Sirpa Leppänen

5 Revisualization of classed motherhood in social media

1 Introduction

As a particular type of the strategy of recontextualization (Bauman & Briggs 1990: 73; Blommaert 2005: 47; Leppänen & Kytölä 2016), revisualization refers to the ways specific socially, culturally, and historically situated, unique aspects of visual discourse are taken up and reinserted in a new context and, as part of this process, the images are modified in some way. Revisualization can involve particular styles of visual representation, design and communication, but also ways of selecting and zooming on particular contents. Further, it can be accompanied and complemented in different ways by textual recontextualization. In this chapter, I argue that in current social media practices, revisualization is an increasingly common practice – it has a significant role in for example interest-driven, humorous and activist social media practices (van Zoonen 2005; Leppänen & Häkkinen 2013). More specifically, I will discuss revisualization in action with the help of two examples from Finland-based social media: blogs dealing with the shifting and contested social category of motherhood. Firstly, to contextualize my analysis, I will briefly discuss historical and current discourses of motherhood in Finland, as well as one their vehicles, so called homing blogs – a popular, largely visual blog genre in Finland produced by young women who have retreated from the labour market to the private sphere of the home (Jäntti et al 2018). Finally, I will show how the discourse of homing blogs has been revisualized (and recontextualized) in social media – in the guise of parodic motherhood blogs.

The investigation of motherhood blogging is worthy of analysis because – as I will show in both cases discussed here – the imagery and styles of visual representation used construct a particular version of motherhood. In so-called homing blogs, the version (or vision) produced is of a contemporary, idealized middle-class motherhood. In parodic mother blogs, meanwhile, we see visualizations of lower class motherhood. I will demonstrate how these revisualizations of motherhood are deeply ambiguous. On the one hand, they appear as a form of transgressive political critique which uses parody to ridicule traditional discourses and (visual) ideologies of gender, class and motherhood. On the other hand, these blogs can also be interpreted as attacking, from a moralistic educated middle-class perspective, the lifestyles and tastes of lower-class women. From this

perspective, bloggers present a grotesque version of the idealized middle-class motherhood, representations that in recent theoretical and empirical work on gender and class have been found typical of working class and underclass femininity in media discourses, public debates and politics (Skeggs 1997; Tyler 2008; Tyler and Bennett 2010; Hatherley 2018). Ultimately, therefore, I argue that otherwise parodic representations of motherhood end up disparaging non-conformist motherhood, thus signalling affinity with classist media spectacles of lower class motherhood that also Finnish audiences "have loved to hate" (Tyler 2008).

2 Revisualization as an aspect of recontextualization

As I say above, I am approaching revisualization as an extension of the concept of recontextualization originally suggested by Bauman & Briggs (1990) and Silverstein & Urban (1996). Emerging at the intersection of performance studies, anthropology and discourse studies, entextualization involves two related processes of discourse generation: decontextualization – taking discourse material out of its context – and recontextualization – integrating and transforming this material so that it fits in a new context. According to Bauman & Briggs (1990: 75–6), there are six dimensions that are relevant in de-/recontextualization; these are: (i) *framing* (i.e. the metacommunicative management of the recontextualized text); (ii) *form* (i.e. formal transformation from one context to another); (iii) *function* (i.e. transformation of the function of discourse); (iv) *indexical grounding* (i.e. shifts of for example deictic markers of person, spatial location and time); (v) *translation* (i.e. both interlingual and intersemiotic translation); and (vi) the *emergent structure of a new context* (i.e. the way in which discourse is shaped by and shaping context by the process of recontextualization). In contrast to the notion of intertextuality that has traditionally been understood as relationships among texts – how texts refer to, draw upon, and/or are shaped by earlier texts – entextualization highlights the processual aspects of intertextuality (Trester 2012: 243), the way in which, in Blommaert's (2005: 47) words, intertextuality turns into "an empirical research programme".

In entextualization processes, communicative actors are active agents for whom entextualization is a means of discursive navigation and "an act of control" through which they can claim a degree of social and discursive power (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 76). This power shows in their access to the activity of entextualization, in the legitimacy of their claims to reuse existing discourse material, in their competence in such reuse, and in the differential values

attached to various types of discourse. Entextualization provides a tool for investigating "empirically what means are available in a given social setting, to whom they may be available, under what circumstances, for making discourse into text" (Bauman & Briggs 1990, 74; see also Leppänen et al. 2014). For many scholars of computer-mediated discourse, entextualization has indeed proved a fruitful concept for the discussion of the trajectories, uptake and transformation of semiotic content, forms and styles that are now pervasive in digital discourse, communication and interactions (see e.g. Leppänen 2012; Rymes 2012; Androutsopoulos 2013; Leppänen et al. 2014).

