

Daughtering and Mothering Revisited.

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In 1993, the edited book *Daughtering and Mothering, Female Subjectivity Re-analysed* was published with chapters written by twenty authors from six different countries. It went beyond the 1970's sisterhood metaphor for women's relationships and took up the mother-daughter relationship as an archetype of generational differences between women in the western world.

The project *Daughtering and Mothering* highlighted the production of female subjectivity by daughters and mothers as an ongoing enterprise. Their relationship was depicted as a space in which daughters and mothers both (have to) struggle for their subjectivity. Therefore, the term *daughtering* seemed to be justified as the counterpart of *mothering*. And, as they both were working on their female subjectivity, (some) antagonism was considered to be almost inevitable. Daughtering and mothering was not exclusively reserved for biological daughters and mothers, however. The possibility of a *symbolic* daughtering and mothering was assumed too, for example in the relationship between student (daughters) and professor (mothers). In addition, the influence of the historical and socio-cultural context was emphasized, thus framing the dominant stories about mothering as western, white and middle class.

Since then many things have changed, on personal, societal, and scholarly levels. The personal positions of the *Daughtering and Mothering volume's* participants have shifted at home as well as in the workplace: from being mothers of teenage sons and daughters to being mothers of adult men and women and (future) grandmothers, and from lecturer to professor. Simultaneously, western societies have become more diverse while going through an emancipation process for women (and men) in family life as well as in the area of education, labor market participation, and economic independence. In addition, within feminist studies some argue for going beyond the usual thinking in terms of waves, generations, and inevitable antagonism. Taken together, these developments raised our curiosity about possible changes in current processes of daughtering and mothering.

On the occasion of the 7th European Feminist Research conference, psychologists and social scientists from three different countries presented four studies related to the theme "Daughtering and Mothering Revisited" (see below). All contributions were based on original and still unpublished research.

Their empirical data on (symbolic) daughters offered evidence for the persistence of attachment and caring narratives as dominant discourses that may produce unhappiness when adopted unreflexively. They also illustrated the continuing lack of attention to the power and disciplinary aspects of mothering. In this respect, the generational differences do not seem to be as large as imagined. Even the relationship between daughters and mothers shows some continuity – with daughters still blaming their mothers, and not the circumstances, for not meeting romantic motherhood expectations. On the other hand, a remarkable claim for agency was evident – not in the name of feminism but in the name of liberalism and individualism - and many female psychology students put their mothers and fathers forward as valuable role models. In addition, there was no support for the notion that students constitute the symbolic daughters of female professors/symbolic mothers. Indeed, it was argued that within the field of girls' studies, such a metaphor may obscure a fresh view on the lives of girls/young women.