



MOTHERLINESS AND MATRIFOCAI FAMILY IN ROSNER'S *ONCE WE WERE HOME*

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Abstract

In order to investigate the Rosner's *Once We Were Home* this study delves into the intricate themes of mother line and matrilocality, offering a poignant exploration of maternal connections which shape identity, belonging, and resilience. The article focuses on centering of women as nurturers, protectors, and transmitters of (family) culture in sustaining families and communities during times of upheaval. The novel reflects on resilience of love, the inheritance of culture, and the central role of mothers in shaping human experience. The article emphasizes the transforming power of maternal attachments in rethinking the matrilocai mothers and reconstructing identities by focusing on the experiences of displaced children and women care for them. Set against the backdrop of World War II and its aftermath, the article follows the lives of children displaced by war, severed from their families and cultural roots. Through their journeys of loss, survival, and rediscovery Rosner illuminates the enduring role of maternal legacies biological, adoptive, in navigating fractured lives. Rosner portrays mother line as a thread connecting past and future, offering stability and meaning in the face of displacement. Similarly, this article explores the mothers as a center of universe and their strong power of healing and connecting in society.

Keywords: *Identity Crises, Loss, Matrilocai Mothering, Motherhood, Mother Line, Nostalgia*

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1. Introduction

Rosner's conventional ideas of motherhood emphasizes the difficulties faced by under-represented voices while dealing with loss and conflict. The article emphasizes the societal impacts on family arrangements as well as the deep love, sacrifice, and challenges of mothers. It also draws attention to matrifocal mothering survivors especially women and their societal responsibilities. The article emphasizes literature has the ability to subvert prevailing narratives and foster both individual and societal memory for healing and progress. In post-war culture, the idea of motherhood has changed dramatically, and its ideals frequently overlap with mother line and Matrifocal mothering. As the major provider for children and a pillar of family stability, the excellent mother was valued highly in post-war nations. Social standards that prioritize motherhood financial security may cause working-class mothers to recall their mother line as they fight to provide for their children. Post-war literature emphasizes the ways in which mothers and daughters shape their identities and exchange experiences of discipline and intimacy. The international congress of women was founded in 1915 by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), which prioritizes women's rights, racial justice, and disarmament. Mother's Day became politically significant. The Madres de Plaza de Mayo 30 April 1977 emerged as a powerful force to uphold human rights and justice during Argentina's 1976–1983 military dictatorship. Through their advocacy, they exposed the regime's human rights abuses and sought justice and the truth about the disappearance of their children. Rosner started writing on deportations and the separation of children from families at the border after being moved by the stories of women who were silenced during World War II. The sacrifice and devotion of a mother during World War II is depicted in *Yellow Bird Sings* (2020). Her paintings often explores themes of trauma, nostalgia, home, hearing, deafness, resilience, and the impact of history on personal lives. She is a distinguished literary voice because of her deft storytelling and capacity to construct intricate narratives. Rosner's writings frequently urge readers to re-evaluate their preconceptions about family, identity, and community while shedding light on the frequently disregarded facets of motherhood. O'Reilly is renowned for her studies of motherhood and she portrayed in literature and specific cultures. She also discusses feminist mothering and society views mothers. By focusing on maternal themes O'Reilly hopes to challenge prevalent cultural myths and give mothers' voices a literary platform. She also discusses stereotypes and recognizes the unique experiences of mothers from all identities, ethnicities and

socioeconomic origins highlights the need for a more inclusive and diverse vision of motherhood. O'Reilly emphasizes literature both reflect and reinforce traditional beliefs surrounding parenting. She argues that patriarchal viewpoints deprive women of agency by idealizing altruism and caring.

1.1. Research Question

- How does *Once We Were Home* explore the concept of matrifocal mothering and the mother line in shaping characters' experiences of resistance and their construction of motherhood identities amidst displacement and family separation?

