The Monstrous Feminine:

Media Representations of
Women Who Commit Crime
In New Zealand

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Abstract

Women who have committed crime appear to be portrayed by the media as sick, deviant and/or dangerous and positioned as the monstrous feminine, deviant from natural womanhood. Several syndromes and disorders have been created by the psychological community to explain the 'abnormal' behaviour of these women. The New Zealand media engages in the use of stereotypes to frame their stories to position women within these specific discourses which are legitimized by the 'experts'.

This research aims to understand how women who commit crime are represented in the media and how the discourses that maintain the underlying structures of power in society are produced and reproduced through the continuous retelling of a particular narrative that maintains gendered social power relations. This research seeks to understand how media representations of women who have committed a crime are reproduced through discourses of sexual difference. Discourses were analysed using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis to unpack the relationship between psychological knowledge of women's deficit and media representations of madness.

The analysis of 39 articles determined the discourses of women's madness and badness were common when discussing the reasons for women's criminal activity. The discourses of madness are based on highly gendered assumptions of what constitutes hegemonic femininity. These discourses are legitimised by the DSM and have become common knowledge via the media. The monstrous feminine is applied to those women who exhibit socially deviant behaviour unacceptable for women and those seen as responsible for the destruction of traditional societal values and going against women's 'natural' maternal instincts.

Analysis concluded the discourse of badness is enacted when women cannot be positioned as mad to explain her unfeminine behaviour. 'Badness' is apparent when discussing mothers who commit crime. These mothers are positioned as having deviated from the motherhood mandate by not conforming to the moral trajectory of the 'good' mother.

By merely positioning women as mad or bad because of their failure to conform to traditional gender norms, we are missing the opportunity to help women and address the issues within their lives that led to committing a crime. Without understanding the conditions of women's lives, the context of women's offending continues to be rendered invisible, and leaves little opportunity for intervention. The assumptions that inform the construction of the discourses of madness need to be challenged so that women's criminal behaviour is not masked by assumptions of a deficit biology, and her distress is not pathologised.

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INTRODUCTION

During my postgraduate studies in psychology in 2014, a particular trial case of a woman who had murdered her husband became a media sensation. Helen Milner, accused of murdering her husband, became known in the public psyche as the "Black Widow". I became increasingly aware that in ordinary everyday conversations there was no acknowledgement of her name but conversations about the Black Widow were prevalent. She was dehumanised. This led me to question how women are constituted in media representations of crime, and how such representations were disturbingly similar to how they are constituted through psychological knowledge of women and mental illness. As I began to interrogate media representations of women's criminal offending, I became angered by how women were constructed by the media through discourses that positioned women as mad and bad with little regard to their context and history.

Media sensationalism of women's violence and aggression is not a new phenomenon (Collins, 2014). Women who have committed crimes appear to be portrayed by the media as sick, deviant and/or dangerous. According to Marsh and Melville (2009), there is a higher level of concern from both the media and the public when women become involved in criminal activity. Although the majority of crime is committed by men, a third of the violent crime stories in the media involve women offenders. The media also produce and reproduce stereotypical views of women and rely on stock stories that follow a well-established moral trajectory that is difficult to change, even in light of new evidence.

As this research developed, it has changed my view of psychology. I saw many disorders produced through psychological knowledge being used as tools to assist the legal system, with little critique of their gendered assumptions or their effects. This research questions the morality of psychology's gendered categorisations and the politics of psychological knowledge that produce the subjects and objects of psy-discourse (Coombes & Morgan, 2004; Rose, 1996) and how our discipline is implicated in the "deep truth" of media representations of women who have committed a criminal offence.

Media representations draw on stereotypes of women who breach the norms of femininity and position them as unnatural, monstrous and manipulative. These representations of women who have committed crimes are constructed through heterosexual norms that define what it is to be masculine and feminine with women, for example, represented through their appearance in accordance with socially constructed femininity. Carlyle, Scarduzio and Slater (2014) argue that women offenders are viewed as socially deviant and are portrayed as abnormal through attributes of their otherness. Violent women in particular are doubly deviant; they have both broken the law and transgressed the norms of appropriate femininity (Birkett 2014; Collins, 2014). For example, the metaphor of the Black Widow is often used in the media as the "embodiment of intimate danger" (Collins, 2014, p.11) whereby a woman who kills her intimate partner is endowed with the qualities of a cold, calculating and manipulative non-human who preys on her unsuspecting victim. Such a representation of women who kill their violent partner is not new;

"the image of female sexuality as potent and deadly as the black widow spider's has been part of our cultural imaginary for centuries" (Oliver, 2008, p.5). In the psychological literature on women who kill their spouse, the black widow emerges as a typology for women who kill for "monetary gain or histrionic attention seeking" and are more likely to use poison as their method to kill an intimate partner and "lure" their "unsuspecting victims" (Miller, 2014, p.7). With the exclusion of women who kill their abusive spouse, women who kill their intimate partner are seen as more culpable than men who kill their wives, reproducing a sexual double standard through the characterisation of her deviant sexuality and femininity. The complex relationship between the monstrous and the deviant other, the blurring of boundaries between the media representation of women who commit crime and the psychological production of the feminine subject is the focus of this research.

This thesis seeks to address the complex interface between feminism, psychology, and technologies of representation that render women's bodies as monstrous. My interest in particular is how media representations of women who have committed crimes reflect Barbara Creed's (1993) notion of the monstrous-feminine and how it is constituted through psychology's understanding of women's difference. Taking up a position in feminist standpoint epistemology enables me to interrogate women's position in the gendered social hierarchy. Henwood and Pidgeon (1995) argue that our view of knowledge is historically, socially and culturally constructed, and therefore our knowledge of who we are can be used as social critique. What we know and how we know depend on who we are, that is, on the knowers historical location and position in the social hierarchy.

This 'standpoint' is critical to feminism as a social movement concerned with how meaning is embodied, both constructed and transformed, through gendered social practices as it repeatedly resists patriarchal power relations. Dorothy Smith (1997) argues there is no representation that is not produced from within gendered social power relations, and all knowledge is therefore situated. Situatedness is understood to be moderated and facilitated by the ways in which social values, experiences and practices are socially organised (Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002). Therefore, feminist standpoint epistemology is a critical approach to the relations between power and knowledge that opens spaces to oppose, resist and counter dominant narratives and enables a standpoint from which to examine women's position in the social hierarchy.

Here, the notion of the monstrous-feminine is produced through an understanding of woman's difference. The aim of this research is to determine how women offenders are portrayed by the media in New Zealand and how psychological knowledge is implicated in such representations to open up spaces to transform the discourses that constitute women's distress through pathological biology.

Chapter One

Gender and Psychology

As this research is investigating how women offenders are portrayed by the media, it is important to look at the expectations around 'normal' womanhood and femininity, and how they are historically produced, to understand the effects for women who do not conform. In order to understand cultural representations of women who do not conform to the norms of gender, and how women tend to be viewed as abnormal and flawed due to psychological deficits, requires an interrogation of the dominant discourses of criminal violence perpetrated by women. Within psychology there has been a long history of feminist engagement with psychiatric diagnoses of disorder, psychological theories and practices in the regulation of problematic behaviour, arguing that particular disorders are "connected to prevailing moralities and norms regarding gender, sexual expression, the gender order, and heteronormativity" (Marecek & Gavey, 2013, p.5). Ideological power operates through social institutions, including psychology, through the operation of hegemonic discourses that constitute women through their out of 'order' biology (Ussher, 2002). In this way, the construction of gender, authorised through science, has led to several syndromes and disorders created to explain the abnormal behaviour of women in the field of psychology. As psychology has had a tendency to base theories and treatment on the norms of men, women's experiences do not factor into these theories with women who do not act within their narrowly socially constructed norms labelled as psychologically damaged, positioning them as mad or bad.

Women's position in the social hierarchy

According to Weitz (2010), throughout history women's bodies have been viewed as both mentally as well as physically inferior to that of men, as belonging to men and constructed as sexual beings who threaten both the bodies and the souls of men. Women's smaller stature and imagined frailer constitution led to the view women were both emotionally and morally weaker than men, with less developed brains (Weitz, 2010), which led to the church determining that women were driven by passion and at greater risk of the influence of the devil. These ideas continued through to the twentieth century when women began to engage in higher education and the workplace with the emotional and physical frailty of women continuing to be the dominant view. These views were used as a justification for not allowing women to become educated or enter the male dominated workforce. Society also believed educating women led to conditions such as hysteria and painful periods (Weitz, 2010).

These ideas around the female gender as deficit to the male led to an increase in gynaecological surgery to remove healthy female organs to treat a wide range of created ailments, including rebelliousness. Surgery was used to 'treat' women who did not conform to their assigned gender role with its acceptable behaviours, including female perversions (Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002). Historically, women who questioned traditional patriarchal views of 'female capability' were often diagnosed as suffering hysteria, or an excess of sexuality, and institutionalised. These constructions, however, only applied too white, middle class women, poor

women and those who were not white were seen as highly robust and capable of hard work, unlike their wealthier counterparts (Weitz, 2010). This appears to have led to the construction of different types of women with different roles based not only on gender but along categorisations of race and class. These assumptions did not begin to be challenged until the 1960s when the naturalness of gender was questioned (Weitz, 2010). Until then, women's experiences, as they did not fit the male norms, were denied and everything not fitting acceptable feminine behaviour was pathologised with women being constructed as 'mad'.

Within the discipline of psychology, women's difference has been normalised through the mind/body Cartesian split that locates women as quantitatively different from men, where mind and body are not only different and distinct but also opposite; the mind is privileged through its rationality and the body is demarcated through its (reproductive) function. Binary opposites are hierarchically organised through gendered relationships of domination and subordination, where one term defines what the other is not (Morgan, 2005). Feminist engagements with psychology have challenged the ways the discipline has produced and reproduced oppressive gendered social power relations, where the mind has been profoundly coupled with masculine values of logic and reason and the body with femininity and the excesses of the disordered and emotional body (Coombes, 2014). The constraints of sexual difference are legitimatized through psychology by naturalising the sexed body, locating women's difference in her biology, which then becomes socially meaningful. As a system of knowledge production, psychological discourse links women's bodies to the system of power that both constitutes and disciplines women's bodies and subjects them to social and cultural practices of (reproductive) deficiency (Sawicki, 1999; Ussher, 1991, 2002).

Feminist psychological research has questioned the historical, social and cultural meanings of gender, and argued that women's experiences cannot be defined or understood within traditional categories of biological differences that position women through their sameness or difference from men (Harding, 1993; Sawicki, 1991). Women located in psychological knowledge as 'other' are produced and reproduced through phallocentrism; women are always positioned in relation to men – the same as men, different from men or as man's complement (Grosz, 1990). Psychological discourse is contextualised within, imparted from, and regulated by the actions and perspectives of 'man' and locates women as a site where problems can be recognised, described and explained through their otherness. Therefore, it is important to investigate the view that gender is a product of our culture, not something that is biologically determined and that when gender is reduced to merely differences in sex, these differences appear to be natural (Lorber, 2010). The meaning given to this difference then produces knowledge that enables an understanding of how the biological differences and gender become embedded within social and cultural relationships (Hare-Mustin & Maracek, 1988). Therefore, gender is dependent on context, cultural background and history to determine which norms are made to appear natural within society. When these norms are made to appear natural we do not question them and we all strive to effectively portray our assigned gender by re-enacting the socially established and accepted norms to fit

within our assigned position (Nentwich, 2008). These positions begin to be enforced from birth with each sex socialised to act within accepted gender norms. These constructions are based on stereotypical ideas of gender, which are completely out of touch with our current western society (Hird, 2003).

As we begin to behave as expected for our gender the taken for granted assumptions that inform them are maintained (Lorber, 2010). Religion, culture and the media are part of this maintenance to ensure the boundaries between men and women are enforced and that we all know our 'natural' place within society. This leads many of us to voluntarily follow the norms laid out for our gender, as we believe it is natural and these norms become part of our identity (Cosgrove, 2000; Flax, 1987; Lorber, 2010). The norms promoted are based on the experiences of the dominant social power relations of domination and subordination (Cermele, Daniels & Anderson, 2001). For women, femininity is a way of enacting and re-enacting the gender norms espoused by society, with women expected to appear and behave in certain ways and those who do not are understood through deficit. These ideals have become so entrenched within society they are seen as natural, and women now engage in self-surveillance to ensure their bodies and behaviour fits society's expectations with those who choose not to conform being viewed as aberrant. The ideals of womanhood can be extremely difficult for many women to achieve and can lead to a lifelong feeling of deficiency (Bartky, 1998).

The differences in biology between men and women are assumed to have led to differences in each genders internal sense of self and identity. This means that complex human emotions and behaviours are explained by an extremely narrow set of differences in anatomy (Flax, 1987). We are expected to behave a certain way due to being placed in one category which is fixed and solely due to our gender. The process also maintains the underlying gendered power structures, which hold up society (Riley, 2001).

Where woman is constituted as a sign of difference, she is monstrous. Braidotti argues that "[i]f we define the monster as a bodily entity that is anomalous and deviant vis-á-vis the norm, then we can argue that the female body shares with the monster the privilege of bringing out a unique blend of fascination and horror" (Braidotti, 1994, p. 81).

Engaging in research from a feminist perspective enables us to think differently about gender and how it is constructed. Gavey (2011) uses a feminist post-structuralism perspective as the theoretical starting point for looking at the subjectivities of women constituted through discourses that create knowledge that then become taken for granted assumptions. We need to question the surface of the knowledge, that is culturally shared, which enables us to understand the world and question the patriarchal framework of values and norms that positions one gender over the other, while at the same time understanding why there are those who conform to the dominant cultural ideals (Gavey, 2011).

According to Morgan (1995), there is a historical relationship between a woman's body and her psychologies, and this view links what it means to be a woman to her body. As with men, women are split into mind and body, however, women's bodies

are constructed as a problem area and not as capable as being as rational as men purely due to her gender. A woman's body is constructed away from her lived experiences, as a product of discourse. The focus is on the body as a biological entity seemingly able to emerge from socialisation in one standard format with only one set of abilities (to produce children). Morgan (1995) advises we need to move away from this limited binary viewpoint of biological and social as separate and look at the relationship between the two. Cultural practices that oppress women are sanctioned and maintained by the dominant series of discourses that ensure specific gender constructions are enabled (Gavey, 2011). As a discipline that is concerned with human subjectivity, language and social relationships, the discourse of 'man' and the masculinist privilege that legitimates psychological knowledge production (Coombes & Morgan, 2004) is questioned through disrupting women's otherness.

The 'good' mother vs the 'bad' mother

Motherhood has been the focus of professional interest for decades, from discourses of mother blaming to gender affirmation, and yet according to Langer (2009), the vulnerability of women to "psychiatric explanations for their conduct, particularly with respect to mothering" has not shifted over time (p. 217). Women who have committed a criminal offence struggle to reconcile their identity as a good mother, as through their criminal behaviour they have not only violated the norms of femininity but also the law (Welsh, 2015). In order to understand the construct of 'bad' mother, there is a need to first understand the assumptions which constitute the 'good' mother. Womanhood is entwined with the desire for motherhood and has a long history which constitutes motherhood as an inevitable natural trajectory for women. Despite neoliberal claims that assume gender equality through individualistic notions of choice and access to education and work (Gill, 2008), the enduring inevitability of motherhood is sustained through ideologies of marriage, heterosexuality and family, which are privileged, reproducing women as nurturers and carers (good), and women who deviate from the 'motherhood mandate' (Russo, 1976) at risk of pathologisation (bad).

The 'good' mother is one who engages in 'intensive mothering' which involves caring for her children 24 hours a day, seven days a week. She is selfless and never puts her own needs and desires ahead of her child's (Jacques & Radtke, 2012; Sevon, 2011). To be eligible to be categorised as the 'good' mother, a woman needs to be at home with her children, not at work, nor dependent on welfare, or out engaging in activities (such as crime) not befitting a mother. The discourse of the 'good' mother is based on heterosexual traditional assumptions relating to marriage and reproduction and is part of maintaining women's identities within society (Sevon, 2011). Not only do women desire to become mothers, there is a need to become the 'right' type of mother.

Embedded within the dominant discourse of motherhood is the view that women are caring and selfless due to an unseen, ingrained natural ability. Such naturalised ability assumes mothers' propensity for selflessness and the ability to negotiate poverty, limited support, poor education, no employment and mental health issues. The emphasis is placed on each woman to have the ability to mother satisfactorily,

regardless of her circumstances (Croghan & Miell 1998; Naylor, 2001). The individualised natural mother renders the social and financial circumstances of these mothers invisible (Croghan & Miell, 1998). The good mother should become the embodiment of femininity within her culture that permeates global diversity (Niner, Cuthbert & Ahmad, 2013). The research conducted by Jacques and Radtke (2012) confirms that the process of inevitable naturalisation, whereby the dominant discourse, in this case the 'good' mother, is so normalised that the non-mother is positioned as 'selfish' or lacking. In their study, Jacques and Radtke (2012) found that despite young women's career aspirations, the assumption of the intensive mother trajectory dominated their futures. The notion of the 'good' mother appears to be unchanged despite the changes to women's lives with career opportunities enabling women to work outside of the home and more options for childcare, and those who do not meet the conditions of intensive mothering, at the cost of career, are positioned as inadequate, defective or abnormal (Naylor, 2001).