The aspect of entextualization that is particularly useful for my current purposes is that it makes possible a conceptualization of, and focus on, the analysis of the uptake and transformation of not only verbal or textual stuff, but also other types of semiotic material. In the case under investigation here, the material that is interesting is visuality – the content of images, their aesthetic, design and photographic dimensions, and their interplay with verbal text. In particular, I am interested in the ways in which the uptake and modification of visual material and styles generate new meanings with respect to a cultural phenomenon – motherhood – being recontextualized. In these ways, my chapter highlights how entextualization in digital practices also involves the crossing and integration of semiotic boundaries as one aspect of the contemporary "realities of the semiotic landscape" (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 34). In other words, I am concerned with the ways digital practices are inherently social multimodal practices with which people make sense of and construct their social and cultural realities, identities and relationships online and around social media (Thurlow 2013; Leppänen et al. 2017).

3 Femininity, motherhood and social class

Femininity and motherhood as classed have long historical roots (Poovey 1984; Skeggs 2001). For example, in Britain, according to Poovey (1984), the notion of ideal femininity emerged in the 18th century. As an image it indexed the habitus of the upper classes, a category of pure, white heterosexuality. Later this image of femininity translated into an ideal for middle-class women that was then disseminated and enforced through conduct books and magazines. As argued by Hatherley (2018: 358), this image of femininity has proved to be very resilient and powerful. Even in the 21st century, working-class, black and/or non-heterosexual women who do not have the financial resources to successfully perform femininity in these idealized or hegemonic ways are still excluded from its realm, demonized and "cast down into the realms of the grotesque" (see also Skeggs 1997;

Gillies 2006; Tyler 2008). In a similar vein, feminist research has shown how motherhood has also been characterized by diverse positions and meanings, and how few mothers can or will submit to "the (white, middle-class, heterosexual) norms of good mothering" (Kawash 2011: 979). Regardless, social class continues to matter in various ways, both in creating or constraining the mothers' material and social opportunities and in shaping the values, goals, and identities that mothers bring to raising their children (Lareau 2003).

Similar processes characterize the history of classed femininity and motherhood in Finland. The discourses of modern motherhood have distinguished "good" motherhood from "bad" according to the mother's social class and wealth (Satka 1996; Nätkin 1997; Helén 1997; Berg 2008). In the 19ᵗʰ and early 20ᵗʰ century, motherhood in Finland became a right that working class women had to struggle for, whereas for upper class women this right was a given. Servants and country women, left-wing, "red" working class mothers and civil war widows were considered particularly immoral and unsuitable as mothers (Nätkin 1997: 42; Satka 1996: 88–91). "Bad" motherhood was seen as ignorance, lack of education or indifference – all characteristics associated with working class and poor mothers. Poverty itself, the material circumstances in home and the poor hygiene in rural and working-class homes were also taken to symbolize insufficient motherhood. At the same time, mothers' employment outside the home was also stigmatized (Sulkunen 1987, 1989) as a form of deviance or even as a crime against women's "true" vocation, motherhood, and the active moral education of children that it was taken to entail. However, alongside with the modernization of the society in the 1960s and 1970s, ideal motherhood began to be challenged. Attitudes and norms concerning different types of motherhood – single mothers, widows, divorced, common law and married mothers – became more liberal, means of birth control increased, abortion became legalized and sexual culture freer. In addition, an increasing number of mothers began working outside the home (Nätkin 1997). Thus, the ideologies and norms of "good" motherhood became less compelling, and it was increasingly regarded not as a set of mutually exclusive choices, but as individual value choices (Nätkin 1997: 250; Berg 2009). Currently, motherhood in Finland can in principle take many different forms. Most significantly, stay-at-home motherhood is just one of the possible positionings available to women; by the same token, working outside the home and having a career is, in principle, not stigmatized. In fact, as a Nordic welfare state, Finland has actively supported women's participation in the labour market for decades (Brunila & Ylöstalo 2015).