2. Literature Review

Monagan (1985) *Rethinking Matrifocality* challenges the traditional notion of matrifocal families, especially among lower-class Afro-descendant groups in the Americas and the Caribbean. The study raises the question of whether family structures need to be understood within larger cultural and social settings or if they may be analyzed only through biological links. Monagan talks about the argument among academics like Gellner, Schneider, and Needham about whether kinship should be characterized by biological or cultural factors. She contends that conventional definitions of family, which are based on marriage, shared housing, and nuclear households, fall short in describing the complexity of matrifocal systems. Using ethnographic research from Trinidad, she illustrates how lower-class Afro-West Indian families operate through flexible kinship networks rather than rigid nuclear units. The study highlights family relationships are shaped by social roles, men maintain multiple residential and economic ties across different households, young women frequently bear children outside of legal marriage, and extended kinship and cooperative networks provide stability in ways that go against the ideals of the Western nuclear family.

Jackson, C. (2014) *Modernity and Matrifocality The Feminization of Kinship* investigate modernity has altered kinship systems, leading to a move toward matrifocality. Matrifocality refers to societies whose mothers are essential in both family and broader social structures, regardless of official descent systems. Jackson contends that economic, political, and social changes over the past fifty years such as urbanization, female employment, migration, and policy shifts have unwittingly reinforced matrifocal kinship structures. Development policies that emphasize women's roles as primary carers and heads of households, such as microfinance and social safety programs, frequently target women. This shift in relatedness and kinship raises difficult considerations regarding the

ramifications for gender power dynamics and social structures in modern countries, even while it does not necessarily translate to gender equality.

Motherhood plays a crucial role in the recovery of families and communities after war, providing physical and emotional care to children suffering from trauma, abuse, and loss. Mothers are frequently idealized as defenders of traditional roles and cultural values, which can raise pressure to conform to preconceived notions. Despite their financial struggles many mothers go on to become leaders in their communities, establishing structures and programs to restore social cohesion. In addition to providing care, motherhood involves speaking up for children's betterment. The relationship between parenting and literary studies remains a topic of interest and research. In post war tales mothers and children navigate the dangerous terrain of trauma displacement and survival, this junction is particularly important. The literature that has already been written about motherhood and marginality has emphasized cultural norms and powers dynamics can stifle and eliminate the voices of women are marginalized (Collins, 1991 & Hooks, 1990). Green (2018) examines feminist practices in mothering challenge patriarchal norms and empowers mothers and daughters. The article's main focus is on feminist motherliness, which link mothers to their female ancestors and allow them to regain authority through relational discourse and embodied knowledge. These motherliness also create intergenerational connections that support women in developing and passing on feminist perspectives and practices. Another important idea, Matr reform, refers to mothers' deliberate attempts to reclaim and reform their parenting power by defying patriarchal expectations and establishing alternative, nurturing approaches to parenting. The study highlights how feminist parenting integrates political and personal principles, fostering non-hierarchical, empowering relationships with feminist mothers and their daughters. The study clearly emphasizes how difficult it is for mothers to defy social expectations, but it also shows how mothering has the power to upend established conventions, encourage autonomy, and topple oppressive structures.

(Ahmad, Chaudhary, & Murtaza 2020) article explores the suffering endured by women in patriarchal societies as well as the hardships the faced throughout the war for their families. According to society women must wear burqas and defer to male family members when they are with them. (Sowmiya& Radah, 2021) discuss patriarchy sexual assault and female victims. The antiquated notion of arms and males frames the role that women plays as leaders combatants and active participants in both internal and external conflicts is undermined by the fighting girls at war and the final duty. In order to survive and the Nigeria-Biafran conflict women had to devise improvised tactics due to unidentified hardship.

The idea of matrifocal mothering is ingrained in Walker's *The Color Purple*, (1982) which explores female connections, empowerment, and perseverance. In a social framework known as matrifocal mothering, the mother or maternal figures play a crucial role in nourishing and upholding the family and society, frequently without the help of male authority. The relationships between Celie, Shug Avery, Sofia, and other female characters support one another emotionally, spiritually, and even physically make this subject especially clear. Celie receives strength and direction from women who serve as mother figures, providing her with love, knowledge, and a sense of self-worth, despite her horrific encounters with males, particularly her violent stepfather and husband. For example, Shug Avery is crucial to Celie's development, not merely by encouraging her creativity and independence while also exposing her to the concepts of pleasure and self-love. By demonstrating courage and defiance, Sofia also exemplifies another type of matrifocal mothering, showing Celie that there are other ways to thrive in a patriarchal society besides obedience. These female partnerships disrupt the conventional family structure, revealing that motherhood and caregiving do not have to be biological but can instead be built on emotional attachments and mutual support. Walker emphasizes that women may be each other's defenders, healers, and sources of strength by redefining motherhood as an empowering force that goes beyond conventional roles through this network of care. Walker depicts maternal care as a drastic act of survival and change, demonstrating women's unit can result in both individual and group emancipation and end oppressive patterns.