Mothers who do not conform, be they welfare mothers or women who engage in criminal activity, are positioned as bad mothers, and face the 'risk' of losing their children. Women will engage in self-surveillance and surveillance of other mothers to ensure their compliance with the natural mother discourse, resulting in those in need of help, for example, women who suffer from mental health issues, or experience ambivalent or negative thoughts towards their child, not seeking support as they risk being positioned as bad, or demonised (Naylor, 2001). Therefore, the everyday struggles of motherhood are rendered invisible through the good/bad dichotomy.

Mad and/or bad? Representations of the Unfeminine

> The idea that a foundation for women's crime might be found anywhere other than in their biological framework has scarcely been considered. (Armstrong, 1999, p. 4).

Despite feminist inquiry into the positioning of women through their difference in the discipline of psychology, the dominant discourses that render women's distress as unfeminine are reproduced through the medicalisation of women's anger and 'unfeminine' socially deviant behaviour; the monstrous feminine represents the interpretation of behaviour and subsequent assessment of response to criminal offending by women (Armstrong, 1999; Ussher, 2008). The medicalisation of women's behaviour as a response to women's unfeminine behaviour, the violation of social and gender norms, has historically been attributed to pathology or uncontrollable raging hormones (Carlyle, Scarduzio & Slater 2014; Ussher, 2008; Weare, 2013). Psychology's preoccupation of categorisation of the normal and pathological struggles with the messiness of women's bodies, and "female corporeality's are dis/ordered … the female body is anti-order; it is difficult to contain" (Campbell, 2009, p.103). Early psychiatry constructed menstruation as a vulnerability and therefore as a symptom of mental illness, and the establishment of PMT/PMS became enmeshed with women's psychology and reproduction. As a diagnostic category to explain women's distress or dysfunction, it has extended beyond clinical practice with material effects for women's lives. Women's bodily

processes, such as menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth categorised as disease, has affected the ways in which women are differentially assessed and held responsible within the criminal justice system. For example, the defence of infanticide depends on the assumption of biological deficit where the focus is on the actions of the 'mad' mother rather than the often "extremely negative life circumstances, including mental illness, substance abuse and trauma", the contextual conditions of women's lives (Woolman & Deer, 2014, p.944). PMS and physiological/biological responses to pregnancy and childbirth, constituted as pathology, are used in criminal settings, reinforcing the idea of women's bodies being the site of madness. Despite no empirical support for such claims, the reproductive body as unruly and in need of discipline continues to dominate and regulate women's experiences, reproducing hegemonic representations of the natural, good woman/mother (Ussher, 2008). The recognition that in certain circumstances, hormones, postpartum depression and postpartum psychoses and other gendered differences impact on the events leading up to the crime of killing one's child, is based on the assumption that women's hormones are out of control. Psychological syndromes also mean women risk being categorised as mad if they do not conform to their prescribed role of wife and mother, therefore what constitutes madness is determined by behaviour that is at odds with the patriarchal system of western society (Ussher, 1994).

Women who do not or cannot live up to the essentialised standards of motherhood are demonised; they are bad mothers who are "ruthless, selfish, cold, callous, neglectful of their children or domestic responsibilities" and often violent (Morrissey, 2010, p. 298). They are not only dangerous to their children, but to the cultural institution of femininity. The murdering mother often generates social revulsion and becomes dehumanised, often positioned as monstrous for the destruction of society's traditional family values and the essentialised natural maternal instinct (Newitz, 1998). The "'monstrous maternal' made flesh" (Morrissey, 2010, p.306) is the object of fear, and has emerged over the last few decades as a set of symptoms applied to a new form of mad, which has been attributed to 'bad' mothers by considering the relationship of mothering discourse to the diagnosis of Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (Raitt & Zeedyk, 2003). In order to make sense of women who kill their children there is an assumption that they are suffering from some kind of mental disorder that depends of constructions of motherhood. While it has emerged as a factitious disorder, it is most often applied to explain the behaviour of women who have harmed their children, or who have induced symptoms of illness on their children that often lead to death. The use of the syndrome to explain criminal behaviour has been used to support the defence of insanity, where women's desire for attention and help, or their history of victimisation is related to their madness (Langer, 2009). Langer argues that the syndrome is embedded in discourses of ideal motherhood and the monstrous maternal and is infused with morality, gender and social judgements. The construction of the syndrome presents a "haunting paradox" (Langer, 2009, p.219) whereby mothers often present through normative motherhood, as caring, loving and devoted to their children's medical wellbeing at the same time as endangering their children. A woman who kills her child, therefore, both acts against nature (evil) and within her nature (protective mother) (Raitt & Zeedyk, 2003).

The assumptions that women are 'mad' and/or 'bad' if they commit crime, especially violent crime (Birkett, 2014; Collins, 2014; Sternadori, 2012), particularly for women who kill, are based on the cultural discourse of sexual difference. Women who lose control and lash out, particularly in anger, contravene the feminine norm of passivity and are viewed as not acting within 'proper' morality (Birkett, 2014; Jewkes, 2011). In this way, women who are positioned as 'mad' through the gaze of psychological diagnoses, can be regulated and controlled (Collins, 2014). Where women's violence is constituted through mental illness that renders femininity as unstable, masculine domination and feminine subordination remain intact (Jewkes, 2011). Through gendered social power relations 'madness' becomes the technology that silences and condemns resistance to femininity and produces a double bind; mad if she is feminine but pathological or 'mad' if she is bad by acting outside the norms of femininity. By giving a woman a diagnosis of madness, society is able to silence her with medication, her problems are individualised and any protests are able to be dismissed as delusions from a mad woman (Ussher, 1994).

Chapter Two

The Production of Risk and Media Representations of Crime

As discussed in the previous chapter, women who commit violent crime are constituted as objects of fear, and represent the monstrous other of femininity. Representations of the dangerous other permeate modern media and evoke public fear and anxiety as a response to the risk of potential threat. The commodification of 'risk' has seen the emergent growth of measures and categorisations of behaviour, including the proliferation of syndromes (e.g. Munchausen's by Proxy), that impose structural and social boundaries that separate 'us' from the deficit of the 'other' (Coombes, Denne & Rangiwananga, 2016). Psychology's participation in the economy of risk is achieved through the authorisation of (sexual) difference through the development of assessments, which target those with mental illness and/or within the criminal justice system. Social media often reproduces the institutional discourses of risk and reframe them as taken-for granted assumptions so that they become normalised within everyday life. According to Rose (2002), the social imagination of risk is reproduced through media claims that mad, bad and dangerous mental health patients living in the community threaten the general public. In this way, the knowledge of risk becomes a new marker for discrimination, and is reproduced through the media to incite "moral outrage and hypervigilant fear within our social interactions, where the risk posed by the dangerous other is seen as too great for society to bear or accept and instead the dangerous other must be identified, managed or contained", including those who violate hegemonic feminine norms (Coombes et al., 2016, p.444). Risk reporting has been well established in the psychological literature on health, often engaged for national security in light of threats to the health of the population. Media coverage shapes not only the public's concerns about the threat of disease but also their trust in public health interventions. Through the constant rehearsal of "readiness to react" to the threat of illness, the relationship between the media and public health risk is achieved (Stephenson & Jamieson, 2009). Media reporting of risk is intimately connected with moral panics when the risk appears to threaten current interests, ideologies and moral order (Berrington & Jones, 2002). The current media obsession with obesity also makes visible the current cultural mandate whereby women's bodies are intimately connected with morality and mental wellbeing, and thin-ness "is read as a signifier of both impulse control and sanity" (Weber, 2012, p.344). For women, the fat body is a site of an excess of intersecting discourses; normative femininity, sexuality, pathology, morality and is represented through the media as a "body out of order" and public surveillance "reveals crimes of excess and madness that manifest through fat" (Weber, 2012, pp.345-346).

Media representations of psychological otherness produces a tension between mad and bad offenders that questions notions of accountability, where the idea of "crazed culpability suggests the mentally disordered are not like 'us' but when they commit a crime there will be a reckoning to us" (Cross, 2014, p.215). The ways in which women's bodies exceed regulatory social norms structures normal and abnormal categories are linked to the female body in psychological discourse through the question of biological reproduction, and historically have been positioned as victims.

Early feminist research understood women who killed as suffering from 'battered women's syndrome' (Walker, 1979) locating her crime as embedded in a history of physical, sexual and/or psychological violence. Historically, the most frequent reports of women's violence in the media were embedded in the context of intimate and/or caring relationships, and in this context women were represented as more anxiety producing and "in *need* of explanation" than their male counterparts (Naylor, 2002, p.188). Discourses of women's violence as 'bad' was rarely reported until more recently, where the notion of 'wicked' women who resist their femininity and seek revenge has gained currency. While this shift may be attributed to perceived changes in women's social positioning, such representations tend to over-represent women's violence (Naylor, 2002). Rather, reported increases in violence by women is "more reflective of cultural anxiety over changing social norms regarding race and gender than an actual increase" (Luke, 2008, p.38). Busch, Morgan and Coombes (2014) discuss the patriarchal and phallocentric representations of intimate partner violence in the media, arguing that the media continue to promote representations that confirm any ideas of difference between the sexes. The gendered moral order is reproduced through discourses that position women against the 'norms' of men. According to Riley (2001) the discourses that maintain the underlying structures of power within society are reproduced through the repeated and continuous sharing of the discourses that maintain gendered social power relations.

The media have very precise views when it comes to mothers, with the idea of the good mother and her opposite in every way, the bad mother. According to Busch, Morgan and Coombes (2014), the figure of the monstrous mother is evoked in media representations of women who seek protection from their violent partners, as destroying the family and preventing men from being fathers. Women in general, mothers and particularly those women who identify as feminists, are depicted as evil and violent as well as vindictive. In stark contrast, good mothers are portrayed by some groups as those who comply with the authority of husbands and fathers, even when the relationship between the mother and father ends. Women who place barriers between a man and his children due to violence, abuse or control are discredited due to an assumption that 'all women are manipulative liars'.

According to Lull (2015), the mass media is a technology that maintains power by ensuring cultural assumptions of morality are normalised and made to appear natural. Stories are created to fit within our everyday assumptions, which allow people to create meaning in a way that fits with their views. Events are constructed within the dominant norms of society at any given time. This process is at the heart of ideological hegemony or the dominance of one group over another. The effectiveness of the media is dependent on how easily people accept dominant ideologies as natural and common sense (Lull, 2015). People are not just detached observers of this process but active participants in institutions and social processes, we read a story with our own pre-existing knowledge and cultural assumptions. To understand the media's role, we need to determine how each group interprets the discourses available to them (Kitzinger, 2004).

The media inform and use the common sense assumptions to ensure certain stories are shared due to the guaranteed reactions these stories create within the public

sphere. Many of the stories the media choose to share are sensationalized and in many cases negative and relevant to maintain dominant ideologies. The public then share these stories from their own point of view, so they end up reproducing the dominant ideals the media have produced (Frewin, Pond & Tuffin, 2009). Media reports of risk draw from the knowledge produced through institutional and social narratives and reframe them as taken for granted understandings. In this way, the telling and retelling of risk within a relationship between the media and its consumers becomes ingrained in the social imagination and assumes unquestionable legitimacy. Media representations both create and then reproduce meaning starting at an individual level (Lyons, 2008) and this content becomes ingrained in all aspects of society, eventually becoming a part of our daily lives (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2014). Unpacking this highly mediated knowledge offers an opportunity for researchers to examine contemporary social processes and understandings (Chamberlain & Hodgetts, 2008).

These media representations can be inaccurate which leads to inaccurate knowledge bases for those who do not have first-hand knowledge of crime. This knowledge includes the view that sex offenders are not wired in the same way as 'normal' people and that 'normal' women are not violent (Carlyle, Scarduzio & Slater, 2014). This knowledge production has also given rise to the idea that society only faces danger from strangers when the reality is that 90 % of perpetrators of crime knew their victims. The idea of 'stranger danger' becoming an ingrained cultural view leads to individuals gaining a false sense of security within their nuclear family. Research shows that the media has a tendency to highlight extreme acts of violence by women and yet under-represent those offences for which women are typically convicted rendering women's violence as more worthy of news coverage (Luke, 2008; Morrissey, 2010; Naylor, 2001).

In contemporary neoliberal society, individual responsibility, with no recognition of gendered social power relations enhance representations of women's individual deviance. These constructions by the media can influence how the attitudes and views of society are shaped and defined (Lyons, 2008). Something has to have gone wrong inside the individual with no recognition of the social context outside the pathological. This view furthers the agenda of punishing the individual without society needing to change (Carlyle, Scarduzio & Slater, 2014). According to Kitzinger (2004), shared understandings of the meanings produced in the media are achieved through a process of framing, where the media relates one event to another and therefore the similarities enable the audience to engage an emotional response (Ducat, Thomas & Blood, 2009).

Framing can be organised in two ways; thematic framing, which places an event within its context and episodic framing that stays within the taken for granted assumptions and focuses on individuals rather than societal issues (Kitzinger, 2004). The media is dominated by episodic framing using an individual focus and ignoring the socio-cultural location that may be contributing to the individual committing the crime. The media accomplishes this by placing their focus on the individual and the singularity of the incident (Carlyle, Scarduzio & Slater, 2014). Representations of women who commit crime are often framed around stereotypes of women's

deviance, drawing on narratives of insanity, victimhood, and monstrous to frame news stories of women's violence that depend on dominant notions of gender, crime and violence that are incongruent with feminine norms of passivity, nurturing and emotional. In this way, the media simplifies complicated and incoherent events into familiar storylines and reinforce gender stereotypes (Jewkes, 2011; Morrissey, 2010; Naylor, 2001). In this way, framing operates to select and highlight the features that cue consumers to the gendered social order, reproducing the dominant ideology that structures and informs how we negotiate, control and understand 'reality' (Kitzinger, 2004). Where women who commit crime are sensationalised because of the anomaly, or their exception to the rules of femininity, the media rely on stereotypes to explain possible motivations, which simultaneously work to remind the audience that these women are a rarity that they are overly masculinised or unable to fulfil the role of traditional femininity, For example, in their study on women who commit political crimes against the state, Lavie-Dinur, Karniel and Azran (2015) found that the media framed their offending through explanations of personal motives, borne not only out of the failure of femininity, but also through the assumption that a woman commits political crime in the wake of failed love or following her love interest, diminishing her credibility as a political agent. This gender frame reinforces the idea that women will become violent if they are let down by their partner (revenge) or they willingly follow a lover into a life of crime (victim) (Lavie-Dinur, Karniel & Azran, 2015).

The process used by the media to represent a particular storyline, therefore, involves confronting or obscuring different aspects of a story, constructing and maintaining stereotypes about certain groups of people and the 'other', supporting or challenging our existing taken for granted assumptions, shifting our attention to the areas of a story deemed important by the media to achieve sympathy or condemnation of the subject of a story and their positioning within the dominant cultural group (Kitzinger, 2004). The success of this process, for the story itself to become an accepted narrative, there needs to be an extensive, and importantly, consistent coverage of the story across media outlets. If conflicting frames are used for the same story, consumers are likely to be more willing to challenge the reality of the story and question the angle taken by the journalist. There may be a continual use of a certain phrase that provokes an emotional reaction from the reader and calls forward a well-known frame or stereotype (Kitzinger, 2004), for example drawing on the metaphor of 'The Black Widow' will immediately be recognised by the audience as a woman who kills at least one husband, and renders her already guilty through her monstrosity (Birkett, 2014).

The media plays an important role in both creating and maintaining the discourses applied to mothers who commit crime, the ultimate betrayal of the good mother role (Naylor, 2001). The media use representations of inhuman creations, such as the devil, as reasons for mother's bad behaviour. The media create a picture of a women who is violent, sexually and emotionally indiscriminating and who is usually a single mother on welfare. They will use the most readily available metaphors to create the highest demonization possible to portray her as an unnatural mother (Naylor, 2001), often drawing on anecdotal evidence to enable readers to hear from those who

witnessed her unnatural motherness, even if this is irrelevant to her current crime. They may also alter parts of the story to fit current stereotypes of the bad mother. Media representations do not take into consideration the mothers' context. Her history of cramped conditions with constantly crying children, an absent father, limited education, no employment and little help and support are often ignored, or if considered are signs of her failure (Naylor, 2001).

Within the research on media representation of women's violent offending, five categories that are dependent on stereotypes have emerged; masculine women, muse/mastermind dichotomy, damaged personality, respectable (good woman) and the witch (Morrissey, 2012). The media consistently use these stereotypes to enable consumers to understand and immediately recognise the message being shared. Women are portrayed in highly stereotypical ways linked closely to existing gender roles (Galdi, Maass & Cadinu, 2014). The stereotype of the woman who engages in crime at the behest of her partner is the manipulated woman, who might otherwise be a 'good woman'. These women are constructed as being duped into doing anything their partner asks of them with no regard for the consequences and no apparent moral agency to know right from wrong (Marsh & Melville, 2009). They will seemingly do anything for love, including hurting their own children. However, as it's opposite, a woman scorned has the potential to turn into a crazed irrational monster in retaliation (Lavie-Dinur, Karniel & Azran, 2015).

