

25th Anniversary Issue on Mothering and Motherhood

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**Term Time:
A Revolutionary Lexicon for Mother-Demics
A Performance Text**

*Term/Time/A Revolutionary Lexicon for Mother-Demics was first performed as part of the ResearchWorks Series at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, England, on Monday, February 24, 2025. In this written publication following the performance, we begin with a note on the fonts readers will encounter herein. Taking a cue from the typographical polyvocality of mothering in Jackie Kay's *The Adoption Papers* (1998), the performers, Dr. Laura Bissell and Dr. Lucy Tyler, express themselves in three typefaces. Lucy's typeface (and her speech acts in performance) is a font often used in children's literature: **Gill Sans**. Laura's typeface is **Grotesque**, acknowledging the historical connotations of this term with birthing bodies. A third typeface, **Segoe UI**, is used to demonstrate the mother-demics' collective speech. Segoe UI is the typeface of the web and desktop app Microsoft Teams, the forum for the mother-demics' communications. Herein, we appropriate Segoe UI as a speculative organizing typography of mother-demics. We begin the performance now.*

The performance begins: two female academics stand on a stage. One of the female academics brings up the following quotation on a screen: "The return to paid work is having to live within these two temporal registers simultaneously without letting one negatively impact the other. In an 'ideal' situation, one should not even know about the other, colleagues should never be made aware of parental temporality, of pumping in toilets, of hourly night feeds" Wolfarth 121.

Lucy: In this creative-critical text, two academic mothers working in contemporary performance attempt to find a lexicon (a vocabulary and a dictionary) for the synchronous work of motherhood and academia. As a revolutionary gesture and resistant act, we (Lucy and Laura) have devised a project called Term-Time, a weekly online meeting for us to become a tiny community of mother-demics.

Laura: My name is Laura, and I am an Athenaeum Research Fellow and lecturer in contemporary performance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. I am a performance-researcher and writer, and I have been an educator in contemporary performance and live art for the past fifteen years. I am interested in writing in all its forms and have had my poetry, creative writing, life writing, and academic work published in journals and anthologies. I have recently completed a monograph on matrescence and performance (Intellect) and am co-editor of the *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media's* special edition on matrescence and media with Jodie Hawkes and Elena Marchevska.

Lucy: My name is Lucy, and I am an associate professor of performance practices at the University of Reading. I am a performance maker, writer, and educator in performance and have been teaching in higher education for fifteen years. My scholarship mostly explores how to hold space for artists to make new works. I organize the Arts Council England-funded Work in Progress project in conjunction with South Street Arts Centre in Reading, United Kingdom (UK), to seed fund and develop new touring works by early and mid-stage artists of national and international acclaim. I am the author of numerous articles and chapters on performance development and the *English Play Development under Neoliberalism* (CUP, 2025). Because of a background in radical left-wing, antiglobalization politics, I attend to performance through a Marxist lens.

Laura: We were connected by Emily Underwood-Lee, whose collaborative work with Lena Šimić has inspired our enquiries into maternal performance and our collaborative duet and shared creative practice throughout Term Time. When I looked back at our email exchanges, our initial meeting to discuss a potential project had been deferred due to one of our children being unwell. This was the first of many interruptions to our process, including illnesses and shifting academic schedules, which is why we built an understanding and expectation of these interruptions and adaptability towards them into our agreement for working together which we made at the outset. Lisa Baraitser says:

In some senses it is barely possible to conceive of maternal subjectivity outside of the experience of interruption itself. The lived experience of mothering is closer to a seemingly endless series of “micro-blows”; what I am referring to as breaches, tears or puncturing to the mother’s durational experiences bringing her back ‘again and again’ into the realm of the immediate, the present, the here-and-now of the child or infant’s demand. (68)

I cannot help but hear in the here-and-now of mothering that Baraitser refers to, the here-and-now-ness that Dee Heddon also writes about in her 2008 study on autobiographical performance. The here-and-now-ness of mothering and performance (and we argue, teaching performance)—as well as the here-and-now-ness of the time we have carved to be together for this project—is a key concern of this work. Time, and how to be present within it, permeates this project.