The freedom for individual mothers to make their own choice is, however, not a categorical given in spite of these developments. Nowadays, social, political, economic and discursive forces can still corral mothers into particular life trajectories, and, in practice, powerfully delimit their actual options. As discussed

in detail by Jäntti and her colleagues (2018), in line with developments in other Western welfare societies (e.g. Porter 2012), it is justified to argue that Finland has witnessed a "feminized recession" (Adkins 2012: 629). For example, there have been cuts in social services, such as communal day care, accompanied by the loss of jobs for women in the public sector, making them more vulnerable. These economic and social changes have also been accompanied by a conglomerate of neoliberal, conservative and post-feminist ideologies in gender discourses that re-articulate the importance of the woman's place in the private sphere of the home and nuclear family (Hayden 2002, Blunt and Dowling 2006). One outcome of these developments has, in fact, been that some individual, modern, educated women have retreated back to home, and that these moves have been rationalized and justified as a "natural" and legitimate choice that women themselves make, rather than the outcome of a range of structural, economic and ideological factors (Jäntti et al. 2018: 890).

These developments are interesting from the point of view of social class: it seems that the women who have been retreating to the home are primarily middle-class women ("modern, educated women"), who "can negotiate and share their "return" to the private sphere of the home with their peers" via, for example, blogging about it (Jäntti et al. 2018: 890). Blogging, for them, thus offers a collective means for synthesizing and blurring the public and the private (Thurlow (2013: 244), for justifying and authenticating their "choice"(Jäntti et al. 2018). The classed nature of these mediatized re-enactments of domesticity can, however, also imply that there are other women – women who may not be (seen as) equally "modern and educated" – who do not have a similar motivation or set of resources to make their situations publicly as visible and sharable via social media.

4 Setting the standard: Homing blogs as a visualization of middle-class motherhood

Homing blogs are a popular women's genre. As single authored diary-like updates of the personal lives of bloggers (Blood 2002; Myers 2010; Rettberg 2013), they constitute a particular sphere of semi-public digital agency (Jäntti et al. 2018:890). They are "semi-public" in that they represent an extension of the bloggers' homes and, by publicly displaying details of their authors' private lives (Noppari & Hautakangas 2012). In this sense, they could be seen as a continuation of the tradition of life-writing, but, unlike traditional diaries, they have a strong emphasis on visual photographic representation of the self, domestic spaces and activities. In the same way as other social media aimed at parents (such as the Mumsnet

discussed in Mackenzie 2019), homing blogs also provide mothers with opportunities for negotiating their position in relation to discourses of motherhood, and serve as a means for seeking identification, connectedness, groupness and communality with other mothers (see Leppänen et al. 2017; Zappavigna 2011).

Most significantly, in light of my focus here, homing blogs are indexical of particular social, cultural and gendered identities, distinctly depicting middle-class motherhood. In so doing, bloggers speak of social class as taste, as sets of preferences of style, manners, patterns of consumption, and cultural values. This Bourdieusean view of social class (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Skeggs 1997, 2015; Gronov 1997; Purhonen et al. 2014) points to people's ability to judge what is beautiful, good and proper as a socially distinctive practice. Thus, different social classes come to have different cultural tastes and to consume culture differently; they also decide what is not liked or from which preferences one should disidentify (see e.g. Purhonen et al. 2014).

Against this backdrop, homing blogs can be seen as a discursive arena for doing classed, sometimes elitist notions of motherhood, where the legitimation of privilege/inequality is discursively organized and sustained (Thurlow & Jaworski 2017: 246). In particular, they seem to draw on and mobilize images of well-organized domestic life and clean, well-ordered homes. While in the early 20th century such imagery was promoted for the education of mothers on the importance of health and hygiene (Saarikangas 2002; Nätkin 1997), in the 21st century they have more to do with the ideologies of "good" motherhood, still displayed prolifically in public media discourses of different kinds. For example, Berg (2009: 172) has argued that currently a typical image of motherhood in the media is the super-mother – a mother who is competent, energetic and diligent. In homing blogs, the modern ideals of middle-class motherhood and the investment mothers make are very visible.