Another common stereotype involves comparing women to various mythical creatures, the evil witch for example, and are readily identifiable through the attributes of the monstrous feminine (Jewkes, 2011). The use of these stereotypes enables societies greatest fears of women and childhood fears of the mythical monsters to collide in a way that separates the good woman from the bad and constructs out of control femininity as something to be feared (Jewkes, 2011; Sternadori, 2012). The monstrous feminine represents the most fearful of all and likely attributed to women who kill their children, women who are so deviant they are condemned for being failures as women and as mothers and are so evil they are beyond redemption (Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002; Jewkes, 2011; Lloyd, 1995; Naylor, 2001).

We, as the audience, can immediately access images of the monstrous feminine and begin to disassociate from the woman, who is already not a 'real' woman within our constructed notions of femininity. Positioned as non-human, and therefore as non-agent, we do not have to confront the possibility that women are capable of violence through 'choice' (Jewkes, 2011) but rather as consumers, stereotypes of defective or non-human women enable us to digest a sensational story with ease. According to Carlyle, Scarduzio and Slater (2014) the use of stereotypes to represent women's violence counter feelings of sympathy, if she is abnormal or deviant, hegemonic femininity is maintained.

Like the relationship between public health and media (Stephenson & Jamieson, 2009), the media too is a powerful force in influencing social and political agendas (Lyons, 2008). For example, through representations of risk and fear, public responses can place pressure on institutions and governments (Ducat, Thomas &

Blood, 2009) through popularist agendas (Cross, 2014). Successful tabloid campaigns for example, that focussed on tactics of naming and shaming to expose child sex offenders have led to the implementation of Sarah's Law the UK. Such campaigns, calling for harsh penalties based on perceived risk and individual blame have also engaged in misrepresenting and stigmatising mental illness as dangerous (Cross, 2014). As an effect, there has been a proliferation of women being incarcerated, despite the offence rate being stable in Western countries (Collins, 2014).

So while the media might enable consumers to think about unthinkable topics and lead to policy changes for the victims of crime in these areas, it also enables misrepresentations to incite outrage and fear within our social interactions, where the risk posed by the dangerous other is seen as too great for society to bear or accept and instead the dangerous other must be identified, managed or contained (Kitzinger, 2004; Szmukler & Rose, 2013).

This research is intended to enable me to understand how the media position women and through which discourses, when women commit crime. This will be achieved by determining how the New Zealand media engages in the use of stereotypes to frame their stories to position women within specific discourses, and how are they are legitimated.

Chapter Three

Research Aims

This research aims to understand how women who commit crime are represented in the media and how the discourses that maintain the underlying structures of power in society are produced and reproduced through the continuous retelling of a particular narrative that maintains gendered social power relations. How does the relationship between psychological knowledge of deficit and media representations of 'madness' reproduce the same position for women? Unpacking this highly mediated knowledge offers an opportunity for researchers to examine contemporary social processes and understandings of women's position in the gendered hierarchy at a particular location – the social imagination of women who commit crime. Specifically, this research seeks to understand how media representations of women who have committed a crime are reproduced through discourses of sexual difference. How are women who engage in counter hegemonic behaviours legitimated through discourses of mad and/or bad? What are the implications for us as researchers and practitioners within psychology?

Methodology

I began this thesis as a curiosity into the everyday conversations about women who commit crime and how they were dependent on assumptions of women's sexual difference. I began to question psychological knowledge production, and how it is dependent on gendered categorisations of disorder, and how the gendering of psychology both produces and reproduces, not only the objects of psy-discourse, but also positions women as subjects of a normative moral order. I began to make sense of the constitution of women's deviance through the normalisation of sexual difference by questioning women's position in the gendered social hierarchy. Drawing on feminist standpoint epistemology enabled me to understand that knowledge is historically, socially and culturally constructed and there is no representation that is not produced from within gendered social power relations – all knowledge is situated (Harding, 1993; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1995). Understanding knowledge as situated destabilises scientific objectivity and offers the opportunity to begin the collection of knowledge that challenges the stability of categorisations of race, gender and heterosexuality that form the central assumptions of our scientific community (Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Harding, 1993). Harding's (1993) reasoning for beginning research from the everyday lives of women is that by starting with the lives of those who are outside the dominant group, we can create a less distorted account of how society functions. In this way, we are offered the opportunity to question the underlying assumptions of claims to 'truth' established through the legitimacy of Western masculine hegemony. This 'standpoint' is critical to feminism as a social movement concerned with how meaning is embodied, both constructed and transformed, through gendered social practices as it repeatedly resists patriarchal power relations. Feminist standpoint epistemology therefore is an engagement with how we come to know our own social location(s) within gendered social power relations that structure and limit how we understand our material lives (Swigonski,

1994). Kronsell (2005) asserts, that understanding knowledge production and our own location within it, offers us an opportunity to challenge the power relations that produces women's oppression and resist the practices that limit our participation in knowledge production.

As this research is interested in media representations of women who have committed crime, it is important to recognise that the category 'woman' is a socially and politically constructed subject position that is based on the assumption that all women share the same differences, and experience the same oppression based on their biological difference with men. This ignores the diversity between and amongst women through various experiences and intersectionalities (Burman, 2003; Hekman, 1997). Burman (2003) argues that attending to difference must go beyond the gendered hierarchy and relations of privilege so as to not risk a return to essentialism. Rather than returning to categories of race, sex and class, we are offered the opportunity to move toward the specific; attending to the axes of social and structural differences within our social and political practices. Hekman (1997) advises we should think of feminist standpoint theory as a 'counterhegemonic discourse', itself a form of resistance as it seeks to unbalance the social hierarchy.

What I found as I read the literature that contextualises this research was that the complexity of the relationship between the monstrous and the deviant other, and the blurring of the boundaries between media representations of the other and the psychological production of the subject opened up a space for transforming our understanding of women who commit crime. What became apparent in my attempts to unpack the mediated knowledge at the nexus of psychology and media representations was the necessity to engage with poststructuralist theories of language as they provide a space in which it is possible to speak of a discourse of masculine privilege within the processes of legitimating knowledge. The turn to poststructural theories enables multiple readings of language, subject positions and social power relations and resonate with the feminist rejection of the idea of an essential gender to further interrogate accepted constructs of sex and gender and the stability of all identity categories (Coombes & Morgan, 2004).

The current research draws on the feminist engagement with the theories of Foucault, who argued against the idea of the natural body free from any control of society, but rather, how we understand the body is through socially constructed practices and technologies of regulation and social control (Morgan, 2005). For Foucault, language is the technology through which meaning is constructed and is always located within discourse. According to feminists who use the theories of Foucault, language is constructed in the form of many competing discourses, with a discourse being understood as meaning constituting systems, which produce objects, and position subjects. These then structure the social world in which we live and enable subject positions, with one likely to be dominant or hegemonic. Although Foucault himself did not address gender, his theory of the intimate relationship between discourse, knowledge and power is institutionalised and constructive, and language is not gender neutral (Gavey, 1989). Feminist poststructuralism holds that language is a means through which meaning and knowledge is constructed as gendered. Language is not seen as simply an expression of underlying meaning,

rather it is always located within discourse (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1997). There are always multiple possible discourses that construct the world in different and often contradictory ways, and which offer many different subject positions. However, not all discourses are equally powerful or available. Dominant discourses can become normalised in that they are viewed as natural and beyond question and are accepted as truth. These normative discourses restrict the available subject positions to those they provide, thereby limiting and constraining the possibilities available to people for the construction of their subjectivities. Foucault argued that discourse is a regime of truth, a body of knowledge that has wide reaching effects and a link to power. These regimes of truth can be seen in the disciplinary power engaged in by institutions, including psychology and the media, to regulate the population through technologies of categorisation to produce norms (Morgan, 2005). Because feminist psychology recognises that patriarchal power is dominant in Western society, a feminist poststructuralist approach recognises the influence of patriarchal discourses on Western knowledge, asserting that dominant ideas of truth, knowledge and reality are masculine constructions. "It is through discourse that material power is exercised and that power relations are established and perpetrated" (Gavey, 2011, p. 464).

To understand the material effects of normalisation as a form of social control, feminist poststructuralism attends to the enactment of disciplinary power. Women's bodies are targeted by disciplinary power to produce a specific 'normal' femininity in order to control women through a form of power that discursively constructs women as inferior to men, while at the same time a threat to men, and sets women as in need of control though several disciplinary tactics. Women are seen as representing nature, which is uncontrollable and in need of containment and constriction, where the histories of women's bodies are intimately connected to the system of reproductive technologies that both constitute and discipline them (King, 2004; Sawicki, 1991). Bartky (1988) theorises the production of women's bodies as docile, in constant need of coercive attention to the functioning of the body through a relentless process of surveillance, and self-surveillance. She argues that gendered disciplinary practices aim to produce an idealised (feminine) woman against the background of bodily deficiency. Rather than gender differences, disciplinary power operates on the actions of the body, the processes by which socially acceptable femininity is constructed. For Bartky the disciplinary practices constructing ideal femininity require extreme bodily transformations for women, and those who resist face very 'real' economic and social consequences for their failure to conform. Discipline is both everywhere and nowhere and gives the appearance that the feminine behaviour of women is natural (Bartky, 1988; Davis & Walker, 2016). While Foucault tended to locate power in particular institutions, Bartky's (1988) analysis of disciplinary power found that it is so dispersed that the production of femininity appears voluntary; disguising the inequality of the system of gender and the way it serves to perpetuate male dominance (Bartky, 1988).

Widdicombe (1995) argues that a discourse is both a product and a reflection of social, economic and political concerns and institutional power relationships. Discourses both establish and maintain power and the degree of power an individual can access is determined by their position within a particular discourse. There are

multiple subject positions available to women within any given discourse, but they will only ever be partial as women negotiate multiple competing discourses, always located within gendered social power relations. Women's subjectivities are fluid and constantly changing as they negotiate multiple discourses, resulting in contradiction and ambiguity of experience (Gavey, 1992). Multiple discourses influence how we interpret and understand the world and our location in it, and shifts across time, location, culture and socio-political contexts (Gavey, 1989). Not all discourses are equally powerful or available often they co-exist, contradict and reinforce each other, however, as some become more dominant they both enable or constrain subject positions. Therefore, an important aspect of attending to discourse is asking who benefits from any particular construction, and who has access to such power? According to Weedon (1997) feminist poststructuralism is a "mode of knowledge production which uses poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions to understand existing power relations and to identify areas and strategies for change" (pp. 40-41). For Weedon (1997) where power is based on sexual difference and relies on both control and compliance, we need to attend to what subject positions are enabled or constrained in any particular discourse, at the same time as interrogating the places in which discourses are formed, including popular social media (Gavey, 1992).

As subjects are produced through multiple discourses, we need to find ways to negotiate often competing and interconnected positions within them. For example, women who have committed crime are positioned through the institutional practices of psychology who uphold discourses of natural femininity that then inform deviance, and through the mass media who uphold discourses of femininity that inform madness. The dominant discourse of hegemonic femininity renders women who commit crime as aberrant in the social imagination (Elizabeth, 2003).

Discourse Analysis

How we live our lives as conscious subjects and how we give meaning to the social relationships we are embedded in and the structures of our everyday lives are very much dependent on the social power operating through the discourse we have access to, and the strength given to that discourse by those vested in maintaining it (Weedon, 1997). This can be seen in the women as mad discourse, which has been used since the eighteenth century to maintain the idea that women who commit crime are not 'real' women and should be seen as aberrant.

Discourse analysis can determine where these ideologies are within our everyday texts and how the ways they are produced and reproduced can enable and limit what we see, what we can think and the ways in which we are 'allowed' to act (Machin & Mayr, 2012). When analysing media representations, we can view this as framing with conventional knowledge where both the frame and the use of the frame distract from any societal responsibility for crime and locate the responsibility on the individual subject (Kitzinger, 2004).

The idea of common sense knowledge underpins the dominant discourses within media representations, many of which are produced and reproduced through the legitimation of scientific and medical knowledge, and at the same time, inform social

and political agendas that authorises the production of such knowledge. Media representations of events reproduce knowledge claims that affirm hegemonic gender norms and it becomes part of the public psyche. Kitzinger (2004) has argued that knowledge is produced and reinforced with the use of framing, story branding and generating public empathy toward a particular moral endpoint, whereby an individual is positioned as a neoliberal subject responsible for their own actions. Within the media, certain parts of a story are excluded, or enhanced to engage the reader's common sense response based on particular stereotypes and establishes positions for readers to align themselves to and be aligned with. A feminist discourse analysis therefore has a particular focus on the subject positions that are available within gendered social power relations. Subject positions mark a particular location in any given socio-political moral order (Coombes & Morgan, 2004), in and through the discourses that inform the boundaries, in this research, of women's criminal conduct. As Gavey (1989) explains, we are caught in a "discursive battle" over the legitimacy of meaning (p. 464). In this study, the texts for analysis are media articles that are necessarily socio-politically located and are actively involved in meaning making processes. The processes at work to produce the text are what Hodgetts and Chamberlain (2006) argue need to be the focus of media representation analysis.

As an institution that is embedded in the discursive battle over meaning, discourse analysis provides an opportunity to determine the media's participation in the operation of power in our everyday knowledge systems. By interrogating the perspectives that are privileged in media representations it becomes possible to determine the aspects of power that represent particular events and frame them to fit existing assumptions so as to challenge what can be said about those who are marginalised (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2006).

Feminist poststructuralism in psychology has become concerned with the importance of how embedded dominant discourse is in our day-to-day lives even without our awareness. These discourses not only construct women as subjects – they also shape women's understandings and meaning making of experiences (Fegan, 1999). A Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis, rather than searching for truth and meaning, analyses the purpose and function of language and discourse at particular sites where gendered power relations are realised (Gavey, 1989). Discourse and meaning are constantly constructed and reproduced and, as multiple discourses always exist, we may call upon multiple discourses at different times and in different situations (Burns & Gavey, 2008). Engaging discourse analysis, in this study, is an attempt to comprehend the relationships between institutional knowledges and the effects on the subjects of which they speak (Weedon, 1997). If we look, for example, at representations of women who commit crime, they move from 'bad' to a construction of 'mad' within the legal system, including the expert testimony of mental health professionals, to produce a subject position which feels more 'natural' to a society that views women as incapable of violence unless they are suffering from a mental illness.

Discourse analysis is an appropriate tool for this research due to its emphasis on examining gendered social power relations. Power is not something possessed by individuals, but rather it operates through them, by impacting on their behaviour.

The subject of the study is not an individual but the multiple positions held in relation to the forces of power. This is important, because power acts on possible actions which means there is always the possibility for other ways of acting, or resisting dominant discourse (Willig, 2001).

Method

Ethics

When undertaking research within a sensitive, potentially harmful area it is important to be aware of any ethical issues that may arise during the research process. Rice (2009) has argued that it is important for feminist researchers to engage in accountability, responsibility and reflexivity. This means ensuring interpretations of data are undertaken whilst being aware of any bias that has the potential to influence the interpretation and becoming immersed within the data collected to enable the researcher to understand their topic. Most importantly integrating your own emotions, embodiments and allegiances by being reflexive at all stages is necessary to the analytical process. In this research, I have clearly engaged a feminist analysis, for the very clear purpose of understanding gendered social power relations.

With regard to the collection of data being analysed, I did not attempt to include text that is not publically available. According to Bruckman (2002) a researcher is able to freely quote and analyse online data without consent if the following criteria are met:

- It is publically archived

- No password is required

- No site publically prohibits use of data

Data Collection

The research question was chosen in late 2014 to interrogate media representations of women who have committed crime. Articles were collected throughout 2015 which involved women and crime from only New Zealand based news outlets, mainly the New Zealand Herald and Stuff.co.nz. Articles were printed to PDF form and saved to ensure the original article was collected, along with a record of the website address for future reference.

The majority of articles were discovered on searches of the crimes sections within the New Zealand Herald and Stuff.co.nz websites on a daily basis, with a handful collected following a link on the social media site Facebook. Over 250 articles were

collected during 2015.   These sites were selected due to the authoritative nature of these publications with the New Zealand Herald voted the best website and overall best newspaper in the CAANZ publishing awards during 2015 and having the largest circulation in New Zealand. This paper was founded in 1863 so has been a source of knowledge for many New Zealanders for over 100 years (nzherald.co.nz), rendering it 'trustworthy'. The vast majority of articles were retrieved from Stuff.co.nz as this site includes many regional publications such as the Otago Daily Times and The Dominion Post, whereas the Herald is focussed on Auckland. Stuff.co.nz is a product of Fairfax Digital and includes the second and third highest circulating papers and is the main competitor to the Herald (Stuff.co.nz). Articles were collected on a daily basis leading to a large sample selection for this research.

When I reached the analysis stage of this research, the articles were read several times to reduce the size of the sample. Several were excluded due to lack of detail within the story or were focussed on gender-neutral positions, in particular when referring to teachers. Several articles were removed as they recycled a previous story or were word for word identical to another story published through another media outlet. Articles that involved more than one offender were also discarded as a strategy to reduce data.