3. Theoretical Framework

O'Reilly points out that mother's usually sacrifice their personal objectives to protect their children. She argues that sacrifices are not merely acts of selflessness but are driven by a desire to provide their children with a better future. She underlines that by building resilience and establishing values in their children through their sacrifices, mothers leave a legacy of love and bravery. In her paper (O'Reilly. 2006) discusses Ruddick maternal practice based on three criteria social acceptance development and preservation. Mothers have an obligation to protect their children encourage their intellectual and emotional development and mold their growth in ways that are socially acceptable. Mothering is a source of strength and resistance and traditional motherhood frequently symbolizes patriarchal limitation and promotes maternal impulses as powerful forces that may topple oppressive system and advance social change. According to her mothers can question patriarchal norms and reframe mothering as a public act with important social ramifications when they accept their experiences and use their agency. O'Reilly in her book *Motherliness* (2018) says about motherliness that the mothering of

my three children, I seek to perform and practice cultural bearing from a feminist mother line. Indeed, I would be a wealthy woman if I had dollar for every time my daughters said, "Where do you think we get it from?" My daughters, often to my surprise, understand their spirited and often risky resistance to patriarchy in terms of a feminist lineage of foremothers. Through my mothering, I seek to connect my daughters to their feminist mother line and impart to them the lessons of their foremothers in order to instill in them, I hope, pride in their feminist heritage and lineage. Similar to womanist theory, I believe that if my daughters are world, they must know the stories, legends, and myths of their foremothers (p.43). Ruddick studies maternal practice and thought stripped of biology, instinct, and passion leads to the development of her judgments metaphysical attitudes, and values in and through maternal practice (p.21) According to O'Reilly's book *Mother Outlaw*, sacrificial motherhood is referred by three primary themes mothering is innate to women and fundamental. Women are born with the ability disposition and desire to naturally raise children as noted by Hall (1998) this engagement of love and instinct is very different from the world of paid job (p.60) second the primary carer of her biological children should be the mother. Third the children need to be cared for full time or if the mother has to work outside the home, the kids have to come before the job (p.6) In addition to their relationship with mothers and family structures have a significant impact on financial resources and decision-making. Mother continued to be the primary decision-makers in the household, while the government's involvement in divorcees' child support ensured financial support. Mothers continued to be the primary decision-makers in the household while the government's involvement in divorcees child support ensured financial support. Early motherhood is highly criticized by society and they lack the ability to judge what is right and wrong for their children. According to O'Reilly, a matrix perspective is one in which motherhood is thematically developed, valued, and structurally fundamental to the story, and a mother has a role of cultural and societal significance. Since they "begin with the mother in her own right from her own perspective" and "hold fast to a maternal perspective," I propose that most modern mother's organizations can be viewed as political or social modes of matrifocality (Daly and Reddy, p. 128). Even child-focused organizations may be built on a mother-centered approach. The woman is the head of the household. Since women were only assessed based on the socially accepted norm of being a good mother and the matrifocal system, which was dominated by being the main provider for the family, their role was disregarded due to gendered essentialism's persistence in contemporary culture. Rosner provides a new explanation of the Matrifocal narrative and the ability of women to manage their families and finances simultaneously.