In this performance lecture, you will hear us experimenting and trying to find this lexicon. In doing so, we realize it doesn’t fit properly anywhere; this form of writing and knowledge feels precarious. We wonder if this partly is because our here-and-now as academic mothers in performance is uncertain. We question if we are experiencing the end times for our discipline: There is a crisis in arts funding; many performing arts courses across the UK are closing, and the sector is in crisis. Performance making and live art involve taking creative risks, and these risks feel increasingly exposing, impossible, and incomprehensible in the current climate. But this is our attempt.

Lucy: Drawing on collaborations of mother-demics in maternal performance (e.g., Šimić and Underwood-Lee) and critical theory exploring maternal time (e.g., Baraitser; Putnam), we wanted to write our way into and through academic motherwork.

Laura: A “term” can be a way of describing or communicating something, a linguistic expression of an idea defining categories and genres. It can also refer to time—capturing how long something lasts and its temporal limits and parameters. Terms can be structures: In the UK, academic semesters are “terms.” We disrupted our term time with creative interventions, carving time to explore our lived experiences as mother-demics.

Lucy: Our lexicon advances the existing literature exploring the material conditions of mothers in academia, which has mostly taken the form of an institutional or sector critique. Scholars have previously highlighted the particularities of the academic’s career timeline concerning when to become a mother (e.g., Vise; Mirick and Wladkowski). Moreover, Kellie Gonçalves’s article title, “What Are You Doing Here, I Thought You Had a Kid Now”: The

Stigmatisation of Working Mothers in Academia,” is illustrative of this reality. Amy Skinner empirically analyses the self-expression of mothers in academia, highlighting the felt sense of two contradictory roles—that of the academic and the mother—and the language through which they express themselves. While scholarship has identified the double life of the mother academic, it does not, as our work does, attempt to move beyond this institutional critique towards a significant development in understanding the maternal academic. Here, we forge neologisms and creative practices that further the methodologies available in exploring mother academics and the available lexicon for describing our double work. We are not alone in seeking a lexicon to support people inhabiting spaces in which they have not always been welcome. Indeed, we draw on contemporaneous lexicons during this historical moment, such as Jane Oremosu and Maggie Semple’s *My Little Black Book: A Blacktionary*. By forming our tiny community of vocabulary seekers, we signal a critical turn in collaborative practices in scholarship (e.g., coauthorship) to advance a new perspective of how academic mothers can exist collectively within the higher education matrix.

Laura: In “‘Poor Piper’: Academic Performances and Maternal Interruptions Made Public,” Angela Sweigart-Gallagher reflects on two moments where her work life as an academic was maternally interrupted suddenly, unexpectedly, and publicly during what she describes as “routine academic performances” (103). She says: “The constant interruption that marks my maternal subjectivity is usually just the back-stage drama of a professorial life that I’ve carefully staged to demonstrate competence and professionalism” (103). Sweigart-Gallagher also reflects on how this façade crumbled when she had to pick her daughter up from nursery due to a rash and teach her class with her child in the space, making visible her mothering to her students. This breakdown between the carefully constructed “professor mode” and what she calls the “messy complexities” of “mommy mode” (103) provoked by her daughter Piper’s interruption causes her to realize how exhausting and dishonest the schism between these two modes of being can be. The other moment she shares is when she is presenting her portfolio of work and student evaluations to colleagues for her second-year review, proof that she is tenure-worthy and feels a sense of pride in her work. Sweigart-Gallagher describes “a well-meaning male colleague, intending his comments as the highest praise” who announces, “In looking at everything you did this last year, all I could think was Poor Piper, she must really have missed her mommy” (103). Another colleague immediately tells her that Piper is fine. This second interruption is not by her child but by a colleague who uses this moment to note that in excelling in her academic role and work, she must be failing as a mother. Her mothering is up for scrutiny, along with her academic track record. Sweigart-Gallagher says:

It was a public versus private interruption, and yet, here the “micro-blow” was doubly jarring. It is one thing for your child to literally or metaphorically tug at the tail of your sensible black jacket, but it is another for a colleague to inadvertently sucker punch you with a compliment during your annual review, thrusting you instantly into mommy mode even in the absence of your child. (104)

Lucy: Since our performance now (in these live and digital spaces) is going to be reperformed as a journal article in the written form (and encountered textually), this practice as research constitutes a unique and distinctive method in exploring motherhood and academia’s relationship through an investigation in liveness, text, and the process of coauthorship. Together, we ask: What are the temporal and embodied connections between academic work (in the field of performance) and motherwork (Ruddick)? We question maternal-demia and consider how academic work and motherwork can be synchronous. In creating a coauthored lexicon, we seek to find a way of performing what we discovered through writing, language and speculative thinking.