I also decided not to include articles that discussed the crimes of teenage girls. I felt this was a highly specific area for analysis given their vulnerability both as adolescents and as a vulnerable group. After this process of exclusion, the remaining articles were divided into child related crime, violence and white-collar crime. To determine the discourses operating within the articles further reading was undertaken and the articles further divided according to how the women were positioned within them, and were organised through attention to the discursively constructed representations of mad and bad.

This process left 39 articles for analysis. During the readings of each article, further research was undertaken to gauge the history of the discourse and to determine how often the discourse occurred in the media in New Zealand. For example, an article discussing battered women's syndrome led to a search for previous cases in New Zealand, which enabled me to engage with the topic in depth and discuss the history of the syndrome and the assumptions the use of this term implied. This process was enacted for all areas to determine the history of dominant discourses within New Zealand.

Analysis

The analysis focused on the use of frames, stereotypes and history by the media to 'construct' the object of the story and the implications for meaning making by the consumer. It was important to maintain the focus on the media representations of the women, not the women themselves. According to Kitzinger (2004), framing can be observed within texts as well as through the consistency of the coverage by the majority of outlets. Therefore, I looked for information that was potentially withheld to support the angle being used within the story that encourages empathy towards the

positioning of a subject within the story, and how that was achieved through key phases. Following Kitzinger, I also read for personal accounts generated from those who were involved, a strategy used by reporters to engender fear for the readers. Within this research, we can see this with the fear of or being recognised as a 'bad mother'.

Throughout the analysis several discursive strategies emerged. Drawing on expert testimony was a common strategy used by the media to support their 'knowledge'' claims and give them credibility. These experts ranged from psychologists to doctors and lawyers and police personnel. Also within this area was the use of the lay person 'expert', a witness who is claimed to have inside knowledge about the woman and her crime with the inclusion of unrelated criminal or 'bad' feminine behaviour.

The analysis then became focussed on how the media drew on discourses of women's madness and badness, with particular attention to mothering. The stages of analysis included determining what discourse was in action, and how it positioned women through framing the story in a particular way. As I organised the articles I became aware of how the legitimacy of psychological knowledge influenced the framing of the media representations through a discourse of madness, and reproduced common sense knowledge of deficit femininity.

Discourses of madness were realised through expert testimony that pathologised women's offending, and authorised through specific disorders such as Borderline Personality Disorder, Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy and Battered Woman's Syndrome. Discourses of badness were realised through knowledge of 'type', and the figure of the Evil Woman emerged. Unlike the pathological woman, the monstrous feminine cannot be 'treated', but is deserving of punishment. Discourses of madness and badness, however, are not necessarily discrete and there were examples of a shift in media representations from bad to mad through the pathologisation of women's behaviour.

There were also articles that were framed through discourses of motherhood, and these articles did not have the legitimacy of psychological knowledge to frame good and bad mothers. Expert opinions however were engaged to legitimate cultural assumptions of bad and/or mad mothers. These articles were collected in the first instance by collating all articles that drew our attention the perpetrator as a mother. They were then further divided into crimes involving unthinkable motherly actions. Here it is the transgression of the normative moral order that frame the articles either through discourses of badness and the tensions between good and bad mothers. Through the framing of these stories, what appears to be on trial is the discourse of good mothering.

I was particularly interested in locating whose voice was authorised in the media representations. As media reports of criminal behaviour, the context of the legal response and expert opinions was clear. However, in the stories of bad mothering, it was the authority of the victim or the bystander who legitimated the story as they reproduced normative assumptions about unfeminine and unnatural behaviours.

To organise the analysis, I worked through the following questions:

1. What position is offered to the woman within the media representation?

2. How is this position constructed and how is it legitimated?

3. What is ignored within the media representation?

4. What has been pathologised within the woman's behaviour and what are the implications of this pathologisation?

5. How do these representations both produce and reproduce normative constructions of femininity and motherhood?

Analysis

Discourses of Madness

> The pathologisation of femininity and regulation of 'difficult' women though psychiatric nosology has a long history. Ussher, 2013, p.1.

> …. feminists have shown that many diagnoses are suffused with the dominant ideologies of their time and place and used to regulate problematic behaviour. Marecek & Gavey, 2013, p. 5.

The association of women with madness goes back many centuries with women who resist feminine norms of any given time, for example, women who resisted cultural norms in the sixteenth century were positioned as witches and were punished for their deviancy so that social norms could be controlled.

 Through techniques of modernity, in particular the onset of scientific rationality, by the nineteenth century women's deviance became established through the concept of hysteria. Positioned as difficult women, hysteria became symptomatic of women's individual pathology. With this historical context, and through gendered social power relations, it has been argued that Borderline Personality Disorder, symptomatic of disturbed personality, has emerged as out of control emotions against the measure of masculine rationality, constructing women's resistance as mad (Shaw & Proctor, 2005; Ussher, 2013). Tracing the history of women's pathology Ussher (2013) has argued that women's responses to distress, depression, rage, emotional sensitivity, for example, ignores the context of women's lives and places the problem within individual deficit.

According to Ussher (2013), in today's society women's madness is defined and regulated through the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Lafrance and McKenzie-Mohr (2013), advise the DSM is the means of sharing a hegemonic view of the world based on moral, social or religious prejudices legitimated through scientific discourse. The authority of the DSM provides the means through which the regulation of normal and abnormal are achieved as a potent form of social control. The categorisation of women's distress has constructed women's suffering as individual pathology and ignores the conditions of women's oppression ((Kurger, van Straaten, Taylor, Lourens & Burkes, 2014; Ussher, 2013), "medicalising their misery" (Lafrance and McKenzie-Mohr 2013, p. 123).

There have been widespread criticisms of versions of the DSM from the feminist community due to the bias towards women and the focus on regulating women's behaviour through pathologisation, as well as the medicalisation of distress and misery with the focus on individual suffering (Lafrance & Mckenzie-Mohr, 2013). This criticism began with feminist critiques of the DSM II after the inclusion of hysterical personality disorder, which involved symptoms that closely mirrored the diagnosis of hysteria, that was viewed as a caricature of femininity in an exaggerated form. By the time the DSM III was produced, this disorder had become histrionic personality disorder seemingly to placate the feminist community and remove the

association with hysteria. However, despite changing the disorder to one of a problematic personality, it continued to pursue the same symptoms of exaggerated femininity. Borderline personality disorder then took the place of hysteria to become the latest feminine based psychiatric disorder. This disorder is not gender neutral as it includes symptoms that we associate with femininity such as depression, impulsiveness in regards to sex, drugs and food and poor self-image. This disorder also includes the criteria of anger, which has led to women's position changing from a broken hysteric to a threatening woman. These disorders all involved the pathologisation of women's emotions, especially anger, and have led to a widely held common assumption that angry women who do not conform to hegemonic femininity are suffering from a psychological condition (Ussher, 2013). Pain and distress are expressed via the symptoms which are culturally accepted as pathology and enable women's distress to be viewed as 'real' by society, and distressed or resistant women are legitimately treated and regulated to ensure these 'symptoms' can be managed and medication used to ensure this distress can be removed (Ussher, 2013). In this way, dominant moralities and norms regarding gender and sexuality that regulate women's behaviour are authorised.

Feminist critiques of the DSM are still ongoing due to the continual inclusion of feminine based disorders, such as the recent inclusion of premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) in the DSM V. The inclusion of PMDD is based on biologically determined causation for psychiatric issues with very little evidence to support the theory. It has been argued that the inclusion of such a diagnosis is to increase the range of pharmaceutical interventions into women's emotional distress (Marecek & Gavey, 2013),

Each version of the DSM seemingly expands the reach of the psychiatric and psychological communities into the regulation of women's lives and many diagnostic categories have become a part of everyday life (Marecek &Gavey, 2013) through the legitimation of proliferation of knowledge permeating women's everyday experience. Through the legitimacy of biomedical knowledge, the DSM continues to constitute experiences of women's distress "not through overwhelming evidence as the pharmaceutical industry would suggest, but because of the economic, political and institutional power of medicine to shape our view of the world" (Lafrance, 2007, p. 128). Through this knowledge production, women are able to self-diagnose or are able to legitimate their experiences and seek relief from their symptoms. Help seeking then becomes understood as taking individual responsibility for their deficit, and offers exemption from blame (Lafrance & McKenzie-Mohr, 2013). In this way, diagnoses may offer some 'relief' from symptoms of distress through the acknowledgement of real felt effects, however, social and institutional systems of meaning limit other ways of understanding. For Ussher (2010), in order to understand individual misery, we need to question how to legitimate pain without invoking individual pathology, and question the gendered social power relations that discursively produce the social conditions of women's lives and their suffering. This analysis, therefore, seeks to interrogate the ways in which the media reproduces common-sense understandings of women's madness to

open up spaces for significant social and political transformation of the knowledge of women's suffering.

Six articles and one blog were collected regarding Margaret Dodd and her behaviour around children. Margaret is constructed by the media in and through the madness discourse with her 'bad' behaviour attributed to the mental illness Borderline Personality Disorder.

Discourse of Madness: Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

We are continually advised through the media coverage of Margaret's criminal offending that she suffers from Borderline Personality Disorder, which is the latest set of symptoms applied to women's madness with 75% of those diagnosed with BPD being women. Borderline Personality Disorder is characterised by instability of mood, disturbance in self-image, chronic feelings of emptiness, chaotic interpersonal relationships, intense fears of abandonment, self-damaging behaviours and suicide attempts (Berger, 2014). However, 5-10 years after diagnosis over 50% of women no longer fit the criteria for this disorder. This is challenging to the idea that personality disorders are a stable and fixed part of an individual's personality and confirms the need to be aware that an individual's experience of distress drives them to behaviours that lead to this diagnosis (Steffen & Steffen, 2015). The media coverage is framed through an appeal to knowledge of her disordered personality.

This is seen in the following headlines:

"Borderline personality disorder"

[Article One] Stuff 29/7/2014

"Severe personality disorder"

[Article Two] Stuff 1/7/2015

"Dodd's has borderline personality disorder and she was to undertake psychological counselling"

[Article Three] Stuff 23/3/2015

According to feminist critics of Borderline Personality Disorder, this diagnosis pathologises the ways in which women react to gendered abuse and oppression and is applied to control the behaviour of women who fail femininity through their expression of anger and aggression (Berger, 2014). The majority of women diagnosed with BPD have experienced childhood sexual abuse and the disorder may represent the impact and effects of past and current trauma. Despite the knowledge of abuse histories, symptoms of BPD remove the experiences of distress from abuse histories, and focus on the associated behaviours. Disregarding women's histories of abuse and oppression, BPD represents a shift from "a limited recognition of the extent and impact of the trauma associated with sexual violence" (Shaw & Proctor, 2005, p. 487) to a commonly held assumption of the individual pathologisation of trauma, which conceals the ongoing and systematic abuse of women and children that society does not want to recognise. According to media reports, Margaret is going around town terrifying children, behaviour not expected of women who are

supposed to nurture children. Her unnatural behaviour is pathologised and she is expected to be contained to restore social order. There is no attempt in the framing of these articles to engender sympathy for her by recognising any history of abuse or trauma, rendering her history invisible and irrelevant and her subsequent behaviours are represented through her deficit. Positioned as mad reproduces the dominant discourse of essentialised femininity.

Media Representations

If we look at the ways Margaret is framed within the madness discourse she is positioned as 'other' to normative femininity and therefore in need of public shaming. The media situate women's behaviours in relation to socially constructed norms, framed as deranged and unstable and offered up for "consumption as an example of women's inability to navigate transitions" of normative femininity (Meyer, Fallah & Wood, 2011, p. 218). Here we see Margaret rendered through the media as a subject of her own demise, through images and stories of the 'terror' of madness. The framing of the 'mad woman' reinforces the stereotypes of a failure of femininity and confirms madness as a purely feminine trait (Meyer, Fallah & Wood, 2011). The media representations continue to enforce gender stereotypes around acceptable behaviour for women and draw on madness discourse when women transgress norms and are in need of regulation through psychological intervention. The media draws on psychological knowledge of BPD to position Margaret as a modern day 'mad woman' who needs to be contained and controlled and whose outbursts can be ignored as the ravings of a hysteric, which appeals to consumer sensibilities. Subjected to constant surveillance, Margaret resists psychological regulation and instead reportedly 'chooses' incarceration as a means of safety from the persistent control over her movement. We can observe this in the following media statements:

"Dodd's told police she only wanted to speak to the boys and that there was no law saying she could not talk to children."

[Article One] Stuff 29/7/2014

"She finds herself being constantly followed by the police. She has given up".

"She waives the right to a pre-sentence report and requests to be sent to prison because it's the only place she feels safe, for the maximum of three months."

[Article Four] Stuff 1/4/2015

According to the media reports, surveillance is justified through the discourse of madness which positions Margaret as a danger to society, and in particular children, and therefore it is necessary for the legal system to regulate and control her behaviours. The power to classify her madness through BPD and therefore restrict her movements through incarceration is dependent on the knowledge of the DSM that legitimates her behaviour as enduring rather than transient. It is the legitimacy of the disorder that enables Margaret's 'dangerous' behaviour to be regulated (Ussher, 2013). It was the authority of expert psychological testimony that led to ongoing surveillance that frames media representations of 'public safety'.

"He sentenced her to intensive supervision for two years with conditions she attend counselling and treatment as recommended by her probation officer."

[Article Five] Stuff 27/1/2015

The conditions that regulate Margaret's movements as a dangerous other appeal to notions of public safety. Her dangerousness is framed in one article as an attraction to pre-pubescents boys and therefore warrants indefinite exclusion from public spaces or result in confinement

"Judge Kellar read from a report prepared for the sentencing which said Dodd's was attracted to pre-pubescent males."

[Article Two] Stuff 1/7/2015

The risk to children in general framed the media reports drawing on discourses of madness through failed natural feminine nurturing. The gendering of BDP is important here, especially where it typically constitutes the attributes of a "demanding, angry aggressive woman" (Ussher, 2013, p.66) that as a more masculine characteristic, is inappropriate for a woman.

This risk to children is discussed in all six articles as follows:

"Parents warned she is menacing and unsavoury."

[Article Five] Stuff 27/1/2015

"You need to stay away from the children."

[Article One] Stuff 29/7/2014

"She has been described as a public menace because of her history of confronting or assaulting children."

[Article Two] Stuff 1/7/2015

"Attracted to prepubescent boys"

[Article Two] Stuff 1/7/2015

Here, there is an appeal to the safety of children. Positioned as dangerous through madness discourse, her aggression toward children is a sign of her pathology and going against hegemonic femininity. With the media maintaining their focus on the children she has frightened, society is justified in its methods of surveillance and removing her from public places to ensure the risk to children is minimal. This risk, however, is based on an assumption that frightening children and assaulting them (one incident) is going to lead to a more serious crime when there is no evidence she has committed a serious crime against a child.

Sex Offender

An aspect of the story that has been largely ignored in the media is her attraction to prepubescent boys. According to the media, psychological expert testimony about her failure to conform to essentialised norms of caring and sexual passivity positions her as a risk to children. However, neither the media nor the legal system positioned her as a sex offender, despite the reference to her attraction. Without any substance to a claim of sex offending, the media representation provokes a fear of the sexually deviant other, positioning Margaret as a 'predator' in need of containment. According to Hayes and Baker (2014) women sex offenders challenge our everyday understandings of gender, and non-hegemonic femininities are seen as "socially toxic, shrouded in denial and taboo" and "contaminants" of the feminine ideal (p. 3). As a society, we have a tendency to position women as victims when it comes to sexually related crime, and sexual violations are often framed through psychological and emotional damage or trauma. In the media representations that position Margaret's behaviour through discourses of madness, her 'attraction' is seen as a personality deficit rather than a sexual deviation, supporting the assumption that it is difficult to believe that women can commit sex crimes in the first instance (Cain, Sample & Anderson, 2015).

Research has been slow to understand the behaviours of women who sexually offend and it has been reported that when a professional is faced with a women sex offender, there is a need to position her within an acceptable discourse of femininity, which can distort the information being provided and the outcome (Bourke, Doherty, McBride, Morgan & McGee, 2014). This suggests the issue remains invisible to both the women who sexually abuse, and society, and the media then appeals to our emotional response to the incommensurability of women and sex offending, and misses an opportunity for intervention. As reported, her sentencing requires counselling and medication to 'fix' her disordered behaviour. Therefore, it is focussed on returning her to 'real' womanhood and her 'attraction' to prepubescent boys is constructed through discourses of madness supporting that it is an excess of sexuality that is a symptom of gendered BPD, an abnormality of their deficit bodies rather than purposeful behaviour (Hayes & Baker, 2014). Deviance of personality reinforces cultural norms of femininity and is less of a threat to hegemonic femininity in the social imagination. We can see this representation as an example of the wild woman discussed by Ussher (1994), a woman who is uncivilized and who terrorised the villages with her unruly behaviour. The monstrous feminine is engaged to invoke fear in consumers the potential destruction of gendered normativity.

The Monstrous Feminine

While the mainstream media attended to knowledge of Margaret's deviant personality to engage consumers with risk, the relationship between the deviant other and the monstrous feminine was also produced. Drawing on stereotypes of women who commit crime as unnatural and manipulative, media blogger Cameron Slater conjures an image of the monster, a bodily entity that is simultaneously fascinating

and horrific. The conflation of mad and bad, and biological and psychological dehumanises the excesses of femininity.