According to O'Reilly (2024), feminist mothering examines how empowerment involves recognizing, assessing, and combating injustice by developing a critical

consciousness that enables one to take initiative, make decisions, and engage in collective social action. In contrast to patriarchal mothering, O'Reilly's idea of empowered mothering challenges the dominant rhetoric and behaviors related to motherhood and modified the ways in which patriarchal motherhood is restrictive or repressive for women and their parents. O'Reilly asserts that a mother's attachment to her kid is crucial to the child's development as well as the mother's resilience and that mothers can find strength and empowerment in the mother-child link. A mother's sense of agency and autonomy is boosted when she is provided with the resources necessary to have a close responsive and caring relationship with her children. A mother's nurturing relationship with her children can also be a source of personal fulfillment and confidence. Mother can transcend the conventional and frequently constricting idea of motherhood thank to this bond which enables them to rethink their responsibilities and challenge social norms.

O'Reilly claims that strong mothering serves as an oppositional discourse of motherhood. More precisely, it represents a theory and practice of mothering that subverts the prevailing discourse of motherhood and changes the ways in which women are oppressed or limited by the lived experience of patriarchal motherhood. In order to support one another mothers band together show solidarity and take part in a movement that challenges structural barriers to mothers' rights and opportunities such as inadequate maternity leave gender discrimination in the workplace and the undervaluation of caregiving. Morrison presents maternal love as a radical act of defiance against the societal value of black life and institutional racism, according to O'Reilly's article from 2000. The mother line is a link between generations that supports empowerment and preserves cultural traditions. Reestablishing a connection with one's maternal ancestry can assist mothers in making real and lasting changes in their own lives the lives of their children and the greater society. Morrison's book explores the trauma of being cut off from one's mother line as a result of historical event like slavery, migration and assimilation. (p.137). Result in self-discovery and healing. Morrison's work *Paradise* demonstrates her ideas.

4. Analysis

This analysis encapsulates the ideal mothers who have strong attachment with their children's and play a vital role in their growth and development even if they are very far away from them. Their identities and sense of belonging are shaped by the contrasting affection of their biological and adopted mothers, according to Rosner. As children are removed from their biological family and placed in adoptive homes following war and relocation, complex concerns of identity memory are raised. Even if the child's original mother lives far away they still feel a deep connection to her. The relics of a biological mother serve as an emotional anchor for children and the affection of an

adoptive mother is described as compassionate but nuanced during times of war as Mira and Daniel get used to their new surroundings. The sibling mother wept and loved their children at the time of their separation due to war. "Mama leans over the seat, and as she hands sleeping Daniel over, she kisses his cheek, his shoulder, his side, his bottom. She holds on to his foot a moment then let's go" (p.9). These lines depicts a mother's attempts to strike a balance between the awful need to give up her child due to uncontrollable external circumstances as well as her mother's want to protect and cling to him. Renata an archaeology student at Oxford University becomes famous thanks to her mother's encouragement. The deep emotional connection between a mother and her children is emphasized by her love. In an attempt to make a lasting impression on Daniel Mother holds his foot and giver him kisses on various body areas before letting him go. "Mum always said she wanted Renata to be more social, to have friends and a boyfriend, but really, what would've become of her if Renata had stayed away after school, gone out with the girls at night, fallen in love? After Papa died, Mum was alone except for her."(p.23) Mother's desire for Renata to have friends, a social life and sexual experiences is in opposition to her implied need on her presence following the death of her father. The influences of mother connections is shown by this dichotomy underlines nurturing maternal love may occasionally inflict emotional strains on children impacting their decisions and sacrifices. When Renata got home from work she stood in front of a mirror and contrasted her mother's beauty with her own. "Compared to the pink ones, even Mum liked this new blue pair better, and she rarely liked things that set off the color of Renata's eyes. When Renata was little, she wondered if her mum wished she'd had the same brown eyes as her and her papa" (p.31). Renata's blue eyes in contrast to her parents brown ones made her question and her mother wanted a deeper physical resemblance. This instance demonstrates maternal relationships are based on love and may convey complex message that have a significant impact on a child's emotional and mental growth. Jozef and Osker enjoy caring for all animals and spend more time on the farm. Soldiers show up at the door one morning and tell the Dabrowski's to surrender their cow since they failed to register at the collection center. "Osker wants to cry out No, but Ciocia Agata's face is terror-stricken. He huddles behind her skirts, tears streaming down his cheeks. She puts her hands back to hold him there, and Wujek Jozef reaches for Anastazja as the soldiers pull the cow toward the door."(p.37)