Term Time: A Project

Laura: Laura and Lucy embark on:

a weekly deep-dive into aca-motherhood, maternal-demia

(the internalized institution of academia or is it the internalized institution of motherhood?)

A work-a-day distancing from the domestic to consider the domestic

Our words (spoken and written) shapeshift from poetry

Lucy: to prose

Laura: to research questions

Lucy: to anecdotes

Laura: to similarities

Lucy: we comment on, we map.

Are we reclaiming motherhood by inserting it inside the working day, or are we reclaiming academia by researching motherhood?

How did we get so entangled and so creative in our weaving?

Our tiny community (in 1.5 hours TeamsTime a week) tries to exteriorize what it feels

like to be mother-demics. The feeling of working on scholarship, on performances

of matrescence (Jones). And the feeling of being both.

We have different voices, but sometimes we arrive at the same.

Laura: There are:

Two of us

Lucy: Two children

Laura: Two kinds of work (mothering and academic)

Lucy: Two institutions

Laura: Two countries

Lucy: Two people becoming willfully precarious by becoming mothers

Laura: Two sets of privileges

Lucy: Two faces (on screens)

Laura: Two audiences

Lucy: Watching two bodies

Laura: But this is the first time they have been in the same space together.

Term Time: Our Research Questions

Lucy: What are the temporal and embodied connections between academic work (in the field of performance) and motherwork?

Laura: We question maternal-dementia and consider how academic work and motherwork can be synchronous.

Lucy: What are the synergies in the temporal registers of these things? How can we explore these by purposefully stitching them together, mapping them, and layering them over each other again and again? How can they exist as a palimpsest? (This is how they are lived).

Laura: Prompt: What would a lexicon of academic/mother work look like? Can we write it?

A is for assessments, angst

Lucy: A is for A disclosure

I'm a Marxist. By that I mean, I suppose, that I want a revolution.

I have studied Marx's works, carried them in my handbag, read them on buses and trains, and in reading groups in pubs and the labour ward.

My role in a revolution is a quiet one, I suppose. My only revolutionary act is this: I read *Das Kapital* (again and again) and apply it to my theatre scholarship.

I do not do this uncritically.

I understand that Marx was a nineteenth-century European cis male (often disorderly, excited, drunk, and lascivious). Moreover, I know that Marx's ideas on the operation of capital (often disorderly and excited themselves) omitted women and the global majority.

For this reason, I have studied the writing of female scholars who have worked to integrate emancipatory perspectives into Marx. In addition, I have read the works of Black scholars who radically reappraise *Kapital* to develop the radical tradition of Black Marxism. Reading this work has sometimes made me prone to make random Marxist critiques, which are sometimes unwelcome at drink parties and the workplace.

In Chapter 10 of *Das Kapital* Volume One, Marx has a chapter titled "The Working Day." This chapter details how factory labour in England was unregulated before it was regulated. People died to enact the eight-hour working day (eight hours for sleep, eight for work, and eight for leisure). There is a history of workers' holidays. The radical precedent of the working day, we know, is not adhered to in the academic workplace.

My time is not my own, ever. There is a double time in which I am undertaking the two labours simultaneously. My diary (all blue) contains personal appointments interlocked with professional ones, like sweet peas climbing and intertwining around each other. Sometimes, there are breaks in my labour, where I take what I refer to in my out-of-office email as "academic leave." This means that, in theory, I do not check my email. These vacations are not necessarily self-selected but robustly organized by the academic calendar...

Laura: B Is for Breasts (in Academia)

In art: Idealized, revered, accepted, voyeured

In literature: Fetishized, fantasized, freaked, fucked

In mothering: Shared, mutated, milked, sucked

In sex: Sucked, squeezed, seen, unsequestered

In feeding: Sequestered, seen, sucked, tutted at

In performance: Attempts to reclaim but sexualized

In porn: sexualized, bouncing, rubbing, reading

In fashion: Barely there

In memory: Soft skin touch soft home

In illness: Malignancy hidden, rebuilt, recovered

In transit: Bra, sports bra, Lycra top, t-shirt

In development: Buds, budding, embarrassment, hide

In comfort: To solace, help, strengthen

In discomfort: Unsolace, uncomfortable, underwear, underwire, underwhelm

In academia...

