These wide-ranging inquiries interrogate stereotypes and ask us to think critically about how motherhood is perceived and represented across time and place. The cover art by Cristie Henry captures many of the issues surveyed in this edition, including domesticity, women's free labor, childrearing, artistic production, and, of course, contemporary motherhood.

This issue begins with 3 thoughtful analyses of very different texts. Shawna Guenther's engaging work is an historical view of mothering through an examination of early modern English medical texts. **Threatening Maternity: Early Modern English medical texts and the *querrelles des femmes***, analyzes how medical texts not only attempted to explain pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding, but also how these texts maintained male privilege and subordinated women and their maternal rights. Lynn DeBoeck's careful analysis of theatre texts, **Lying-in Plain Sight: A New Framework for Understanding Pregnancy and Birth in Drama and Performance**, discusses the lack of representation of pregnancy and birth in theatre and the significance of this erasure. The final work in this opening trio, Stephanie Fearon's **Mothering from Afar: Jamaican Domestic Workers in Trey Anthony's Play *How Black Mothers Say I Love You***, examines specifically on Black storytelling and motherwork in Trey Anthony's play.

The next set of works focus contemporary cinema, literature, and television. Aline Ferreira's **What Is a Mother? Hybrid Motherhood and Biorobotic Representation** is a compelling discussion of Dennis Villeneuve's movie *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), Grant Sputore's movie *I Am Mother* (Australia, 2019), and Ian McEwan's recent short story "Düssel..." (2018) and how they grapple with questions about what is human and how natality relates to humanness. Kyren Hunt weaves a personal narrative with her analysis of how *Vikings* represents contemporary motherhood **Forged in a Fire: A Matricentric Reading of a Shield Maiden's Mothering in the 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Century.** Leigh Viner analyzes unconventional mothering, including certain taboos, in her interesting analysis of **Motherhood and Female Desire in Agnès Varda's *Kung-Fu Master*.**

Personal narratives about mothering and being mothered follow in the next section. Daphne Desser considers her own mother's history and its impact on her and her daughter, as well as intergenerational interpretation of those roles, in **My Mother is a Sabra and Other Inconvenient Truths.** Amanda Turcios's lyric essay about her mother and other women who mothered her won the Undergraduate Humanities Diversity Award at the 2020 Humanities Education and Research Association conference in Chicago, Illinois. Her work is entitled, **I Am Not the Same Person I was Yesterday: A Lyric Essay.** Hala Georges is an artist who writes about the impact of mothering on her work and the work of her colleagues who are mothers in **A Personal Perspective on the Relation between Creativity and Motherhood.**

We wrap up this issue with two final perspectives: the impact of mothering on students, and the representation of mothering in art. Alexandra Horton's article **Student-Mothers and Curriculum Leadership** shares data on student-mothers and the unique challenges they face in higher education. Lisa Haugen's interview with Cristie Henry provides important insights about our cover art and about mothering as a subject matter in art.

The Call for Submissions to this issue on motherhood and the arts went out before the global pandemic, but the issue itself was delayed by pandemic-related challenges. The Humanities Education and Research Association conference in early March 2020 was, for many participants, one of the last "normal" professional activities of 2020. The delays to this issue made me reflect often on the emerging research on the pandemic's impact on mothers in particular, especially the additional domestic and emotional labor that mothers did, and continue to do, during the pandemic. I am grateful that this issue of *Interdisciplinary Humanities* is finally published and hope we will return to this topic again in a few years with an issue on motherhood, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the humanities, and more!