Mother love has a profound effect on a child's emotional development, as demonstrated by Agata's protective actions in the moment. Her innate desire to keep Osker secure despite her own anxiety serves as an example of the protective role carers play in fostering a sense of security. Even in the middle of chaos, the maternal love of an adoptive mother provides children with a sense of stability when they are feeling depressed. Osker's

defensive stance offers a haven, emphasising the value of ongoing emotional openness. Oskar's tear and his huddle behind Agata's skirts reveal his reliance on her as a source of comfort and safety. This bond shows that a mother's love not only calms a child's immediate fears but also creates the foundation for them to overcome challenges with steadiness and self-assurance. One of the main characters, Roger, was nurtured throughout the war by nuns and a priest after being brought to a French convent as a baby. Growing up around nuns and a priest, he was always willing to ask questions at the orphanage. He enjoyed sharing stories and riddles with his companion Hanri, and one nun encouraged him to write down all of his enquiries. A nun named Brigitte listens to Hanri's stories and treats him like her child. Roger developed a bond with a nun, but he eventually lost her nun.

“Roger goes searching for Sister Brigitte but doesn’t find her. She’s not in her usual places, waiting by the classroom door before morning studies, or walking in the garden after lunch.” (p.81) when Roger heard one of the older boys say he saw gendarmes take Louise away he went to the garden where the nun often strolled after lunch her calm voice floating through the autumn wind as she discussed the significance of maternal love in a child’s development. Roger searched for the nun’s absence while lingered like an unanswered question. “Roger can’t sleep that night, thinking about Sister Brigitte and Father Louis, wondering what happened to them and worrying that it’s his fault.” (p.81) Roger reenacted his recent conversations with each of them at night. Nun talks on mother love and child development had always been very enlightening to him.

At the time of leaving Ana’s mother kept her family photo in the sibling satchel she was delighted to see when she arrived at Agata’s house. “Mira is glad to have the picture even as she puzzles over why her mother packed it. They weren’t going to forget their parents’ faces in a few days.” (p.11) the picture’s packaging by Mira’s mother emphasizes the profound impact on a child’s growth as well as the strong emotional intelligence and prescience of parental love. The mother’s behavior demonstrates that mothers understand the importance of maintaining emotional continuity throughout period of separation. By providing the children with this reminder the mother ensures that they have a tangible connection to their history even when they are not physically present, which foster emotional stability and resilience. Because of his devotion to his carers during the war Oskar provided care for non-biological mothers and was able to forge bonds as deep as blood ties. He attempts to regain his biological family this lead a conflict demonstrating survival and pain can divide and modify the mother line. Anastazja never fails to remind Oskar of their former days together. “When Anastazja spot a cat basking in a spot of sun, she thinks of how they gave Bolek to a neighbor when they had to live their house and move to the ghetto. He won’t be safe with us her mother had said. Oskar doesn’t

remember their parents. “house, or the ghetto, or Bolek, ”. (p.23). Parental sacrifice and protection conveys an important parental decision that was driven by a deep-seated desire to protect her kids. The mother’s decision can be seen as a reflection of a realistic decisions made by many mothers during emergencies typically prioritizing their children’s survival over their own feelings. Bloke’s relationship with Anastazja has involved sentimental sacrifices made against her will. Motherliness is a terrible necessity intertwined with protecting affection. The idea of the mother line is directly tied to Renata’s experience of discovering her Jewish heritage later in life. Her reunion with her roots serves as a metaphor for resilient memory and identity can be even when they are upended by external circumstances like relocation. “Now, in Jerusalem, Renata feels keenly conscious of her features and roots. Memories of her mother warning to hide her Germanness, evidence of bloodlines that led to so much Jewish destruction.” (p.73) A multifaceted analysis of lineage, kinship, and the burdens carried down through the generations is demonstrated by Renata's understanding of her traits and roots. When Renata's mother was growing up, being German was strongly linked to the Nazi regime and the persecution of Jews. Her cautions seem to be an attempt to shield her daughter from the dangers and embarrassments associated with having a dangerous identity. Motherliness transmit the worry and the resulting survival mechanism by acting as a conduit of historical memory. A societal structure that emphasizes women as primary carers or maternal figures arises. Women who are often compelled to take on mothering or caring responsibilities impact the lives and identities of the displaced children. Throughout the narrative, women such as Sister Brigitte and Madame Mercier assume protective and loving roles, providing displaced children with a sense of stability and belonging. Despite not being biological moms, these individuals' nurturing duties create a matrix dynamic where children like Roger depend on parental surrogates for their emotional and physical existence. Sister Brigitte was Roger's carer when he was residing at the church, and she constantly encouraged him to ask questions in order to better comprehend. Despite her own distress, Sister Brigitte feeds all of the children. “Roger still didn’t understand why Sister Brigitte was crying earlier, or why they waiter the four Whole year he’s been at Sainte Marie’s and just weeks before his first Communion to have him baptized. But he was happy for the sweet, caramelized ball of dough he got to eat. And he was happy to be saved. (p.2)