Lucy:

1. I used to tell a story about this one time, during my drama MA, I was introducing a world-renowned playwright's keynote at a conference. At that time, I wore a lot of men's clothing, including large men's shirts (I thought I was very cool). When I was introducing the keynote, I did not realize that the shirt had opened down to reveal my braless chest to my waist. When I came off the stage, another student hypothesized that baring my breasts was done for some professional gain. I was humiliated but also interested in the thought that my breasts could somehow support a career trajectory in the theatre just by being out. I had always assumed it was the other way around.
2. A memorable time nipples have become a discussion point in performance practice teaching is about Pina Bausch. Watching archive performances of Café Müller, students often comment during the screening about the erect nipples of performers, including Pina's. What makes nipples so funny to the students? How, in the chiffon or silk slips, do they read to us in the

performance classroom? The nipples (and the breasts) feel significant, since sexuality, gender performance, and power dynamics are often at play in Bausch's work. Are nipples part of Tanztheater? We went to see *Nelken* at Sadler's Wells, a leading Dance organization in London (2024). Being in the upper circle, we could see the chiffon, but we could barely see the breasts. They didn't seem to matter anymore.

3. I tell my first-year female student group about Jade Montserrat's *Feeding Chair*, which was touring UK modern art galleries in the summer of 2024. I recommend they go and see this work, which invites parents and carers to feed their young children in galleries and other public spaces. I tell them that in Oxford in the 1980s, the Museum of Modern Art was the only place that permitted public breastfeeding. They are bemused; they ask me to verify if breastfeeding burns a lot of calories. I tell them about all the cake I ate on maternity leave, the pathological baking and icing. I do not tell them what it was really like: the hours on the sofa, the crying, the visiting the breast screening centre, the mastitis, and the tutting in Marks and Spencer's cafe. I do not say any of that.

B Is for Breast Desk Drawer

A space to keep ephemera relating to breastfeeding (e.g., a second top in case of leaks, breast pump, and nipple balm).

Laura: B Is for Busy (All the Time)

C Is for Carriance (Ettinger)

D Is for Daughter

Lucy: Drafts

Laura: D Is for Desk Photo

I am looking at it now

of Saltcoats beach

in Ayrshire, on the windy West Coast

the sky is blue

a haze of yellow light to the left of the picture

a smattering of cloud

shingle in the foreground, pebbles, some shells

waves further out

LAURA BISSELL AND LUCY TYLER

and on the horizon a wall of trees
with whitewashed buildings to the right
one foot in the sand, the other leg raised
arms out to the side, fingers splayed
legs flesh-bared,
hair wind-swept
face of glee
a pink t-shirt claims
“Girls Can Change the World”:
not visible is the ice cream we got
that melted so fast that we had to use my dress as a towel
what remains unseen
is the cuddle you gave me when I put you in the car
sand in toes and clothes and hair and in between sticky fingers
I look at this picture and remember other moments
being a child on the beach
my sister looking at the white sand
shouting *snow!*

E Is for Evenings, Essays

Lucy: E Is for Emergency Contact

I have called the preschool to check on my child more times than they have called me at work.

E Is for Exams

Do I progress since my exit velocity was achieved in the speed I reached running sweatily between sports day and the exams board I chaired?

Laura: F Is for Fuck This

Lucy: F Is for Finger-Painting Capital

The presence of children’s artwork as a means to signify your home life

F Is for Flexible Working Contract

A human-resources-devised performance in which your role involves requesting bends in time, agreeing to pretend to work less than you do, relegating certain activities to the unspoken, and accepting the extent of your labour.

Laura: G Is for Going to Work/Going Home

Lucy: H is for Human Resources

Laura: H Is for Haiku

Myths of motherhood

Mess, just scrambling and juggling

Keep losing the thread

Lucy: Lucy and Laura

Teach, read, make art, learn, mother.

How do we do it?

Laura: I Is for Invisible

I Is for Imagining

Imagining is inherently a hopeful act. To look ahead is to see the future, to invite and summon it. Imagining as incantation and invitation.

I went to a talk on menstruation in academia called “Blood Work.” The term was described as a combination of “body work”—work people are expected to do with their bodies or work done to other’s bodies (e.g., personal care)—and “dirty work”—work with an “occupational taint” and moral, physical and emotional connotations (e.g., working with the blood of others). Professor Kate Sang claims that “The labour of managing your own menstruation = bloody work”. it made me think of our project and what the “work” is and how it is in the body. As Grosz says: “Far from being an inert, passive, non-cultural and ahistorical term, the body may be seen as the crucial term, the site of contestation in a series of economic, political, sexual and intellectual struggles” (19).