"She is clearly a nutter and doesn't care about legal consequences"

"Perhaps she is a bit retarded or something. Being a lardo and a heifer thrice over is certainly the least of her problems"

Blog dated 28/1/2015 [Article Six] by Cameron Slater

It is evident through this popular blog that Margaret's physical appearance is being scrutinised, and the relationship between the disordered and deviant excesses of the body become socially meaningful; she is represented as both overweight and non-human. A search on media websites immediately reveals repeated images of her court appearances – an overweight woman with purple hair and a startled (mad) expression on her face. Such images also reveal that she does not meet the standards of feminine bodily ideals and her lack of control over her body positions her within the discourse of madness with a body that requires policing (Weber, 2012). The continuous use of such an unflattering image in the media confirms her failure of femininity and reinforces her deviance from the feminine ideals promoted by Western society. The focus on thin as the ideal feminine body demands that women are requires to take up less space than men, in all ways. The surveillance of women's bodies links the ideal feminine body with good citizenship (Gill, 2008; Tischner & Malson, 2010) and women's bodies and psychological wellbeing links what it means to be a woman to her body. The fat body lacks discipline, ruptures the norms of hegemonic femininity and becomes a symbol of a body out of order and a dangerous mind (Morgan, 2005; Weber, 2012). The fat body is a sign of inner darkness and deviance, and the outward manifestation of excess, a body "always visible and always-already constituted as [a] health offender" (Tischner & Malson, 2015, p. 261). The discourse of madness is easily invoked through the image of a fat body, where those who do not fit the norms are singled out and marginalised and their intelligence questioned, as can be seen in the blog. The media representations reproduce the social assumptions of the out of control body as something to be feared and avoided (Hartley, 2010). Subjecting Margaret's appearance to such scrutiny confirms her status as aggressive and 'crazy', a woman to be both hated and feared.

Discourse of Madness: Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (MSBP)

The articles selected for analysis regard a woman under investigation for the deaths of two infants in her care 14 months apart. The offender/caregiver is constructed by the media in and through the madness discourse with her 'bad' behaviour attributes to the psychiatric disorder Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (MSBP).

History of Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy

We are repeatedly drawn to a diagnosis of MSBP in the media coverage of the story of the person accountable for the deaths of two children because it is beyond our social imagination to assume that two children in the same family could die of natural causes (Fish, Bromfield & Higgins, 2005). This is particularly true if more than one case of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) has occurred in a family. Recurrent SIDS and MSBP are therefore linked as the only tenable explanation for the deaths (Wrennall, 2007). The media account depends heavily on the expertise of professionals (psychological/medical) to draw our attention to comprehending the incomprehensible.

Munchausen syndrome by proxy (MSBP) is a diagnosis, particularly applied to women, who abuse their children by fabricating an illness in a child that results in unnecessary medical treatment with 6-10 % of cases being fatal to the child (Dye, Rondeau, Guido, Mason & O'Brien, 2013). Updated in DSM V as Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another it is described as the "falsification of physical or psychological signs or symptoms, or induction of injury or disease, in another, associated with identified deception" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 361). The 'other' is usually a child or adult under the care of the person with the disorder, whereby the carer is "the perpetrator" who receives the diagnosis. Suggestive of criminality, the perpetrator abuses the victim, and when "apprehended" they tend to receive a diagnosis of mood or personality rather than a psychosis (Morrison, 2014, p. 283). These statements indicate the high risk and dangerousness of the 'perpetrator' however, given that 95% of diagnoses are attributed to mother's and 90-98% to women, the disorder is not only gendered, but is produced through a discourse of women's madness (Dye et al., 2013; Heubrock, 2001). Risk is managed through evidential assessment with the intention of engaging a legal response to women's 'bad' behaviour, despite the presence of mental disorder. While the disorder does not reach the standards of evidence in the United Kingdom, due to criticisms of the lack of scientific evidence for the disorder, it has reached epidemic proportions and is now regarded as a "moral panic", entrenched expert witness testimony and child protection as well as in public opinion (Evans, Butz, & Webber-Dereszynski, 2009, p.34). As a result, international literature reports that tens of thousands of children have been wrongfully removed from their mother's care, based on a set of behaviours that may warrant parenting intervention but do not meet the criteria of disorder (Raitt & Zeedyk, 2007; Scheper-Hughes, 2002; Wrennall, 2007).

Media Representations

The articles about this particular woman's criminal behaviour relied on the use of expert knowledge to construct MSBP as a genuine psychological condition, that renders possible the idea that some women abuse their children:

"…. believes the internet has contributed to the number of Munchausen by proxy cases…."

"" These mothers tend to be psychopathic", he said. "They don't experience guilt and they lack empathy.""

"…. parents who have the syndrome do not love children in the way that most people do."

"Often when a death occurs, it's because of a miscalculation."

"…. long-term psychotherapy is required."

"This is a personality type that takes years in the making, and I think it probably involves psychotherapeutic treatment that would also take years."

[Article Ten] Stuff 21/7/2014

In her examination of the practices of the assessment of MSBP, Pankratz (2006) found that there was little evidence of the criteria specified in the DSM but rather 'experts' were inclined to use the diagnosis through a judgement of the woman's behaviour and making assumptions about her motivations, based on symptoms of abuse of a child, and sometimes without assessing the carer/mother herself. Suggestive of a moral panic about the increase in reported child abuse cases, it appears that mothers in particular are being blamed by means of an obscure syndrome. While mother-blame is not a new form of oppression for women, MSBP enables the pathologisation of the 'bad mother'. This indicates to me, that MSBP is another means of constituting women as mad through the knowledge authorised through the DSM and legitimated through expert testimony in the legal system. Discourses of madness shift the meaning of bad, and it is women's deficit rather than gendered social power relations that are to blame, and become objects of fear. According to Naylor (2001), MSBP reinforces an ongoing fear of women and their power over the lives and deaths of children. Fear confirms the riskiness of women's excesses through appealing to her pathology; normal on the outside, but beneath lurks the evil monster.

There are several areas of concern around this diagnosis from a feminist perspective. Located within a history of women's resistance to cultural norms, from witches to hysterics, women's positioning through the relationship between medical/psychiatric discourse and law draw on the same stereotypes of motherhood that produce her pathology (Lewis & Sommervold, 2014; Raitt & Zeedyk, 2004). Despite the description of the disorder drawing on the gender-neutral terms 'carer', ingrained within the law and society it is based on commonly held assumptions about motherhood and mothering. The authority of the DSM to legitimate expert testimony subjects mothers to a group of seemingly unconnected signs and

symptoms placed together within a single category, and constitutes a logical connection between cultural assumptions of women as nurturers and the horror of the failure of a 'good mother' to protect her child (Lewis & Sommervold, 2014). It offers no explanation of why these women seek unnecessary medical treatment for their children, in order to gain attention as their chosen form of abuse, resonates with the excess emotion of the 'hysterical woman'. Dominant discourses of mothering "have rarely been elevated to prominence in either judicial, medical or academic analysis, [and] they continue to operate efficiently and powerfully" (Raitt & Zeedvk, 2004, p. 276). The legitimacy of the existence of the disorder is based on 'evidence' of expert testimony to secure convictions rather than on scientific evidence, demonstrating the dangers of recursive arguments that reproduce the monstrous maternal (Morrissey, 2010).

The media reports draw on the discourse of madness by reporting MSBP as the legitimate pathology to make the death of two children intelligible. The removal of surviving children for their protection can also be justified through deploying MSBP and reinforces mother-blame. The media representation draws our attention to her pathology through a narrative frame that suggests previously healthy children have suffered because of the actions of a hysterical woman (attention seeking behaviour). Rather than bad, the mother is constituted as mad.

 "…. looking into Munchausen syndrome by proxy – a form of child abuse involving the exaggeration or fabrication of illnesses or symptoms by a caregiver."

"It is a mental illness and requires treatment."

[Article Seven] NZ Herald 4/9/2015

[Article Eight] Otago Daily Times 4/9/2015

"…. police held concerns about the circumstances surrounding the children's deaths. Both were healthy in the hours before they stopped breathing."

"…. Munchausen syndrome by proxy a form of child abuse where a person harms someone to garner sympathy or attention from others…."

[Article Nine] Stuff 4/9/2015

In these media representations of the case, and before any charges had been laid, the discourse of madness is offered as an explanation for the public to comprehend the history of the woman under investigation. It was also reported that the mother 'voluntarily' relinquished the custody of the child's siblings, confirming the dangerousness of the mother. According to Wrennall (2007), separating children from their mother in such circumstances is coercive; it is for the protection of the child and based on the assumption of her inevitable failure as a mother.

"…. voluntarily gave up custody while the deaths of his siblings were investigated…."

[Article Eight] Otago Daily Times and [Article Nine] Stuff 4/9/2015

"They believed she was a good mother."

 "I could hear her [the child's mother] screaming 'help' as she ran across the road"

[Article Nine] Stuff 4/9/2015

We are also presented with 'evidence' that this woman was a 'good' mother, who sought the help of the neighbour in order to protect the child. These two positions, while they may seemingly offer conflicting accounts, framed through MSBP we are offered a paradox; the protective mother who acts within nature, and the monstrous mother who harms her child (Langer, 2009; Raitt & Zeedyk, 2003).

It is evident through the media representations that the discourse of madness is drawn on to explain a woman's criminal behaviour. Rather than bad, which evokes the real possibility that a natural woman/mother is capable of abusing her child which is at odds with the social moral order, framing her behaviour through a discourse of madness, her disorder renders her unstable, and her behaviour can be regulated and controlled to ensure her symptoms can be managed through the medicalisation of her out of control 'hysteria'. The link between MSBP and symptoms of hysteria are based on the assumption of attention seeking, another example of the manipulative woman who are both clever and deceitful enough to engage 'others' (medical intervention) in their abuse. Allison and Roberts (1998), in questioning the lack of evidence of the disorder, suggest that the diagnosis is a response by the legal/medical systems that reproduce the same historical fear about monstrous women rather than the abuse of the child.

The troubling aspect of the MSBP discourse being proliferated through media reports and into the social imagination is there is little evidence to support its use. MSBP through its own definition requires the long term abuse of a child in the form of medical interventions that rarely leads to the child's death. The loss of two babies within the same family is so incomprehensible within our social order that the monstrous mother can be the only explanation. As this research was being completed, there was a report of a woman in the UK who suffered a similar loss of two children and whose conviction was overturned. What the experts had argued was, without evidence of a medical reason to explain their deaths, the pathology of the mother was to blame.

Discourse of Madness: Battered Women's Syndrome

Further examples of a version of the 'madness' discourse are found in stories around Battered Women's Syndrome.

History of Battered Women's Syndrome

Battered women's syndrome was a construct introduced by psychologist Lenore Walker in the 1970s to try and explain the experiences and behaviour of women who have been abused. The original theories were based on the results of experiments with dogs and led to this syndrome being based on learned helplessness in which the woman learns that escape attempts are pointless (Rothenberg, 2002). This construct has been researched for over 40 years and is still followed by concerns. It has evolved into a full mental health disorder which is now used to explain 'abnormal' behaviours in women and has become embedded in the legal system (Dutton, 2009). Calling it a 'syndrome' adds to the power and legitimacy of the construct and ensures it is viewed as a 'real' illness, as well as medicalizing domestic violence (Rothenberg, 2002). This syndrome is currently not included in the DSM.

According to Dutton (1996) there are several main criticisms of Battered Woman Syndrome. There is no one profile of a battered woman as women's responses to abuse vary and with some women meeting the criteria for another clinical diagnosis (such as PTSD) and others not fitting this criterion. The term Battered Woman Syndrome is very unclear with no specific set of symptoms and the exclusion of some reactions. The diagnosis of PTSD may be more applicable for women who have experienced abuse. From a legal perspective the experts involved in this syndrome focus on what the woman did to remove herself from the abuse and what the effect of this was. The use of Battered Woman Syndrome produces a stereotyped image that these women are damaged and disordered which led to the deviant behaviour of them killing their partner (Dutton, 1996). This leads to the woman being removed of her moral agency (Scholz, n. d) and at the mercy of uncontrollable psychological urges due to her biology.

This syndrome has become a legal defence for a woman who has suffered many years of violence and control. This syndrome ignores the reasons women do not leave abusive relationships, fear and social context for example. The syndrome is merely a description of the woman's possible psychological state at the time of the murder. Many women do not go on to kill their abusive partners and the use of this syndrome should not justify her actions. Instead this syndrome should be used to assist a jury in understanding the woman's actions are more akin too self-defence than premeditated murder. However, it appears this syndrome is being utilized by the legal system to portray these women as suffering from a mental illness which impaired their judgement. If we instead looked at the social issues around domestic violence the need to diagnose women may no longer be required (Terrance, Plumm & Kehn, 2015).

The main concern with battered woman syndrome is that once again criminal behaviour is being labelled as pathological with this disorder fitting into the repeating pattern of over-diagnosing and over medicalizing women and creating

disorders and syndromes specifically to explain women's behaviour when it is outside the norms expected (Dodd, 2015). We call in 'experts' to confirm these women as psychologically damaged and that is why they kill their partners, they view the person's death as the only way out from abuse (Hubble, 1997). The 'experts' tell us these women are so psychologically damaged they see no other options available. These 'experts' opinions are given higher value than the woman's own experiences and each woman's individuality is ignored as she is fitted into the box of battered woman with her behaviour explained due to this syndrome. This syndrome undermines a woman's credibility and labels her unstable and insane (Terrance, Plumm & Kehn, 2015) and this syndrome ignores any social context and the behaviour of the woman's partner and again places the blame and need to change on to the woman.

It is also convenient to have a one size fits all syndrome where battered women who kill their partners can be placed. We see it as a genuine diagnosis that explains why these women 'snap' all whilst ignoring the available literature on a victim's response to abuse (Dutton, 2009). This syndrome constructs women as having a psychological disorder that has a final result of her killing her abuser and maintains the view that women are helpless and weak and at the mercy of their flawed biology and who are unable to make acceptable decisions when they are abused (Posch, 1998).

Media Representations

The discourse of battered woman syndrome is presented by the media as a true syndrome with the assumption that it is a legally and psychologically recognised disorder. This is confirmed by the use of the expert, however, she had not met the woman and yet was able to diagnose her with this syndrome due to the societal assumption that all women are the same and can therefore be diagnosed based on the crime they committed. By advising "…. she had never met or assessed Ms Keefe" the media representation is framed to advise the audience any woman who kills her partner is 'snapping' due to years of abuse and can be judged as temporarily insane regardless of any other circumstances.

"…. evidence of research she has done into battered women's syndrome. However, she admitted in cross-examination she had never met or assessed Ms Keefe."

"The crown claims Ms Keefe arrived home drunk and in an angry mood and stabbed Mr Verma."

"…. said in his opening address Ms Keefe had used the knife in self-defence."

[Article Eleven] Radio NZ 17/9/2013

"She picked up the knife so he would leave her alone. Instead he said "Just... do it".

[Article Twelve] Stuff 19/9/2013

The media representation mentions, briefly, that this woman was angry 'drunk and in an angry mood' which is quickly dismissed with a reference too self-defence. The

assumption is that women do not react out of anger as that is not a normal feminine reaction, we can only accept self-defence if there was abuse and ongoing violence and she fought back out of fear for her own life. We are unable to frame a woman as acting out of rage, she has to be seen as reacting due to fear. We accept that women can be afraid but not that they can be angry. This is reiterated by the following, "…. contended his client was a battered woman and the death was the unfortunate outcome of self-defence." (Stuff 11/10/13).

The victim's family are framed as being greatly wronged by a verdict which agreed she acted in self-defence. She is blamed due to "instead of leaving when told to 'f… off' by Vera, she stayed to finish the fight." (Stuff 11/10/2013). The media representation is not blame on the victim for becoming violent in the first place but on the woman for not leaving and reacting with her own anger and violence.

"There were too many women on that jury, that's how I felt. Too many of them feeling sorry for Miss Innocent. But she's not innocent, they don't know her."

"…. justice was not served."

[Article Thirteen] Stuff 11/10/2013

Like the provocation defence for men the law commission wants a separate 'special' defence for women who kill their abusers. This is framed by the media as a negative scenario which will lead to women killing their partners merely to 'get rid of' them. This defence is also perpetuating the idea that women have to be 'mad' to commit crime, especially violent crime, and should be offered treatment to reobtain normality.

"A law review could make it easier for battered victims who kill their abusers to avoid prison, but some worry it could provide a loophole for those wanting to get rid of their partners".

"When victims of family violence kill their abusers, they are often acting in response to years of physical, sexual and psychological abuse."

[Article Fourteen] Stuff 10/11/2015

The assumption around mental health and crime with women have become so ingrained within our culture they have become common sense and the women themselves are focused on fixing themselves to become 'real' women again. The focus by the media on their mental deficit has become normal and expected, backed up by the law and the experts as a way of explaining how they could have acted so unwomanly. This also enforces the message to the public that they are no longer at risk as the women have been 'fixed'. However, by focusing solely on treating these psychological defects all other factors leading up to their offending are ignored which could lead the women to reoffend.