Sister Brigitte’s tears and her participation in Roger’s baptism imply that she is a mother or other caring person priorities his spiritual and emotional health. Individual are often the emotional backbone of matrix systems providing direction and assistance to others in times of crisis or changes. Roger’s postponed baptism occurred just before his first communion may serve as a metaphor for the careful preparation and protection required in maternal care. Emotional response is emphasized by the protective and

empathetic qualities that are commonly exhibited by important characters in the matrix system. Roger's delight over the sweet, caramelized ball of dough symbolizes the nurturing component of the system and small acts of kindness or supply have a significant influence. These lines exemplify three key principles communal responsibility for individual flourishing emotional connection and care. his contentment with being saved is consistent with the therapeutic focus on mental and spiritual health demonstrating that his existential and physical needs are satisfied inside this nurturing environment. The situation of Ana's mother separates and keep up her independent child care is consistent with a matrix structure. When their father is sleeping and the mother is bathing and eating with them all of the mother actions throughout the time of departure reflect this notion. Ana asked her mother to wake up her father as she was leaving but she said nothing. "Her mother hushes her, "don't wake your papa," and darts about the tiny room, stuffing things into a satchel." (p.8) important behaviors, such as making decisions, taking care of her family, and safeguarding them, are demonstrated by the mother's actions in the scene. The mother takes on a leadership role in the family as the guardian and decision-maker, moving quickly to pack and manage the environment while ensuring her child doesn't speak. Mother's advice to "not wake your papa" suggests that she is trying to shield the child from a potentially upsetting situation. By hurrying around the room and packing things into a rucksack, the mother shows how resourceful she can be while dealing with challenging circumstances. In matrix systems, women are usually depicted as adaptable and self-sufficient. The mother continues to focus on her child and keeping the peace in the house despite the urgency of the situation. This supports the core principles of promoting emotional well-being and boding, maintaining the family's roots despite external pressures. Agata's actions illustrate the matrix structure, where mothers serve as the family's emotional and social cornerstones. "Sunday morning, Agata brushes and braids Anastazja's hair and teaches her to recite the Our Father and the Hail Mary. Agata gives her a cross to wear around her neck and describes the church services, instructs her on how to behave in case anyone is watching. (p.15)

Anastazja's hair being brushed and braided represents a very loving bond and mothers place a high priority on the welfare of kids in their care. Agata plays the part of a cultural transmitter by teaching Anastazja prayers, presenting her with a crucifix and explaining church ceremonies. When Agata tells Anastazja act if someone is looking it demonstrates her proactive instincts and gives kids the skills they need to survive in socially and physically challenging situation. One day Agata told the children a story about a couple fervently wanted a child. As she was strolling around a tree a woman spoke to a spirit and asked her she wanted if she wanted a child the woman gave birth to a charming baby boy named Bachtel after spirit's instruction. A twenty year old boy kissed his parents

and walked out. One day Bachtalo was sitting in the shadows Matuja spoke up “I promised your mother that you would be happy. I will help you now to find your good fortune. You have with you the little beech box?” (p.34) There is a strong maternal element that emphasizes giving care supporting others emotionally and imparting knowledge. In a matrifocal culture the mother highlights the significance of her roles as the child’s primary care and as the primary source of nurturing, emotional support and life direction. The speaker’s commitment to helping the youngster find luck lends credence to the idea that mothers serve as defenders and enablers guiding their children towards security and happiness. The reference to the small beach box suggests a tangible connection to the child’s heritage such as memories knowledge or life skills.