What we often see in homing blogs[1] are carefully crafted visualizations of private dreams that are broadcast to a blogger audience. Often, the emphasis on the private as the core substance shows in the blogger's point of view, for example: the blogs include a first-person singular position, manifest in both the photographic perceptual focus (i.e. showing viewers what the author sees), and in the narration (i.e. telling viewers what the author thinks). In this way, audiences are given an account of experiences in, and reflections on, the everyday life of the women bloggers – a verbalized and visualized insight into their view of the world. Figure 5.1 offers an illustration of this kind of private experience being publicly

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1 I'm very grateful to all the bloggers who each gave me a permission to use their posts as my data examples in this article.

Figure 5.1: http://mminulta.blogspot.com, accessed 12 February, 2019.

disseminated – here we see a carefully colour coordinated picture of the blogger's feet on a rug.

Most bloggers do not include their own pictures in their profile. When they do so, we find photographs like 5.1, or pictures that have been shot or edited so that they cannot be identified. An example of this can be seen in 5.2 below. This kind of images emphasize the bloggers' role as an observer whose main task is to

Figure 5.2: http://saapasjalansalonki.blogspot.com, accessed 1 February, 2019.

record and represent details of their lifeworld, but in a way that backgrounds themselves. In this sense, they differ a great deal from for example fashion bloggers who regularly pose for their own cameras (Duffy & Hund 2015).

While the bloggers avoid including pictures of themselves, they emphatically focus on giving their audiences aestheticized visions of the spaces, details, objects and the material reality of their homes. In these ways, they display publicly intimate moments of their family lives. For example, blog posts often include pictures of children as in Figure 5.3. At other times, they often suggest a retreat to a simpler, downshifted and ecologically aware life. For example, there are pictures of mundane activities, such as making handicrafts, baking, knitting, tending plants, preparing meals, or enjoying a cup of tea in settings indicating austerity and modesty. At the same time, everything in the pictures conveys a particular

Figure 5.3: https://aitiydenaika.blogspot.com, accessed 3 February, 2019.

sense of style – the objects and furnishings may be old and recycled, but they are (presented as) beautiful in their contours, colours and materiality; this is what we see in Figures 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6:

Figure 5.4: http://mminulta.blogspot.com, accessed 12 February, 2019.

It seems that, in these kinds of homing blogs, beauty, harmony and balance are central values. This shows in the poetic and aesthetic depictions of the bloggers' everyday lives inside or in proximity of their homes. The pictures are carefully edited so that they are dominated by soft muted colours shading into black, often, however, with flecks of sunlight as an important element in them. There are posts depicting picturesque details of the bloggers' homes, close-ups of unfinished handicrafts and household chores, children playing, houseplants, and pets. Bloggers or other adults seldom feature in pictures. Likewise, there are few images taken in urban settings, or involving technological gadgets, cars or computers. It is as if the pictures depict life decades ago. The overall impression of the entries thus is that of nostalgia and melancholy. The visual depiction of these young women's domestic lives seems, in fact, to be in stark contrast with the everyday epiphanies and moments of happiness that the

Figure 5.5: http://mminulta.blogspot.com, accessed 12 February, 2019.

Figure 5.6: http://irmastiina.blogspot.com, accessed 28 February, 2019.

bloggers' textual entries suggest they enjoy (Jäntti et al. 2018). In these respects, they resemble a great deal rhetorical strategies that Mapes (2018: 217) has shown to be typical of elite authenticity in food discourse, another discourse central in the construction and mediatization of classed identity: simplicity, lowbrow appreciation, pioneer spirit, locality and sustainability.

5 Visual parody: The revisualization of homing blogs

While homing blogs arguably display aestheticized images of industrious, but melancholic and romanticized or nostalgic middle-class motherhood, they nowadays also have their counter-genre. In Finland, such a counter-blog is *Shitty Mother's Diary* ("Paskaäidin päiväkirja").[2] This particular diary was launched in 2007 by an anonymous group of bloggers. A key goal in their blogs and other social media posts is that they use parody to challenge the ideological assumptions concerning the nuclear family, notions of "good" mothering, and the aesthetics of home conveyed in, for example, homing blogs.[3]

In *Shitty Mother's Diary*, we find a mother figure who is familiar from comic and critical representations in the media: the "relaxed" mother.[4] According to Berg (2009: 129), relaxed motherhood is the opposite of the mother who sacrifices everything for her child and family. As examples of relaxed motherhood, Berg refers to celebrity mothers who have, among other things, described stay-at-home motherhood as a "brain-dead activity" and "confessed" to being a "bad mother" who makes sure they have time for themselves and their needs. However, in *Shitty Mother's Diary* this vision of the relaxed mother is also presented as an explicitly classed being, as a critical travesty of the middle-class motherhood one example of which is visible in the homing blogs discussed above.

