

CALL FOR PAPERS

DEMETER PRESS

Seeking submissions for an edited collection provisionally entitled *The Truth about (M)Otherhood: Choosing to be Childfree*

Editors: Dr Julie Rodgers, Maynooth University (Ireland) and Dr Helene Cummins, Brescia College, Western University (Canada)

Deadline for Abstracts: April 1st, 2016

Despite the many gains of feminism over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and its various endeavor to de-centre motherhood from the core of the female existence, it would appear that voluntarily choosing not to become a mother is not a decision that society feels uncomfortable with and, moreover, refuses to accept as valid. In fact, in order to illustrate the extent to which the non-mother is rendered queer, Lucie Joubert, author of *L'envers du landau* (The Other Side of the Cradle), an essay on voluntary non-motherhood published in 2010, likens her admission of this choice to a 'coming-out' (19). Although a fairly recent issue of *Time* magazine with a front-page feature on the childfree lifestyle suggests that we are beginning to at least explore the stories of women who have decided not to become mothers (Sandler 2013), unfortunately, in its bid to depict the positive aspects of being childfree, the article actually perpetuates one of the most common stereotypes associated with non-mothers, namely that they are too egocentric to have children and consider the needs of anyone else but themselves.

If motherhood continues to be promoted as one of the most defining stages in a woman's life, or, to quote the best-selling maternity guide *What to Expect when you are Expecting*, 'the adventure of a lifetime', 'one of life's most magical experiences', 'the most joyful, exciting, and wondrous moment' (2009, xx-xxiii), how, then, does the woman who does not want to become a mother negotiate and articulate this decision? Where does her freely adopted stance as non-mother sit in a predominantly pronatalist postfeminist society that persists in conflating 'true' womanhood with motherhood? To what extent does a woman's decision not to mother impact on her sense of self in a culture, particularly in the domain of the media, that hounds women to procreate or forever risk regret and dissatisfaction? What kind of recriminations is the voluntary child-free women subjected to and how does she retaliate? Are there more positive ways of narrating the child-free experience than society would lead us to believe?

Inspired by the title of Melanie Notkins' 2015 publication *Otherhood: Modern Women Finding a New Kind of Happiness*, this collection will examine the position of voluntary non-motherhood from a range of interdisciplinary perspectives and encourages scholars from the following disciplines to submit abstracts: literature; film; television; popular culture; new media; sociology; history; psychology and psychoanalysis; philosophy; religion; feminist theory and gender studies.

Submission Guidelines:

Please send abstracts of approximately 250 words and a short bio to Julie.rodgers@nuim.ie and hcummins@uwo.ca by 1st April 2016.

Completed articles of 6,000- 8,000 words (including all references and endnotes) will be due by 15th July 2017. Contributors will be responsible for ensuring that manuscripts adhere to MLA style. Inquiries may be directed to the Editors at Julie.rodgers@nuim.ie and hcummins@uwo.ca

DEMETER PRESS

140 Holland St. West, P.O. Box 13022 Bradford, ON, L3Z 2Y5, Canada

<http://www.demeterpress.org> info@demeterpress.org