Discourses of Badness

Discourse of Badness: The Evil Woman

The figure of the evil woman (Oliver, 2008) is represented in the media through a discourse of badness, attributing the features of the monstrous feminine to a woman who killed her husband without recourse to a history of victimization, or mental illness. Acting outside the norms of femininity, she is produced as unnatural, manipulative and monstrous having deviated from the norms of legal and social morality and appropriate femininity. Positioned as doubly deviant, she embodies intimate danger through the qualities of a cold, calculating non-human animal of prey (Birkett, 2014; Collins, 2014). Her act of murder is represented through the legitimacy of a typology that blurs the boundary between the psychological production of deviance and the media representation of evil. In this way the discourse of badness is realized through the metaphor of the black widow, immediately recognized in the social imagination as a woman who kills her husband, and is necessarily guilty through her monstrosity.

History of The Evil Woman

Without the legitimacy of disorder, typologies have been developed to categorize behavior of dangerous criminals to ascertain motivations and create a 'criminal profile' for use in the legal system. As a typology, a black widow is categorized as committing her crime for financial advantage, often through the use of poison, and then simultaneously 'nurture' their intended victim until their death (Armstrong, 1999, Birkett, 2014). Often these deaths go undetected, at least initially, because they often present as 'good' wives enacting appropriate feminine grief (Harrison, Murphey, Ho, Bowers & Flaherty, 2015). The difficulty for society to accept that a woman is capable of such murder is part of the camouflage of the black widow (Miller, 2014). Through typology research, it is the manipulation of normative femininity to hide murderous instinct, which renders her evil. Unlike the woman who kills her abusive husband, the evil figure does not have a history of victimization. Therefore, the fascination and horror of the potential potent and deadly woman is sensationalized through the media as the monstrous feminine and represents the most fearful figure of woman (Jewkes, 2011). Positioned through a discourse of bad/evil she is devoid of excuse or sympathy and the focus shifts from the crime to the gendered characteristics of evil womanhood (Weatherby, Blanche & Jones, 2008) and the knowledge that is produced through 'knowing' her type renders her culpable and deserving of harsh punishment (Miller, 2014; Weatherby, Blanche & Jones, 2008). While the figure of the evil women may meet the conditions of excess emotion within a discourse of madness, here the pathology is in need of punishment.

Media Representations

The figure of the evil woman is evoked through representing Helen Milner as the Black Widow, summoning the image of a killer who was devoid of emotion and acted in a cold-blooded, calculated manner to obtain her husband's life insurance. It is through this image that the relationship between the legitimacy of typology

research and the media representations produce and reproduce women's violence through the monstrous feminine.

There were many stories written about Helen and I have selected four to use within this analysis to draw attention to the ways the media, and psychological research that seeks to categorize women's violent crime, subjected her to a gendered discourse of badness.

The articles construct Milner as evil to appeal to the fascination and horror of the consumer that she is so 'bad' that even her own mother had no empathy for her and that no one came forward to defend her as a 'good' wife or mother. In this way, the framing of the article calls on dominant discourses of the evil woman, rather than the a more sympathetic understanding of women who are positioned through a discourse of madness.

"Not even Helen Milner's mother could find a nice word to say about her."

"….no one came to Milner's defense."

The articles initially draw on 'expert advice' that produce a history of knowledge of women who kill based on case studies. Milner joins New Zealand's roll of shame. Embedded in that history is evidence of typologies that analyze women's behavior through their location in the gendered moral order of mad to bad categories, with the most deviant and dangerous produced as evil. As can be seen in the extracts below, the typology of Black Widow is constituted through the criteria of cold-blooded, more bizarre (incomprehensible to common-sense norms of femininity and discourses of feminine pathology), and performed without male coercion (pathologised victimization).

"New Zealand has a long history of female murderers…." (3 mentioned)

"Detectives spoken to about other cold-blooded killers said they could remember none similar to Milner." (Previous killers were themselves victims of abuse or scapegoats).

"She noted Christchurch was infamous for 'bizarre' cases – but that didn't offer an explanation for Milner's behavior."

"…. certainly the worst female killer I've ever heard of."

"I've never heard of anybody like Helen Milner. She just stands out, he said"

"What set Milner apart was the fact she acted alone without the influence of another, or a man, like other female criminals."

[Article Fifteen] Stuff 22/12/2013

The consistent rendering of the image of the Black Widow frames the articles that meet the typology criteria for manipulation, coercing family members to protect her, while at the same time manipulating (luring) her victim (prey) as a 'good wife'.

"Ben says his father did love Milner, but she had control over him and she even tried to lure Ben into her web." [Article Sixteen]

They framed their story through the coercion story, in which we see the extent of her murderous instinct.

'Black Widow' Helen Milner tore my family apart

"The manipulative Christchurch woman was recently sentenced to life in prison with 17 years' non-parole after she was found guilty of murdering Philip, her husband, in 2009".

"…used as a pawn by his stepmother…. who asserted that Phil was not Ben's father – just so she could cover up the cold-blooded murder."

"Helen must have been desperate to come up with that plan. People always said I looked like him, so she was grasping at straws."

"…. premeditated killing…."

"…. love for Milner that had blinded him to her treacherous plan…"

 "Anyone who takes another human's life, for no reason at all, is despicable."

"…. despicable for using him to cover up the murder.

 "I felt she slowly wanted to take over my mind…. she wanted to make me a drone…."

[Article Sixteen] New Zealand Woman's weekly 10/3/2014

For the consumers of this story, the legitimacy of the typology/the figure of evil only becomes comprehensible if she is dehumanized. This is partially achieved through her position as a bad mother. Her potential as the figure of evil, rather than the typological criteria of killing more than one intimate partner, is realized through her history of luring not only her children, but manipulating her femininity among her colleagues by luring them into the cultural assumptions embedded in discourses of madness.

"At the time 'The Black Widow' was actually serving jail time for another shocking crime – in a mother's act of ultimate betrayal, Milner had framed her own son…." [Sixteen]

"My old lady's paid for a hit to be put on me," Kearns said." [Seventeen]

"Earlier this month, a High Court Judge ordered Milner to pay her son $55,000 in damages for her 'outrageous and calculated' actions." [Seventeen]

"…. Kearns said he would never speak to his mother again and would bankrupt her if needed to get hold of the money". [Seventeen]

"Milner was nicknamed 'The Black Widow' by work colleagues because of her constant talk about how she planned to poison her husband." [sixteen]

Even in stories of the bad mother, the figure of the evil women frames the articles, despite the typology specifying it as a type of serial killer. Legitimated as a category, the Black Widow, with a history of manipulation, not only killed/cared for her

husband for monetary gain, she used poison (her potent and deadly sexuality) as her method and her manipulative femininity to lure 'us' into believing it was suicide.

"…. concocted an elaborate scheme to make it look like suicide …."

"Motivated by greed…."

While Helen does not meet the criteria established by Kelleher and Kelleher (2013) as a female serial killer, the figure of the Black Widow draws attention to her potential lethality and the consumer is consistently and repeatedly reminded of her crime as an embodiment of the dangerousness of women's out of control sexuality and femininity.

Discourse of Badness: From the Figure of Evil to Victim of Madness

I selected this story for its similarities to the representation of the figure of the evil women constituted through a discourse of badness. However, rather than positioned through the qualities of a cold and calculating animal of prey, the figure represented here has a history of mental illness and victimization. Represented in the media as lacking feminine emotion, her deviation from the norms of feminine morality is immediately rendered visible through madness discourse and through the legitimacy of the typology of partner killers. Unlike the Black Widow, the figure represented here is monstrous through her participation in the crime and a victim through her reluctant willingness to participate through her submissive position in an intimate relationship (Miller, 2014). While it is conceivable to understand a woman's capacity to kill her violent partner through a discourse of madness (BWS), collaborating in murder with an abusive partner transgresses cultural sensibilities. In this way, she is culpable for her participation as an accomplice and to blame for her victimization within her intimate relationship (bad), and positioned through madness discourse, her culpability is mediated. She is therefore both responsible for her unfeminine socially deviant behavior, and positioned as mad through the psychological gaze.

History

Typology research on women who kill has found that the majority of women have received a diagnosis of pathological disorder, including histrionic personality, BPD, bipolar disorder. However, often mental illness is ascribed "after the perpetrator is caught and scrutinized by the public" as the only conceivable was to makes sense of such monstrous acts (Harrison et al., 2015, p.387). The media draws on expert testimony to legitimate Bipolar Affective Disorder complicated with Borderline Personality traits to constitute her as mad, and her disordered emotions are framed through an appeal to knowledge of her deficit.

Media Representations

In the first article, we see the evil woman discourse in action through her disordered emotions describing her behavior as devoid of feminine emotion and therefore disturbing. The figure of the monstrous feminine emerges through her willingness to be a good wife and simultaneously refuse the essentialised feminine desire to nurture. Initially the media framed their story as her agentic willingness to offend

alongside her husband, however the figure of the evil women is contested through discourses of madness, including her vulnerability to suffering symptoms of vulnerability to an abusive partner (BWS) to explain her feminine deviance.

Woman jailed for murder of mother-in-law

"A 28 –year-old women has been sentenced to a minimum of 13 years and seven months in prison for her part in the brutal axe-murder of her mother-in-law."

"…. remained emotionless…."

"Actively participated."

"…. had been present during the planning, and had been an equal participant in the murder."

"Your demonstration was frank, unemotive, and disturbing," he said."

"Janelle Holl told police David 'kind of asked me to help him, but I wanted to help him."

"The court this morning heard that Janelle Holl had a history of mental illness, which could not be ruled out as a factor in her offending."

[Article Eighteen] Stuff 18/7/2014

A discourse of madness shifts the focus from the figure of evil through the legitimacy psychological disorder. The effect of this shift is to remove her agency and her actions become more recognizable in the social imagination. Framed as controlled by her partner rather than through discourses of bad, she is positioned as less culpable of murderous intent and more deserving of sympathy for feminine pathology.

Axe murderer Janelle Holl has sentence quashed

"…. has had her sentence squashed and replaced with a lesser sentence."

"She was given a discount for her role in the murder relative to that of her husband, and her mental health."

[Article Nineteen] Marlborough Express 13/3/2015

"A forensic psychologist found Janelle Holl had a history of bipolar affective disorder type I, complicated by borderline personality traits." [Article Eighteen]

"There was evidence she felt trapped and intimidated in her marriage, and her family had tried to seek mental health services for her shortly before the murder."

"But it was found she was less culpable than her husband…. she was under his control…."

"…. her mental health did not point to a risk of reoffending."

[Article Twenty] NZ Herald 13/3/2015

Framed through a discourse of madness, including her vulnerability to her abusive partner legitimates the pathologisation of women's behavior and she is no longer positioned as bad. The media reproduces the story through the retelling of women's deficit and therefore appeals to normative cultural assumptions of women's violence. Unlike the figure of evil (Helen Milner), the mad woman is deserving of a lesser sentence in the social imagination.

Discourse of Mad Mothers

Discourse of Mad Mothers: Infanticide

I have included this article in the analysis as it appeared in the media during the writing of this thesis, and represents the discourse of madness through the legal categorisation of infanticide. Infanticide in the legal system is governed through Section 178 of the Crimes Act 1961 and is grounds for a defence "Where a woman causes the death of any child of hers under the age of 10 years in a manner that amounts to culpable homicide, and where at the time of the offence the balance of her mind was disturbed, by reason of her not having fully recovered from the effect of giving birth to that or any other child, or by reason of the effect of lactation, or by reason of any disorder consequent upon childbirth or lactation, to such an extent that she should not be held fully responsible, she is guilty of infanticide, and not of murder or manslaughter…" (Crimes Act, 1961). Under the Crimes Act, a woman's reproductive biological body is located as the site of pathology and the disease of her mind so much so that "…criminal responsibility is diminished even to the point of insanity" (Coombes, 2000, p. 150).

History of Infanticide

Postpartum psychosis has a long history in both law and psychology, and is deeply embedded in dominant discourses of the essentialised reproductive woman's body and the criteria of the naturalised good mother. The recognition that in certain circumstances, out of control hormones and postpartum depression, renders women who kill their child more comprehensible (Kruger, van Straaten, Taylor, Lourens & Dukas, 2014) than the monstrous maternal constituted through a diagnosis of MSBP. Rather than bad, through a discourse of madness a woman who kills a child due to her out of control hormones is in need of psychiatric treatment rather than incarceration, to return to a state of normal hegemonic femininity. The dominant discourse of the good mother is unchallenged through the medicalisation of murder (Laster, 1989).

While infanticide is not a psychological disorder, the history of pathologising women's reproduction is legitimated within the DSM, and has as its focus the riskiness of women's bodies. According to the DSM 5, infanticide is most likely to be carried out by women suffering postpartum psychosis with episodes of hallucinations of killing their infant or delusions the infant is suffering possession. The DSM 5 recognises bipolar and other mood disorders during pregnancy, a shift from occurring in the postpartum period of the previous version of DSM as necessary to prevent postpartum psychosis that is the major risk factor for infanticide (DSM 5, 2013).

A concern around this focus on biological deficiency and risk, is that new mothers who are found to be suffering from peri- and post- natal issues such as depression, are assumed to be at risk of harming their child, reproducing women's depression as in need of discipline and regulation through practices of monitoring and medicalising their experiences (Murray & Finn, 2011). Despite no evidence of psychoses, and no evidence of any differences between postpartum and other forms of depression,

women's reproduction remains a site of control (Dobson & Sales, 2000) and women's bodies are the site of intervention based on the categorisation of women's distress as individual pathology (Ussher, 2013).

Infanticide depends on the expert testimony of the medicalisation of women's biology through discourse of madness that has a 'special status' in the legal system. It maintains common sense understandings that women are not accountable for their behaviour due to their diminished functioning of a body that is difficult to contain. Bodily functions such as childbirth and lactation are evidence of disordered bodies and therefore render women vulnerable rather than bad (Campbell, 2009); Dobson & Sales, 2000). It is the pathologisation of women's reproductive bodies and their riskiness that are used in the legal setting to locate the mad mother who is so impaired by childbirth that her excess emotion removes her ability to reason. The article is framed through an exploration of 'lesser' sentences based on madness discourse that has a temporal relationship with reproduction.

Media Representations

In the article we are presented with the issue of mother's who kill a child but who are not responsible for their action through a deficit of reason. The representation here is of a mental disease located in the pathology of childbirth that needs treatment rather than punishment. Rather than the figure of the monstrous maternal body, her failure to conform to the feminine desire to nurture is contested through a vulnerability to mental illness in such a way that her out of control hormones enable a sympathetic response.

The article was entitled "*When mothers kill but don't go to jail*" (Stuff, 24/11/2015). [Article Twenty-One]

Infanticide References:

"A mother who admits killing her child may not be convicted of murder."

"But yet in your case the charge is one of infanticide and some will perceive your treatment by the court as sympathetic and inconsistent with that in other cases."

"Infanticide is a charge available to women who can show their minds have been temporarily 'disturbed' by the stress of childbirth or breastfeeding."

"Usually these sentences are non-custodial; such as community service, supervision or mental health treatment."

"Some argue babies have a lower status in society and this is reflected in infanticides lesser penalties."

"It is now thought child homicide is correlated with socio-cultural factors or personality disorders rather than hormonal imbalances, Midson said."

Expert testimony that shifts the dominant discourse of madness from biological deficit to social-cultural factors that can be attributed to personality disorder, the notion of homicide rather than infanticide does not appear to shift the dominant cultural understanding of women's madness. It remains incomprehensible. The

appearance of this article at this time was related to a focus in the media on child abuse in New Zealand, and not related to a recent case. The last reported infanticide defence was 5 years ago. Therefore, the focus on infanticide in a history of high rates of child homicide, the representation of women's madness remains in the social imagination confirming a preoccupation with explanations of women who do not meet the criteria of good mother are suffering the effects of a defective and pathological body/mind. Expert testimony legitimates the representation of temporary madness both drawing on the inevitability of natural motherhood through treatment of an individual disorder.

"Some of the women described 'delusionally based mercy killing' – killing to protect or rescue the children from some imagined doom…."

"In a sense the killing was because the child mattered so much to them."

"All the women I talked to had very treatable mental illness."

"Psychiatric reports found she suffered from 'a major depressive illness' and it was clear 'the balance of her mind was disturbed' following her latest pregnancy."

"You lost control."

Framed through a discourse of madness, including a woman's vulnerability to her out of control hormones legitimates the pathologisation of women's reproduction. The media reproduces the legitimacy of reproductive pathology through a retelling of deficit that appeals to normative cultural assumptions that women, unless mad, are naturally good mother's regardless of their circumstances.

Discourses of Motherhood

The following analyses have a different space within the media than those above that are framed through the legitimacy of psychological knowledge of disorder. Women who have committed a criminal offence, particularly with respect to mothering are represented in the following media reports as constructed through their deviation from the motherhood mandate derived from the inevitable natural trajectory of womanhood sustained through a natural desire to be good mothers. Women who commit crime do not conform to the requirements of the good mother are positioned as bad mothers and demonised.