Table 1

Concept	Andrea O’Reilly’s ideas	<i>Once we were home</i>	Significance
Matrifocal Mothering	Mother-centered approach that places mothers’ experiences authority and agency at the center of family and culture.	Mothers actively reclaim and protect their children despite adversity of war. (Agatha)	Mothers represent as empowered agents resisting marginalization and trauma.
Mother line	The intergenerational transmission of maternal knowledge resilience, identity and survival strategies	Maternal memory and trauma passed across generation’s mother-child bonds persist despite separation.	Emphasizes continuity and strength of maternal identity through generations.
Patriarchal Motherhood	Motherhood shaped and constrained by patriarchal norms-self-sacrifice, silence. Subordination to male authority	State, war, and religious systems impose control, disrupt mother-child relationships.	Reveals oppressive social structures limiting maternal agency and enforcing loss.

5. Conclusion

The horrific circumstances of Jewish children who were hidden during World War I are examined in Rosner's 2023 book *Once We Were Home*. A Christian couple in Poland takes in Roger, a French child who was raised in a monastery, and his siblings Daniel (Oskar) and Mira (now Ana). After the war, when Jewish activists regained them, they struggled with identity and belonging. The novel interweaves their encounters with Renata, an archaeologist in Israel in 1968, revealing deep emotional wounds and the longing for a home amid disaster and suffering. A young French Jewish child named Roger was raised in a convent during World War I after being concealed to evade the Nazis. He battles with identification and belonging as a result of being estranged from his Jewish heritage. Despite having been baptized and raised as a Catholic, he rejects the notion of salvation and yearns for his biological family. After the war, his aunt wants to bring him back, but the church is against making him risk his life to flee across the Pyrenees. In particular, post-war themes of identity, motherhood, resilience, and attempts to re-establish their fractured motherliness and the matrifocal moms in stories throughout adversity were used to explore trauma, loss, matrifocal mothering, and mother line.

The ideas of matrifocal mothering and the mother line are crucial in influencing the characters' resistance experiences and how they develop maternal identities in the face of displacement and familial separation in Rosner's *Once We Were Home*. Matrifocal mothering, emphasizes women's resilience and caregiving, is an act of resistance to the trauma of cultural erasure and displacement. Children are taken from their biological mothers due to broken family structures after the Holocaust are frequently placed in foster homes or organizations that question their cultural identity. While the memory of biological mothers endures as a source of strength and cultural continuity, surrogate mothers try to offer stability in these shattered contexts. Through stories, rituals, and lullabies, this silent maternal inheritance transforms into a powerful act of resistance. keeping the kids grounded and maintaining their identities in spite of their physical separation. A recurrent theme that links the characters to their ancestry and influences they perceive themselves is the mother line, or the lineage of maternal influence. The recollections and tales of maternal ancestors function as an essential link between the past and present, even when there are no direct connections. By providing a sense of belonging in a fractured society, this bond with the mother line aids characters in rediscovering who they are and recovering from the pain of displacement. The article also examines parenting changes in the context of displacement. As adaptive and surrogate mothering roles develop in response to need, motherhood for many characters transcends biological ties. But the characters frequently struggle with dual identities, divided between their both their birth

moms and their foster moms. They are forced by this conflict to reinterpret what motherhood means to them. The characters' longing for mother ties is heightened by the severe mental and physical wounds caused by displacement and familial separation. Their drive for real or symbolic reunions highlights the lasting importance of maternal links in securing their identities, while the loss of roots causes them to doubt their feeling of belonging. Rosner illustrates how maternal ties derived from memory, caregiving, or cultural heritage survive in the face of severe loss by presenting motherhood as an act of defiance and resiliency. Thus, *Once We Were Home* effectively depicts the ways that mothers' legacies influence resistance, identity, and belonging in successive generations.

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