This parodic criticality of *Shitty Mother's Diary* no doubt has a political undertone. It can, in fact, be seen as an example of new forms of activism that in the context of ludic and memic participatory cultures increasingly rely on playful transgressions as their key strategies (van Zoonen 2005; Leppänen & Häkkinen 2012; Häkkinen & Leppänen 2014). Along the lines suggested by Janks (2003: 2), their transgressiveness derives from how they both go beyond the bounds of norms and, in doing so, highlight the very same norms in a deeply "reflective act of denial and affirmation." As will be shown in more detail below, *Shitty Mother's Diary* tackles the figure of the middle-class mother, bringing this this figure in an elevated position down to "the comic plane of parody and travesty" (Bakhtin 1981: 54).

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2 http://paskamutsi.vuodatus.net, accessed 12 January, 2019

3 Social media parodies of motherhood are not an exclusively Finnish phenomenon; for example, there is a similar blog in Sweden, *Dåliga mammans blogg*, ("The bad mother's blog", https://inaskrev.blogspot.com/) and in the UK: *The Diary of a Pompey Chavette (*https://shadesofpompeychav.wordpress.com).

4 Similar depictions of bad mothers can be found on other media as well – in Finnish TV comedy, for example.

The transgressive stance taken in *Shitty Mother's Diary* is very clear in this early entry from the year 2007. What we see in this entry is a picture of a young child who is placed in a dog carrier.

The picture in Figures 5.7 is accompanied by a verbal entry which, in its own way, also flouts our expectations of what a blog entry typically contains:

Figure 5.7: http://paskamutsi.vuodatus.net, accessed 12 January, 2019.

Extract 5.1 – Translation of verbal framing of Figure 5.7[5]

"I'm the summer cat of the shitties Nicittä now and I was given the task of choosing my favourite out of reder mail, so here goes!

Esmeralda Ariel's piece first caught my eye SUCH A LOVELY princess-like name *tasting it* Esmeralda Ariel <3 I wonder if it is a birth name or an artist name? [. . .] Some ybercool fridge magnetism [. . .],

One mother also sends us an idyllic picture with a useful tip to those who are traveling with kids."

In Figure 5.7, the picture suggests that children can be treated in the same way as dogs. In addition, the picture does not present the child in an aesthetically pleasing way. Rather, it is made to look like a low-quality snapshot that has not been self-consciously or deliberately designed at all – which may, in fact, be a strategy exploited more generally in social media in broadcasting material supposedly documenting "authentic" everyday life (Berliner 2014: 298). All the other visual aspects of this entry also highlight ways in which this blog deviates from the typical conventions of homing blogs. These include the ample use of emoticons, the choice of the Comic Sans Serif as the font (a font originally designed

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5 All the translations from the original Finnish texts to English are by SL. Due to space limitations, the original Finnish texts were excluded from this chapter.

for cartoons), and the seemingly random use of typeface colours. The overall impression of the page is that it is cluttered, unorganized and messy. The contents of the text entry also amplify the impression of a lack of design and control: the entry gives us a fairly incoherent string of comments and reactions to alleged reader mail, all of which remain quite opaque to the reader.

The same transgressive theme is apparent in other entries. Figures 5.8 and 5.9, for example, are pictures taken inside a car wash, describing how, during the children's school break, the mother has come up with the idea of taking the children along for entertainment.

Figure 5.8: http://paskamutsi.vuodatus.net, accessed 12 January, 2019.

Extract 5.2 – Translation of the verbal framing of Figures 5.8 and 5.9

"I've almost done my bird with the school break. And it is not as if it isn't nice to spend several days in a row with the kids the only thing that bothered me was the constant cooking, normally they eat at school during the day. It is a constant problem to figure out activities for the energetic offspring and secondly everything costs in this world so it is not an easy concept this. But as a hint to others, too that you don't always have to pay to have fun as long as you are an inventive person. =)"

As in Figure 5.7, the entry here includes seemingly happenstance pictures illustrating what the textual entry describes: that taking the children to car wash can be meaningful "quality time" with mother. These examples also exemplify another typical feature of the verbal content of posts: they are written in vernacular or "slangy", speech-like Finnish, with frequent misspellings, missing

Figure 5.9: http://paskamutsi.vuodatus.net, accessed 12 January, 2019.

punctuation and unorthodox syntax. In addition, every compound word is written as two separate words. In this way, and akin to the "non-aesthetic" pictures and visual design, the verbal content thus becomes an evocative index of the allegedly non-normative mother identity. The desired overall impression seems to be that either the blogger's competence in blogging, photographing and writing is not very strong, or, that she is not too concerned with following the usual or expected rules.

