

## Honoring the Heretic\*

*A Writing Workshop to help clients embrace motherhood in all its shades*

*\*Heretic: holding a position outside of the orthodox;*

*Greek: Hairetikos = able to choose*

Deborah Warne & Dr. Brooke Laufer

Video Course

CPD hours: 3 / CE credits: N/A

Price: £69



Online video access remains available for 1 year from the date you receive the video course.

Our long-held, one-dimensional beliefs about motherhood can appear *asphyxiating* to women in general, but especially to mothers and those on the cusp of this monumental, life-changing experience. We insist motherhood is natural and fulfilling. A mother is meant to nurture, to self-sacrifice - motherhood is the ultimate goal and the final purpose of womanhood. **So why then, when women become mothers, would there be debilitating depression? A murderous rage? A breakdown of self-assurance?**

For a woman who arrives at motherhood and finds she is not connected - finds that she does not like her baby, or her partner, or herself - may dissolve in a desperate and silent failing, a falling. We want to believe becoming a mother is an absolute joy: when we as women get to play the role we were meant to play, as suggested by literature and film, media and capitalism, our parents, even our peers. In reality, having a child is a profound, frightening, and exhilarating experience at the boundary of life, from which one comes back a transformed person. Most women bear this monumental transition to motherhood with a lot of hardship.

**Matrescence** - the physical, emotional, hormonal and social transition to becoming a mother - is hardly **shepherded by Western society**, as now mothers are largely expected to take an isolated unpaid maternity leave; most mothers no longer live near their own mothers and aunts so have lost a female tribe; mothers then return to work and are expected to carry the impossible load of full time work both in and outside of the home. Where is the honoring of *matrescence*? Is there space for it in our modern society?



The title of this webinar, *Honoring The Heretic*, responds specifically to the long-held narratives that revolve around the female body within the context of a male-orientated society. An actual mother's body - round, sexual, changing, soft, leaking - is outside or *Other* to the patriarchal construct of Mother – pure, white, firm, thin, virginal. **The maternal body is instinctual, sexual, creative, destructive – in short, human; not saintly.**

**The intention of this webinar is to create a space, safe enough for women to reflect on their more negative maternal experiences, and through creative writing, find ways to re-story those experiences.** By articulating the more negative experiences, perhaps ones that have never been aired before, we can hold and expand the experience of motherhood and womanhood as authentic, acceptable and honourable in all its myriad facets – the good, the bad and the ugly.

The written word has the potential to bring the mother into full being. Through the writing process, we, as therapists (and mothers/mentors) - can engender self-empowerment and better understanding in our clients, of their relational role to the infant, and to themselves, and to find a way to access the authentic full range of the maternal body. The use of breakout rooms at this webinar will provide smaller, more intimate groups for sharing some of these difficult subjects.

As mothers, we have access to a multitude of maternal archetypes as part of the collective representation. This also includes the Dark Mother or the dark feminine – which finds little acceptance in the patriarchal contract.

**This seminar will discuss such archetypes as Inanna, Eve, Lilith, Kali, and the Black Madonna, which are as authentic and valid as the exemplar self-sacrificing Mother and need to be acknowledged to authenticate the complete spectrum of motherhood.**

**The webinar will offer readings to reflect on and creative writing exercises, such as freewriting structured towards reflexivity and poetry therapy** using a relevant poem as a prompt for creative writing.

Together Deborah and Brooke will give voice and space to the dark experience of motherhood, and help participants build a broader understanding of the emotional range of *the mother* in themselves.

Specifically, this seminar will discuss:

- The split of Mother by patriarchal systems into Good and Bad Mother
- The authentic mother as having the experience of the dark maternal archetype
- The process of writing as a way of accessing and expressing the dark mother
- The concept of Mother heretic in history and in ourselves
- The potential for transformation by allowing the full expression of a mother's subjectivity
- The Jungian concept of an archetype, specifically the Good Mother archetype (i.e., the Virgin Mary) and the Dark Mother (i.e., Kali).
- The possibility of the Black Madonna as an archetype that holds the full range of motherhood
- Post structural feminist concepts of subject, writing, and transformation from Julia Kristeva and Helene Cixous
- The existence and non-existence of *Matrescence* in our contemporary culture
- **The prevention of maternal isolation and violence by the writing of dark mother self**

**Learning Objectives:**



- Discuss the split of Mother by patriarchal systems into Good and Bad Mother
- Discuss the authentic mother as having the experience of the dark maternal archetype
- Discuss the concept of Mother heretic in history and in ourselves

### About the speakers

**Brooke Laufer, Psy.D.** is an independent scholar, writer, and clinician with a doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the California Institute of Integral Studies. Brooke runs a group practice in Evanston, IL, where she specialises in women's reproductive health. She has Jungian analytic training and a deep interest in motherhood, perinatal mood disorders, and infanticide. She serves as a forensic evaluator specializing in cases of infanticide and maternal filicide. Brooke works with women who have been incarcerated for infanticide and also runs groups for mothers who have experienced postpartum psychosis. Brooke has been writing and speaking on Medea as the Modern Mother from a clinical and Jungian perspective for the last several years, with the intention of bringing consciousness to the pitfalls of Motherhood. For more information, visit [www.drbrookelaufer.com](http://www.drbrookelaufer.com)

**Deborah Warne:** Trained through the Metanoia Institute Psychotherapy Training College, London, Deborah has an MSc in Creative Writing for Therapeutic Purposes and facilitates writing for wellbeing workshops. For nearly thirty years, her specialist area has been in writing ancestral biography, in consultation with clients who are keen to commemorate the lives of past family members in a way that creates meaningful story.

Rooted in personal experience, her interest evolved to focus on the phenomenon of transgenerational trauma, exploring how it manifests in the lives of descendants. Her work engages in the potential for creative writing to consciously reframe past narrative, releasing preserved patterns and cycles of trauma within a person's family dynamic.

She is currently engaged in exploring cultural narratives that surround her experience of motherhood, particularly in what she has termed, the violence of isolation. Deborah warmly invites men and women to help start to break down the walls of silence around this hugely unrepresented, yet important role in society in a collaborative project termed *The Philosophy of Motherhood: Honouring the Heretic*.

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There is no known commercial support for this program

This course does not qualify for CE credits.

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