Sang argues: “The ideal academic does not have a body, does not have a menstruating body.” She recounts the experience of an academic who had a miscarriage in her office at university and how she waited until everyone had gone home before she felt she could leave.

Sang says: “The menstruating and pregnant body is not compatible with a research career.”

In the future of our mother and academic work, the body should be acknowledged. It should be visible, and it should be allowed to speak. In our tiny revolution of two, we have tried to scope out the lived realities of our mother and academic work, its relationality, form, patterns and structures, and how it takes up space and time.

Perhaps the role of the mother-demic can be to trouble and draw attention to the structures of term times, what they are loaded with, and how they (actually) pan out. In doing this, we ask how to care for students and children and teach students and children synchronously. We teach performance but realize we have rarely mentioned mother-artists in our teaching. If we do not explicitly address the reality of artmaking and mothering and do not speak about our entanglements of making and mothering in an academic context, how can we expect others to acknowledge this?

Lucy: J Is for Juggle

Laura: K Is for Kisses

In the morning and at bedtime

Lucy: L is for Love

bell hooks says in *All About Love: New Visions*, “The practice of love offers no place of safety. We risk loss, hurt, pain. We risk being acted upon by forces outside our control” (13).

Laura: L Is for Lunches

Lucy: Literature reviews

Laura: Laundry

L Is for Laptop

You made your laptop from cardboard and cut-out paper. A code on the paper screen was the password. The keyboard went from A to Z, and the space bar was a rectangle drawn in white paint pen.

Lucy: M Is for Mess

Laura: Marking

Lucy: Marks on the Wall

Laura: M Is for Movement

Lucy: What are the choreographies of academic work?

Laura: Typing, teaching, reading, sitting, nodding, and writing

Lucy: What are the choreographies of motherwork?

Laura: Bending, carrying, lifting, fixing, opening, and helping

Lucy: Are there any gestural commonalities?

Laura: Walking, nodding, looking, showing interest, and being open

Lucy: Are there any patterns?

Laura: Academic work is more static and motherwork more active. Both are exerting, tiring, exhausting, and depleting. Both are rewarding.

Lucy: Where do you feel the work in your body?

Laura: My neck, shoulders, hips. At the point where my neck meets my head. Behind my eyes.

Lucy: I am mostly, I think, in a squat position—by

the side of the bathtub, on the twister mat,

Tying a shoelace, picking up a toy. I bend, I

Kneel, I lie down next to you at night. I am

Rarely seated except when we watch a show

And go long together. One time, last

Summer I think I had COVID-19 and lost an hour

Or two on the floor while you played around

Me. We rarely walk, we race! Here, at work,

I think I hunch, or I am mostly standing or seated

—certainly static. Often twisting,

Slightly to point at a screen, some writing,

Holding a file. There are some things I

Wouldn't do with my body here—stand on a

Table, squat in a lecture, sit against a wall

Drinking tea while someone draws around

My head.

Laura: N Is for Never Enough Time

O Is for Office Still Life

You would love the stationary
I think
Might swing on the swivel chair
And open the drawers
You would like the shelves of books
(Not to be climbed)
You might rifle through my paperwork
Peep in folders
Hide under my desk
Perhaps if a colleague came in
You might disappear behind my legs
Like when you were little
Would you recognize the cushions I made?
One in your room
One here on a grey plastic chair
Trying to make it more comfortable
You might wonder where the stage is
Red velvet curtains
Black boxes
You might be disappointed
By the lack of magic
The absence of theatre

Lucy: P Is for Publications, Performance, People, Pinky Promises, and Plimsoles

Laura: Q Is for Questions

Lucy: R Is for Reading

Laura: Resting

Lucy: Research

Laura: R Is for Research Plans

A walking performance with my daughter—we choose alternate walks (e.g., I choose Ben Lomond, and she chooses a walk to the ice cream shop). We record our conversations and make maps.

A performance where my daughter and I sook a long bit of spaghetti across a stage.

A performance where my daughter and I ask each other questions with no limits or censors.

A performance with my daughter where we are both dressed as cats.

A performance where mothers perform a choral work of comforting, shooshing, and low singing.

