



Call for Chapters

Demeter Press is seeking submissions for an edited collection

tentatively entitled:

Mothers, Mothering, and Mythology

Editors: Alys Einion and Rachael Williams

Please submit 400-500 word abstracts by: April 30, 2024

Mothers are represented in the earliest works of art, in cave paintings, and rock art that capture the act of birth as a communal/community event, in images of breasts and breastfeeding, and in various figurines representing what is thought to be the fertility of the female. Mothers and mothering are deeply symbolic and culturally expressed diversely but with many common or recurring symbols. In mythologies across the world, creation myths and complex cultural mythologies and histories explore mothering in multiple ways, with a mother figure associated with the Sun (as in Australian Aborigine traditions), the Moon, as Sky Woman, or the Earth. Gaia/Ge, in Māori tradition, Papatūānuku gives birth to Tāne, her first son and all living things; similarly in many traditions Mother Earth gives birth to all life; Isis is represented as the mother of Horus; in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, Mary is held sacred as the mother of Jesus. Goddesses and women as mothers or would-be mothers feature throughout Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Celtic, Scandinavian, Native American, Indian, African, and other indigenous cultures worldwide. Mothers and mothering are subject to powerful inherited narratives that are enculturated into communities, and which can serve as forms of teaching (both historical and practical) but also shape how we perceive mothering and mothers, and motherhood itself. No less powerful are the 'new' mythologies of motherhood derived from more recent times where the spread of coloniality and its associated belief systems have limited access to these diverse stories and symbols.

This collection seeks to illuminate the power of mothering and mother symbols, stories, and traditional representations across and within cultures, to understand the nature of their symbolism and to explore how such mythologies and representations impact on mothering identities, performances, experiences, and expectations. We wish to give voice to the multiple mythologies that have enshrined and created our concept of 'Mother' and to explore these meanings in the world today, as artistic, academic, and personal endeavour and relation.

As co-editors, both academics and midwives, we are inspired to better understand mothers and mothering as culturally constructed through these enduring narratives and symbols, and how these might support us to reclaim future mother-narratives. Alys Einion is a published writer of fiction, the editor of an international midwifery journal, and a midwifery academic and pagan, with two decades of experience of researching and teaching the history of midwifery and mothering in prehistory and anthropology. As a lesbian mother, a biological mother, a step-mother and as an inclusive feminist midwife, she has questioned the cultural construction of mothering and its roots in histories of the Global North.

Rachael Williams is a lecturer in midwifery, practising midwife and a qualified nurse who has worked in various roles in the NHS since 1997. As a rotational midwife she works in high-risk medicalised care and low-risk midwifery-led care, antenatal and postnatal units, as well as teaching parent craft to new mothers. As a staunch proponent of woman-led (rather than medical/midwifery-led) models, and as a mother of a six-year-old, she has interests in mothers' experience of neonatal resuscitation,

and of treatment following a change in risk, as well as the global perspective of what makes midwives happy, not least from the perspective of maintaining care quality

We are seeking submissions from academics, artists, activists, writers, mothers, parents, and those with lived experience. Submissions may include: personal essay/reflection, academic essay, academic research, memoir, creative non-fiction, narrative, poetry, art, photography, and hybrid genre. We are interested in explorations of relationships between people and mothering myths, deconstructions of mothering narratives in historical or current mythology, and are particularly keen to include those whose cultures and histories have been marginalised or affected by colonialism and coloniality. We also welcome new readings of mother myths and mythologies through a decolonising lens and through a lens of diverse gender and sexuality.

Submission guidelines

Submission Guidelines: Abstract (400-500 words) with a 75-word bio (single document) by April 1, 2024. Acceptance will be made by May 5, 2024. Completed works (up to 6,500 words double-spaced pages, 12-point font, in MLA reference format for citation) are due Oct 3, 2024. Please note that acceptance will depend on the strength and fit of the final piece. Also please note that papers will be received and reviewed in English. Prospective authors who may have limited experience with publishing in English are strongly encouraged to seek the assistance of a technical editor before submitting proposals and papers, as language difficulties may be raised as a concern during the external review process. Please send inquires and abstracts to: alyswelshwitch@gmail.com