Discourse of Bad Mothers: The Evil Woman

The articles chosen here are produced through a discourse of badness, in this representation through the figure of the bad/evil mother, attributing the features of the monstrous maternal to a woman who was held responsible for the sexual abuse of her daughter. Acting outside the norms of natural motherhood she is produced a monstrous having deviated from the norms of legal and social morality. Her actions, unlike those who are framed through a vulnerability to an abusive partner (BWS), are framed through a discourse of badness and she is positioned as deserving the force of the law.

Media Representations

The media representation is framed through a mother's admission of selling her 14-year-old daughter for sex. The notion of such an act is beyond our social comprehension of a mother. The framing of the story draws our attention to a mother who is so anomalous and deviant from the norms of mothering that we are drawn to both the fascination and the horror that she is so bad she represents the monstrous maternal made flesh (Morrissey, 2010), the kind of mother who acts against nature and which society must fear. In the media reports, we hear that not only did she act against the natural 'laws' of motherhood by allowing a man to sexually abuse her daughter, but she also used threats of violence to ensure her daughter complied. This is not the behaviour of an intensive 'good' mother who we expect to protect their children from abuse. Such is our fascination with the horror of the evil woman, that there was no discussion in the media of any lack of protection of the child from her father.

"The 47-year-old woman pleaded guilty to charges of being a party to sexual violation and being a party to attempted sexual violation."

"The defendant would allow (the man) to take the complainant into a bedroom at the address."

"The (mother) would threaten the complainant with physical violence and state "just do what he says or I will give you a hiding" and "just do what he says and I will be happy.""

"She offered no explanation for her actions except to say she was remorseful and sorry."

[Article Twenty-Two] Stuff 5/8/2015

Woman admits pimping out daughter

"She could face as long as 20 years in jail."

"When spoken to the woman – who has no previous convictions – admitted she allowed her daughter to go with the man and that she received money for it."

[Article Twenty-Three] NZ Herald 5/8/2015

Not only did this woman act against the natural laws of motherhood, she did it for monetary gain, and is therefore attributed with the masculine position of 'pimp'. In this way, she is so unfeminine in her deviance from the norm that her behaviour warrants a long sentence. This framing renders the real possibility that a mother is capable of abusing her child outside the social moral order impossible. Rather than disordered, she is constructed through a discourse of bad mother, and the figure of the evil woman is produced.

Discourse of Bad Mothers: Tensions Between Good and Bad

The articles chosen here are produced through the discourse of badness, in these representations as woman who not only violated the norms of femininity through their criminal activity but also violated the norms of motherhood for failing to protect their children. The framing of the articles ignored the issue of what is commonly reported as New Zealand's problematic binge drinking culture but maintained a gaze on social ideals of normative femininity and motherhood.

Media Representations

 These two articles again construct the offence through the behaviour of a woman, not because she was arrested for drink-driving but because she did so with her children in the car. Because of the incomprehensibility of a mother's capacity to protect her children, her femininity as a subject was also under scrutiny and she was also framed violating the norms of femininity through the attributes of hostility, belligerence and failure to cooperate.

Mother pleads guilty to drink driving with four children in the car

"A Hawera mother has pleaded guilty to drink driving and leading police on a short pursuit with four children in tow."

"She was initially hostile, belligerent and uncooperative before being arrested and handcuffed…."

".... pleaded guilty to drink driving, failing to stop, dangerous driving and ill treatment of a child."

[Article Twenty-Four] Stuff 22/9/2015

Despite her claim to leaving what could be understood as a potentially violent domestic situation, this framing does not evoke the kind of sympathy that might be present when a history of violence is considered (e.g. BWS). Instead, her failure of

femininity and her failure as a protective mother she is constructed as a bad mother, individually responsible for her lack.

"She offered no explanation for her driving, saying only 'I had to leave the house after an argument."

[Article Twenty-Five] NZ Herald 22/9/2015

In the second story, perhaps because the mother did not fail to meet the requirements of passive femininity (she was not hostile) evokes a more sympathetic response. In this report of a woman's drink driving, she is framed through a discourse of a bad mother but at the same time, vulnerable to her circumstances and was trying to be a good mother and get her child to school. In this article, rather than framed through her unfeminine socially deviant behaviour (abusive to police), she was rendered less bad through her failure to protect.

Hastings mum drunk on school run disqualified from driving

"…Judge Bridget Mackintosh said her offending was 'terrible'."

"But the judge noted Hale had a number of personal issues and that she was remorseful."

"Hale then got out of her car and took both her children into the school."

"She refused to say why she drove, and abused police."

[Article Twenty-Six] Stuff 9/9/2015

Hastings mum caught drink-driving with children in car ordered to stay home

"…. ordered to stay home for the weekends…."

"…. clearly been having problems in her life…."

"Police had been told the woman knew she shouldn't have been driving but did so because she wanted to get the child to school on time."

[Article Twenty-Seven] NZ Herald 9/9/2015

What was apparent in these articles was the positioning of the women through the paternalism of a legal response to women's criminal behaviour that is at odds with hegemonic femininity and in need of disciplinary advice, to stay at home for weekends, the rightful place for a good mother to be. Through the framing of these two media reports, what appears to be on trial is the discourse of good mothering, rather than drink driving.

Discourse of Bad Mothers: Danger

During the course of this research two stories were included which focussed on mothers buying their teenage daughters alcohol. Adults buying teenagers alcohol is not a new phenomenon in our culture, yet at times it becomes a criminal act. The media representations here are framed to draw our attention to the well-established moral trajectory of what constitutes a good mother, positioning these mothers through a discourse of bad mothering. The legal response to the mother's behaviour reported here concerns the regulation of motherhood and is connected to the prevailing moralities and norms regarding gender and sexuality and the protection of children.

Media Representations

The representations focus on mothers rather than on the socially embedded problem of teenage alcohol consumption within New Zealand, which has become normalised as a culture of intoxication (Lyons, Goodwin, McCreanor & Griffin, 2015). The media makes visible the moral outrage about alcohol abuse in communities, however in these two stories, it is mothers who are out of order and mother-blame is sensationalised and assumes unquestionable legitimacy.

Story One

Christchurch woman convicted for alcohol-fuelled teenage parties

"…. supplied alcohol to several teenagers her daughter invited to two parties held at their house late last year. "

"It is the first conviction for supplying alcohol to minors in Canterbury under new liquor laws…."

"…most cases of adults supplying alcohol went undetected."

"According to police, several children at the party, including her daughter, were so intoxicated they were vomiting."

"Saunders did not ask for consent from the children's parents at either party". (Correction made here by myself as read parent's children).

"In this case, a conviction was necessary as Saunders offending was not a one-off and was 'on the upper end of the scale', Harris said.

[Article Twenty-Eight] Stuff 29/4/2015

To maintain the dominant discourse of motherhood, the media reports the risk that mothers are to children, rather than teenagers, and enables the consumers to engage an emotional response to the failure of this mother to meet the standards of appropriate mothering. The legal response draws our attention for the need to regulate normative femininity to maintain the gendered moral order. In this story, her crime is sensationalised to serve as a warning to consumers of the consequences of out of control femininity.

In the second story, the discourse of bad mother is framed through the mother's individual choice to not only provide alcohol, but through a double deviance that also questioned her moral position with regard to teenage sex.

Story two

Woman fined for buying teen daughter vodka

".... said the woman had followed a 'conscious course of conduct over a prolonged period' at the start of last year, during which she would buy alcohol for her teenage daughter and her school friends."

"The children subsequently engaged in sexual activity."

"The mother sent pictures of genitalia infected by sexually-transmitted diseases to the teenage couple."

[Article Twenty-Nine] NZ Herald 23/1/2015 (All quotes from Article Twenty-Five)

Framed through bad mother discourse, the education of sexually transmitted infections that might otherwise be recognised as good mothering is also brought into question. Further evidence of mother-blame is realised through a commonly held assumption that a good mother should meet the criteria of the motherhood mandate through intensive mothering, and involves above all that she cares for her children above all else, including employment (Jacques & Radke, 2012; Sevon, 2011). In the legal response to this woman, claims to potential employment further position her as deviant and therefore she breaches the norms of good mother.

"A conviction would make this difficult he said, as well as any bid to find future employment."

"But Judge Gibson dismissed the argument as 'merely speculative' and convicted the woman on all six charges."

The impact of this type of charge on her career is dismissed as unimportant with the assumption seeming to be that as she is a woman her career does not really matter in the first place. She should focus on being a mother instead. The assumption for this being if she had not been a career woman maybe her children would not have been able to manipulate her into buying alcohol. Again we see the idea of the easily manipulated woman who can even be talked into actions by children.

The risk of bad mothering is brought into view through a discourse of madness where the assessment of experts is used to explain her deviant behaviour.

"As a result of the charges her children had been taken away from her by Child, Youth and Family for six weeks and she had undergone extensive therapy."

"Her psychologist's report, supplied to the court, said she had been trying to befriend her children instead of parenting them, but had since changed her mind-set."

The legitimacy of expert knowledge of the normalisation of the good mother confirms her deviance, both bad and mad. What is evident in this article is the positioning of the bad mother who does not meet the criteria for legitimate madness,

but rather a failure of hegemonic femininity and her capacity to care for her children and therefore in need of disciplinary advice. The framing of this article depends on a normative moral order, and serves as a warning to those who fail.

 "I am disgusted by her actions and can only assume she is a very disturbed person."

Mother-blame is not new in the history of women's lives, and teenage binge drinking behaviour being blamed on mothers is intelligible within such a history of women's deficit. To make sense of a mother's failure to protect her children comprehensible, the deviance is framed as both a transgression of the moral (legal) order, and a transgression of the appropriate norms of a good mother. Through the framing of these two media reports, what appears to be on trial is the discourse of good mothering.

Discourse of Bad Mothers: Bad or Mad?

The following two media stories are included as they differently draw attention to the moral trajectory of what constitutes a good mother and contest the boundaries between good and bad. The legal response to the mothers' behaviours depended on how the women are constituted as moral citizens in relation to their children's deaths.

Media Representations

The first article is framed through the discourse of the bad mother who failed to protect her child. What is different in the framing of this article is that the mother is positioned through her status as a health professional rather than as a mother. This framing establishes a particular doubt in the social imagination, rather than a bad mother, we are drawn to the exceptional circumstances of a well-respected professional, who through her appropriate feminine emotional response to the loss of her child maintains her good mother status.

Hot car death: 'Death is punishment enough' – Family First

 "A Wanganui health professional who pleaded guilty to manslaughter after her child was left in a hot car has been discharged without conviction."

"The court heard the boy died of heatstroke and dehydration."

"The defendant sobbed as the summary of facts was read out in court."

"The charging document stated she "omitted without lawful excuse to perform her legal duty to provide that child with necessaries, thereby bringing the death of the child in circumstances where her omission was a major departure from the standard of care expected of a reasonable person to whom that legal duty applied".

"After the sentencing, Crown Prosecutor Lance Rowe said the court had to balance the premium that the law placed on the vulnerability of children versus the "exceptional circumstances" in this case".

[Article Thirty] NZ Herald 5/6/2015

The construction of a good mother who makes a tragic mistake rather than intentionally harming her child (as in MSBP) is more understandable within the social moral order. To engage public sympathy, the media account depends heavily on the expertise of professionals

to make the incomprehensible more intelligible. Expert testimony is used to legitimate the difference between bad mothers who might leave their children in the car intentionally, and mothers, who in a moment of madness, are suffering the symptoms of 'forgotten baby syndrome'. James Reason's Swiss Cheese Model of human error is an attempt to explain that accidents are a result of a number of events that when they converge are likely to end in accident or injury (Porter, Bliss & Sleet, 2009). The media representation draws our attention to the various events that converged to add legitimacy to the newly developing syndrome.

Forgotten baby syndrome: it can happen to anyone

"It was what was believed to have happened at Whanganui Hospital last Friday, when a mother left her 16-month-old boy in her car while she went to work instead of dropping the child at the nearby Noah's Ark Early Learning Centre".

"She did not usually take the child to the centre on Fridays. The father was unable to do so, as normal, on the day of the death as he was working."

"British psychologist James Reason calls it the "Swiss Cheese Model".

"University of South Florida molecular physiology professor David Diamond told the Washington Post that stress - either sudden or chronic – could weaken the brain's higher-functioning centres and give people a type of "tunnel vision" where they forget about their child".

"The quality of prior parental care seems to be irrelevant [in these cases]," he said".

"The important factors that keep showing up involve a combination of stress, emotion, lack of sleep and change in routine, where the basal ganglia [part of the brain controlling voluntary but barely conscious actions] is trying to do what it's supposed to do, and the conscious mind is too weakened to resist. "What happens is that the memory circuits in a vulnerable hippocampus literally get overwritten, like with a computer program".

"He was not aware of a similar case in New Zealand where a baby had been forgotten in a car but knew of many where a parent had deliberately left a child inside".

[Article Thirty-One] Stuff 21/1/2015

The expert knowledge of a psychologist and a molecular physiologist does not have the legitimacy of a recognised disorder and yet the explanation becomes embedded in our social imagination through the recognition of stress, emotion, sleep deprivation affecting brain functioning, resonating with the symptoms of women's reproductive pathology realised in infanticide. Research on 'forgotten baby syndrome' has not been conducted, although Costa and Grundstein (2016) recently published in article on the incidence of children left unattended in cars in Brazil and

found that in 71% of cases the child was forgotten and in particular, on the way to daycare. Given that the majority of daycare drop offs are completed by mothers, the development of such a syndrome may well become another discourse of women's madness.

The discourse of madness is put in tension with a discourse of badness through expert opinion based on 'other' examples of 'parents' (specifically mothers) who deliberately leave a child in the car. The deliberate act is made visible through good and bad mothering. This framing confirms the riskiness of women's excess emotion understood through the pathologisation of women's deficit and at the same time positions her as a good professional mother. Her status as a health professional frames an argument against the 'bad' mother through the commonly held assumption and legitimated through expert opinion, that 'other' mothers (welfare dependent, no employment, uneducated) do not deserve our sympathy. Fear of the bad mother confirms the riskiness of mothers who do not conform to the cultural assumptions that a natural mother as nurturing in their failure to protect their child.

"…knew of many where a parent had deliberately left a child inside'.

The discourse of madness, legitimated through expert opinion based on cultural assumptions of women's pathology is authorised through the legal system, and the idea that she is not responsible for her failure to protect is brought into the social imagination. As a victim of her deficit, she is not legally (morally) in need of discipline, as 'death is punishment enough.' Produced as a good mother, she does not warrant the force of the law.

"This is the wrong action to take," says Dr Gallavin.

"What are we going to do here? We're going to prosecute a stressed-out parent over something that is an absolute tragedy, where more often than not, cases like this are a discharge without conviction – I bet my bottom dollar it's going to happen here." (17/4/2015)

https://www.familyfirst.org.nz/2015/04/charging-whanganui-mother-wrong-action-to-take/

The 'other' mothers (welfare dependent, no employment, uneducated) who do not deserve our sympathy also appeared in the media, through discourse of badness. The mother who fails to protect her child when engaged in an activity that does not meet the moral criteria of a good professional mother who individually manages the conditions of motherhood, is less likely to be positioned through a discourse of madness. There is no mention of this woman's stress, emotion, or sleep deprivation; rather she is positioned as abandoning her children to go shopping.

All quotes from New Zealand Herald (2/12/2015) [Extra Article]

"An Auckland mother left her baby twins in her car in a mall carpark for more than 40 minutes while she shopped, thinking it would be "okay" because she had parked in the shade".

"The mum got back at 3.30pm and said she parked at about 2.50pm. She said 'I was only going to be 10 minutes'. She had Kmart bags ... she hadn't heard them paging her. She said she felt terrible and 'you probably think I'm a bad mother'.

"Then she said, 'I tell my husband all the time that you can't leave your babies in the car in this country, they just go off at you'. Then she said 'I purposefully parked the car undercover and in the shade ... they normally sleep for ages'."

"The woman, who has young children of her own, did not want to judge the other mother but was horrified at her explanation and excuse".

"What if someone had crashed into her car, stolen her car or taken the children? What if something had happened to her in the mall and nobody new these babies were out in the carpark? I didn't sleep all night. I rang the police this morning on behalf of the babies - someone needs to know."

Rather than a legal narrative, the media representation in this article is produced through the social intervention in normalising 'good' mothers. The fascination and horror of any breaches of the motherhood mandate are produced and reproduced through the surveillance and discipline of normal feminine behaviour. The discourse of badness frames the 'other' mother through a transgression of the moral (legal) order, and a transgression of the norms of a good mother. We make sense of her failure comprehensible through a constant surveillance of good mothering without any understanding of the conditions of women's lives.

Discourse of Bad Mothers: Mother-blame

The media story here is also framed through a discourse of badness that draws attention to the failure of the moral trajectory of a good mother. The legal response to the mother's failure to protect her child based on the assumption of that a moral mother will be responsible for her child's death. She is not quite the figure of the evil woman, however in her failure to protect she is positioned as to blame.

Research suggests that mothers are increasingly subject to failure to protect laws, especially when they refuse to proactively seek help to end violence. In the context of common law, mothers are required to protect their children by notifying police or child protection services, and removing the child from the risk (Morgan & Coombes, 2016).

Media Representations

The framing of the articles in this story have none of the elements that might elicit sympathy for this mother's failure to protect. Emma Le Fleming Roberts is not only blamed, but because she is blame-worthy she is also named and shamed, positioned as an object to be feared for her failure as a natural mother.