A performance where I ask my mother questions about being a mother in front of an audience with my daughter onstage.

A durational performance where mothers take naps, and children pretend to read to them.

Lucy: R Is for Revolution

Is revolution possible in mother and academic work, and what would it look like and feel like? It looks like two people who have had babies and talk to each other online. Their quiet conversation focusses on holding space—just a quiet space online—to describe the historical material conditions they experienced when they returned to academia following parental leave. This revolution looks like two people who meet regularly to recognize their experiences are similar. It looks like people identifying what it is to work for each other. The discovered similarities are not necessarily so objectionable that they need to change right away. The discovered similarities are more about how time is structured now that there is a double labour of academics and mothers. Is this class consciousness? What is class consciousness in academia? What is class consciousness in academia for mothers? It is the discovery that it is not us alone who doubles diaries, who...

Laura: S Is for Sleep

Lucy: Snack and Chat

Laura: S Is for Screen Children

Children as desktop/phone wallpaper.

Lucy: S is for Speculative futures

I cannot get to this speculative future of mother and academic work
without reference to a complicated grief
of past academic work (because maybe they are the same thing).
There is a version of academia where we used to be together
Where some of us (and that is the problem because it was only some of us)
sat together and read or walked and talked and handed each other books
and notes, and essays and banners,
and we met ourselves in so doing,
and we met each other in so doing.
And although there wasn't your child on the grass in the park,
or mine in the beer garden,
or both playing outside the library as we spoke to each other,
there could have been.
There could have been a baby in your arms or mine,
a block builder under this table,
a sand sculpturer building a tower
while we talked about your writing, or mine.
There could have been a child moving between our offices,
you showing my child the curves of an "s" on your page,
me showing your child the way two words can come together,
like magic, like motherdemic.

Laura: T Is for Tired, Theatre

Lucy: T Is for TERM

Laura: T Is for TIME

Lucy: T Is for Teaching Pedagogies, the Performance Discipline, and Maternal Dramaturgies/Performances of Matrescence

1. The imbrication of the maternal confessional into performance discourse in the classroom—the interpretive labour of risks and value for students (sometimes in terms of other performance methodologies).
2. The unspoken constraints around different identities to higher education forms and how they impact on and interact with one another (e.g. the higher education manager and the loss of counter-cultural positionality in the department).

3. Our role models were not mothers.
4. Taboo and risk in teaching performance (including material risk to jobs) and the integration of performances of matrescence concerning those logics.
5. The relationship between teaching and practising autobiography and the student studio, especially the grotesque, abject, and uncanny(?) aspects.
6. Tension and tipping points between repression, punishment concerning higher education and partial access (usually) for babies in the arts.
7. Funding differences around provision for childcare in Scotland and England.

Laura: U Is for Undergraduate

Lucy: V Is for Volcano

Laura: W Is for Willpower, Washing, Walking, Waking, and Work

Lucy: W Is for Wastepaper

I have two bags of waste
paper, should be shredded
in my unlocked cupboard
I hope you do not unpack:
students' progression notes,
council tax bills, production flyers
from performances—a baby in utero
Is it kissing a shotgun
goodnight? Don't look at that!
You have stuck a unicorn to the board
I use for dramaturgical decisions.

Laura: W Is for Work

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Lucy: X Is for X-Ray

Laura: Y Is for Yellow

Lucy: Z Is for ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

Laura: To bring this performance lecture to a close, we wanted to reflect on where we are in our term times, our academic mothering. A year has passed since we started carving out time together. Our children are older, and our mothering has evolved in step with their milestones. So our academic work also changes. What will our term times look like after the summer, next academic year, or in ten years? What will performance-making and teaching performance look and feel like?

Lucy: Šimić and Underwood-Lee reflect on their status as mothering academics concerning their mothers. About bringing her children into her praxis, Šimić reflects that her mother is proud of her for becoming an academic “and working in a university and being a reader,” but she is not very proud of her for “being a feminist performance artist,” and her mother was annoyed that Šimić took her “children to demonstrations” (22). Speaking back to her mother, Šimić responds: “These things I do are actually helping me in my career, you know. This is how I became a reader, how I make my living: by being an activist, by being a feminist. So I still have to fight for my position as a feminist activist, performance artist, art activist” (22). At the end of this revolutionary lexicon for mother-demics, we acknowledge that we, too, still must fight.

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