Mother charged after autistic son's death

 "A mother has been charged with failing to get her autistic son medical help after his stepfather allegedly fatally attacked him."

"…. charged with failing to get her five-year-old autistic son Leon medical treatment before his death in May."

"He later died in hospital from serious head injuries and his stepfather James Roberts was charged with his murder."

[Article Thirty-Two] NZ Newswire 9/7/2015

Leon Jayet-Cole's mum Emma Le Fleming Roberts charged

"Police have charged the mother of 5-year-old autistic boy Leon Jayet-Cole for failing to get him medical treatment."

[Article Thirty-Three] Stuff 9/7/2015

Mother of autistic boy charged for failing to get medical treatment

"…. charged with failing in her legal duty as carer to get him medical treatment on the day he died."

"It is a charge that carries a maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment."

[Article Thirty-Four] NZ Herald 9/7/2015

Mother denies failing to get treatment for boy who died

"…. she omitted to discharge a legal duty' to seek medical treatment for him, which was likely to cause serious illness or death."

"It states that the omission was 'a major departure from the standard of care expected of a reasonable person."

[Article Thirty-Five] Stuff 4/8/2015

All the articles are produced from a discourse of badness, specifically for her failure to protect her child, and her failure to seek treatment in a timely manner. Her double failure resonates with the commonly held assumption in the domestic violence literature that a woman is responsible for the violence against her. Research has shown that there is a pervasive discourse of maternal failure and deficit in legal responses to domestic violence that shift the focus away from the perpetrator of violence to the mother's failure to protect (Morgan & Coombes, 2016). Absent in the media stories is the action of the perpetrator, rather it is the failure of the mother that is sensationalised engaging the fascination and horror of consumers when facing the fearful figure of the monstrous maternal.

Leon Jayet-Cole's mother Emma Roberts gives birth to daughter

"Child, youth and family said it remained 'involved and is focussed' on the safety and well-being of Leon's siblings but refused to comment further."

[Article Thirty-Six] Stuff 17/7/2015

The common law requirement for mothers to protect their children is child centred, with a focus on the woman and her capacity to protect her children, and ignores the conditions of violence in the home. While the law requires a mother report violence against children, within the context of domestic violence mothers fear the removal of their children by statutory agencies (Morgan & Coombes, 2016). The removal of children affirms women's responsibility and reproduces mother-blame.

Framed as responsible to failing to protect her children, the discourse of badness positions the mother as blame-worthy through her transgression of the moral order of common law that operates through normalisation of mother-blame. It is motherhood that is the object of

The discourse of badness frames the 'other' mother through a transgression of the moral (legal) order, and a transgression of the norms of a good mother. We make sense of her failure comprehensible through a constant surveillance of good mothering without any understanding of the conditions of women's lives. Through the framing of this story, what appears to be on trial is the discourse of good mothering.

Discourse of Bad Mother: The Monstrous Feminine

The following media stories are included as they draw attention to common sense understandings of sexual difference when faced with acts of violence and destruction, and the very real possibility that we have to confront the notion that women are capable of the desecration of children's graves, which is at odds with the social moral order of femininity, and women's natural instincts as mothers. While the woman at the heart of this story is not a mother, it is her lack of conformity to feminine norms of passivity, nurturing and emotional responsibility that organises the storyline, and stereotypes of a defective or non-human woman is sensationalised. Acting outside the norms of femininity and the inevitability of motherhood, she is positioned as monstrous having deviated from the norms of legal and social morality and appropriate femininity. To make the criminal act of destroying the graves of children comprehensible, the representation shifts focus from an act of vandalism and unfeminine socially deviant behaviour to the constitution of the monstrous feminine.

Media Representations

Four stories were collected on a woman who vandalised the graves of children in South Auckland. In the initial reports of the desecration of the children's graves, it was assumed by police that it was the behaviour of a man, as such an act is outside cultural expectations of feminine behaviour.

 "The man who desecrated dozens of children's graves at a South Auckland cemetery was caught on CCTV footage, police say."

[Article Thirty-Seven] NZ Herald 18/5/2015

"Grieving parents at the scene said they were amazed at how much effort had been put into the destruction."

[Article Thirty-Nine] Stuff 11/6/2015

"I didn't think they'd actually be able to find the person and I'm very surprised it was a female."

[Article Thirty-Eight] NZ Herald 18/5/2015

The bad mother discourse operates through the media representation in her failure to protect. Rather than a legal narrative, the media representation in this article is produced through the normalisation of a good mother, who continues to grieve for her children and protect their resting place. The discourse of badness frames the behaviour of this woman's transgression of the moral order of a good mother. To engage public sympathy and to evoke moral outrage, the media account is framed through the response of grieving parents. The act of vandalism, in its severity is not only dangerous to the cultural institution of femininity, such an act is so deviant in the social imagination, that the woman is positioned as monstrous. On Facebook, she was compared to a paedophile, reproducing the fear of the dangerous and deviant other.

"Obviously [they have] got no morals or motherly instincts in them, to do that to babies' graves – I can't quite understand how someone could do it."

"They will be able to get the help they need because they're obviously not right."

[Article Thirty-Eight] NZ Herald 18/5/2015

As an object of fear, the monstrous feminine emerges to separate the good woman from the bad. We, as the audience, can immediately access images of the monstrous feminine and begin to disassociate from the woman, who is already not a 'real' woman within our constructed notions of femininity. This story is framed to doubly damn the woman for transgressing the moral (legal) order as well as not conforming to hegemonic feminine norms, including not being immediately identifiable as a woman. By framing her as monstrous we are able to confirm that we ourselves are normal (Ussher, 1991).

Chapter Five

Conclusion

As a student of psychology interested in correctional psychology, this research project began with my curiosity about the everyday conversations about women who have committed violent crimes and how they were dehumanised. As a student of psychology, I was interested in how psychological research and practice were implicated in common sense understandings of women's criminal offending through a gendered moral trajectory that pathologises women's distress. The metaphor of the Black Widow and its connection with dangerous feminine sexuality led me to question the interface between feminism, psychology and technologies of representation that render women's bodies as monstrous. Kitzinger (2004) argued that how we frame a story produces and reproduces a particular moral endpoint, and this research is no exception. The analysis is produced through my location in psychology and in particular, feminist engagements with psychological knowledge production to interrogate the subject positions available to women within gendered social power relations.

The aim of the research was to understand how women who commit crime are represented in the media and how the discourses that maintain the underlying structures of power in society are produced and reproduced through the continuous retelling of a particular narrative that maintains gendered social power relations. What became evident in the analysis of the media articles was that when women committed violent crimes, they were often constituted as objects of fear, the monstrous other of femininity. Where media reporting of risk is intimately connected with moral panics when the risk appears to threaten current interests, ideologies and moral order, the commodification of risk confirms discourses of mad and bad in the social imagination. In my attempt to understand the highly mediated knowledge of women's position in the gendered hierarchy two discourses emerged in complex ways to frame women's offending as transgressing the norms of femininity and motherhood. Women were positioned through a discourse of madness, often legitimated through psychological disorder, or through a discourse of badness regularly legitimated through the culturally embedded moral order constituting the good mother.

The media representations resonated with the long history of women's madness both defined and regulated through the DSM categorisation of individual women's pathology that continues to ignore the conditions of women's gendered location in the social hierarchy. The disorders that were recognised in the media reports were all disorders that included the pathologisation of women's emotions, especially anger, and enter the social imagination confirming angry women are a threat to the moral order. Women who fail to meet the norms of femininity are made intelligible through their pathology and the regulation of women's behaviour is authorised. In the analysis, Borderline Personality Disorder, Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy and Battered Women's Syndrome, were used to explain woman's criminal activity through a discourse of madness, legitimated through expert testimony.

The use of an expert, either through a report of their testimony in a trial, or drawing on expert opinion of professionals to frame the story was evident in most of the articles. The position of medical and psychological expertise in the legal system draw our attention to feminine pathology authorised through the legitimacy of the

DSM, or professional experience. In each case, a discourse of madness is used to describe a woman's behaviour when it breaches the normative trajectory of culturally embedded femininity. Women's anger or aggression, rather than a response to their history of oppression, is pathologised. The discourse of madness frames the media representations in such a way that the abnormality of women's behaviour is individualised, and becomes comprehensible in the social imagination, and hegemonic femininity remains unchallenged. Discourses of madness produce women's deficit as an object of fear, confirming the riskiness of women's excess emotion. As an operation of gendered social power, the regulation of normative femininity is achieved through the fear of out of control femininity. These representations enforce the normative boundaries for women and ensure that society monitors and polices their behaviour, with women monitoring each other as well as themselves.

The authority of the DSM was realised in the media representations. Even though the DSM 5 includes a warning that certain personality disorders are diagnosed more frequently for women and that "[a]lthough these differences in prevalence probably reflect real gender differences in the presence of such patterns, clinicians must be cautious not to over diagnose or underdiagnose certain personality disorders in females or males because of social stereotypes about typical gender roles and behaviour." (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, P. 680), the analysis suggests that when a woman's behaviour threatens the gendered moral order, it is femininity that is disordered or pathologised. Despite the disclaimer, DSM 5 continues to regulate women's behaviour through diagnoses that are connected to prevailing moralities and norms regarding gender, sexual expression, and heteronormativity.

While the criteria for the disorder of BPD specifically included the pathologisation of anger, all discourses of madness involved the pathologisation of women's emotion as lack or as excess, and support the commonly held assumption that angry or violent women suffers a psychological condition, and ignores the material effects of gendered social power relations. If we continue to construct women's criminal behaviour as the result of an individualised psychological disorder, rather than a reaction to the conditions of gendered oppression, women's context (poverty, education, histories of abuse) remains unchallenged.

Madness discourse legitimated through expert testimony also produced a relationship between the deviant other and the monstrous feminine within the media reports. The conflation of mad (pathological) and bad (criminal) of women's unruly bodies was engaged to invoke social fear of the destruction of gendered normativity. MHBP legitimated social fear of the unstable category of a protective mother who acts within nature, and the monstrous mother who harms her child. BWS constructs women as having a psychological disorder that maintains the view that women are helpless and weak and at the mercy of their flawed biology and are therefore unable to make acceptable decisions when they are positioned as victims.

When we charge women who have committed a crime, especially violent crime, based on a disorder we are potentially condemning them to a life time of surveillance and treatment for their 'condition' to ensure they are coerced into their rightful place in the gendered moral order, capable of adhering to the norms of femininity. Psychological intervention it seems, based on the criteria of disorder, would be to treat her for 'acting out' – acting outside the socially sanctioned norms of femininity.

The figure of the evil woman, rather than legitimated through the authority of the DSM, is legitimated though criminological typologies. Rather than a discourse of madness, the evil woman's behaviours are similarly constituted as deviant femininity, but through a discourse of badness. The figure of the evil woman is produced as unnatural, manipulative and monstrous having deviated from the norms of legal and social morality and appropriate femininity. Positioned as doubly deviant, she embodies intimate danger through the qualities of a cold, calculating non-human subject that blurs the boundaries of psychological deviance (mad) to produce, in the social imagination, the most fearful figure of womanhood (bad). While the figure of the monstrous feminine meets the criteria excess emotion through a discourse of madness, she is constituted through a discourse of badness. While psychological knowledge constitutes the subject woman as a sign of difference, the assessment and interpretation of her unfeminine socially deviant behaviour becomes the object of intensified risk inciting moral outrage and a threat to be contained. The discourse of badness that enables society to make sense of the inconceivable dangerousness of out of control femininity through the image of the monstrous feminine can be mediated through discourses of madness where psychological knowledge legitimates disordered emotion through recourse to feminine vulnerability. It is precisely the moment of recognition of women's vulnerability as individual pathology, embedded in a history of hysteria, that the regulation of women's morality is authorised, and the legitimacy of infanticide as a defence emerges. The defence of infanticide depends on the assumption of biological deficit where the focus is on women's pathological reproductive bodies. The recognition that in certain circumstances, hormones, postpartum depression and postpartum psychoses and other gendered differences impact on the events leading up to the crime of killing one's child, is based on the assumption that women's hormones are out of control. Women risk being categorised as mad if they do not conform to their prescribed role of wife and mother, therefore what constitutes madness is determined by behaviour that is at odds with the legitimacy of biomedical knowledge that links women's bodies to the system of power that subjects them to social and cultural moralities that essentialise femininity. The reproductive body as unruly and in need of discipline continues to dominate and regulate women's experiences, reproducing hegemonic representations of the natural, good woman/mother. Infanticide depends on the expert testimony of the medicalisation of women's biology through a discourse of madness where her excess of emotion limits her ability to reason. The legitimacy of reproductive pathology appeals to normative cultural assumptions that women, unless mad, are naturally good mother's regardless of their circumstances.

The pathology of motherhood permeated the media reports on women's criminal offending. Implicated in these representations is the authority of technologies that define, measure and treat women's reproductive deficit, which are discursively reproduced in popular discourse as the inevitability of motherhood that positions women as perpetual life givers and therefore instinctively nurturing vulnerable beings. Discourses of madness and badness both framed the actions of mothers who violated the norms of femininity through their criminal activity, but also violated the norms of motherhood for failing to protect their children. The discourse of the bad mother brought into view that monstrous maternal, who like the figure of the evil woman, so dangerous to natural motherhood her riskiness evokes moral outrage and

becomes a threat to be contained. Like the figure of the evil woman, the monstrous maternal is so anomalous and deviant from the norms of mothering that we are drawn to both the fascination and the horror that she is so bad she represents the kind of mother who acts against nature and which society must fear. The very possibility that a mother is capable of abusing her child outside the social moral order is incomprehensible and therefore, rather than disordered, she is constructed through a discourse of bad mother, and the figure of the evil woman is produced. The inevitability of motherhood is so entrenched in our social imagination, that if a woman who offends is also a mother, the legal response to her behaviour concerns the regulation of motherhood and is connected to the dominant morality of gender and the natural ability to protect children that assumes unquestionable legitimacy. The legitimacy of expert knowledge of the normalisation of the good mother confirms her deviance. A bad mother does not meet the criteria for legitimate madness, rather she represents a failure of hegemonic femininity and her capacity to care for her children and therefore is in need of disciplinary action. The transgression of the gendered moral order is recognised through the socially constructed norms of a good mother. However, where the mother is constituted through madness, her failure to protect her child is rendered more comprehensible. Expert testimony legitimates the difference between bad mothers, and mothers who fail to protect their children through a discourse of madness. Here the analysis finds the proliferation of the feminisation of psychological symptoms to legitimate a newly developing syndrome, forgotten baby syndrome. Socially recognisable deficits such as sleep deprivation and excess emotion are rendered visible, and resonate with the symptoms of women's reproductive pathology realised in infanticide. The discourse of madness confirms the riskiness of women's biological deficit however; it is only recognised if she can otherwise be considered a good mother. Here there is s split between an otherwise good mother who in a moment of madness fails to protect her child and an 'other' mother who is already bad for her failure to meet the moral conditions of good citizenship. Failure to protect, without the legitimacy of discourses of madness reproduced mother-blame, even where the mother was not responsible for the violence against her children.

How the discourses of madness and badness positioned women, especially women who either killed children or failed to protect children, confirm the dangerousness of women's deficit, and in the social imagination the monstrous feminine/monstrous maternal threaten the social moral order. The questionable regulation of women's lives through the categorisation of women's distress as individual psychology, normal and abnormal femininity were realised in the media representations and there was little evidence of any understanding of the oppressive conditions of women's lives.

Reflection

My engagement with the literature and the analysis has truly opened my eyes around how women are constructed within media representations after they have acted against hegemonic feminine norms through criminal offending. Women are represented through discourses of mad or bad entrenched in feminine norms and the social moral order. If she cannot fit within the 'mad' discourse she is constructed as 'bad' or positioned as 'evil' and deemed to be more of a risk to society. Without the legitimacy of disorder, women who fail femininity are less likely to receive psychological intervention.

Following the analysis, my main concern is the reliance on the DSM by psychologists working within the legal system, especially where the legitimacy of psychological knowledge positions women through a discourse of madness if she fails the norms of femininity and essentialised motherhood. The implications here are that women who are 'mad' can have their femininity normalised. The widening of categories within the DSM that pathologise women's failure to meet the norms of femininity suggests an increasing desire to police control women's behaviour, despite a lack of scientific evidence for the disorders. This is particularly worrying where the authority of experts is increasingly being used within the legal system.

I was surprised by the extent that the conditions of women's lives were ignored, both in the psychological categorisations for disorder, and in the media representations. The struggles of motherhood, the particular stories of single mothers, poverty, inferior housing was missing.

According to the NZPsS Code of Ethics, our practice of psychology requires us to practice in socially responsible ways, including taking responsibility for social power relationships, and our participation in them. As a future psychologist with an interest in working with women in the corrections system, the process of this research has enabled me to question my position in the current production of psychological knowledge, and my participation in social and political systems, that legitimate authority over normalcy through the commodification of risk and sexual difference. I end the research with a new question, how can my participation in psychological research and practice transform the material effects of the pathologisation of femininity that produces and reproduces the structural and cultural practice that inscribe meaning on the body of the 'other'?

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Appendix One

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