In the same way as in homing blogs, the "shitty mother" herself is seldom in the pictures. Instead, there are entries that give or ask for tips relating to home decoration, handicrafts, cooking, or activities with children. Typically, the pictures depict the end results of the mother's activities, showing the products as somehow warped, shoddy or shocking. For example, there are pictures about rotten food, or burnt or otherwise sad looking baked goods. With irony, however, the verbal comments frame the content of the images as if they were impeccable and attractive. Figure 5.10 illustrates this kind of a blog entry, picturing a smoothie that the "shitty mother" had prepared as a Mother's Day surprise:

Extract 5.3 – Translation of the verbal framing of Figure 5.10

"**Mother's day surprise !**
Hello and an energetic Mother's Day to everyone <3 :) :)
     In the morning I got a lovely surprise when I found in the fridge a green smoothie that I had buzzed together a few weeks ago. :)
     It was in a good shape and breathed easily in a Rooster jar by Arabia [a Finnish design brand]. It is absolutely the top this way of super foods and fresh nutrition. :) :) :) I recommend it to all of those who have doubts! :)
     <3 <3 <3 <3 <3"

Figure 5.10: http://paskamutsi.vuodatus.net, accessed 12 January, 2019.

The stance taken in the pictures and verbal entries is constative or positively emotional – they depict or evaluate the details in the "shitty mother's" life. Seemingly innocently, the posts thereby engage in the display of, and commentary on, mothering in the best traditions of normative middle-class motherhood, suggesting that the mother simply has tried to do the right, correct and proper thing. At the same time, bloggers nevertheless display none of the careful, aestheticizing design and flair with visual presentation and photography characteristic of for example homing blogs. Figures 5.11 and 5.12 offer other examples of this type of "shitty mother" entries. In these cases, we see a mother's home-decorating project:

Extract 5.4 Translation of verbal framing of Figures 5.11 and 5.12

"DIY RURAL ROMANTIC CUPBOARD. Our reader Hot Romance -85 sent us a tip on home decorating: Now that it is almost Christmas, you often want to refurbish your home but the price is often too high. I just thought to do it myself and saved a lot of money' ... You can find inspiring pictures in web flea markets and magazines for interior decoration :) A big thank you to Hot Romance and wishes for a wonderful time preparing for Christmas to all of our other readers, too."

The example in Figures 5.11–2 and Extract 5.4 builds on a contrast between middle-class aesthetics and its subversion. Figure 5.11 includes a picture of a beautiful country romantic cupboard, of the kind that is often featured in magazines of interior decoration. At the same time, as Figure 5.12 shows, the blog entry also includes a picture of a cupboard that seems to be redecorated

Figure 5.11: http://paskamutsi.vuodatus.net, accessed 12 January, 2019.

Figure 5.12: http://paskamutsi.vuodatus.net, accessed 12 January, 2019.

according to the model provided by the country romantic cupboard. However, the social and cultural indices of this particular cupboard are all "wrong": instead of the French calligraphic inscription on a stylish cupboard suggesting an upper class, elitist taste, it has Finnish words written in shaky block letters by a felt tip pen on a standard issue, shabby kitchen cupboard. Further, instead of the inscribed reference to a romantic shop in Paris selling hosiery and shoes ("Bonnetterie & Chaussures"), the re-fashioned cupboard refers to a working-

class suburb of Hervanta in the city of Tampere, Finland. In addition, it shows inscriptions whose connotations are far from the prestigious ones of the model cupboard: they include a reference to Finnish homemade moonshine ("pontikka"); a nationalist right-wing slogan ("Koti, Uskonto ja Isänmaa", 'Home, Religion and Fatherland') and an iconic extract from Finnish rock lyrics ("Työttömyys, viina, kirves ja perhe", 'Unemployment, spirit alcohol, axe, family'). As in the case of the other examples discussed above, the verbal framing of the images 5.11 and 5.12 stands in an ironic contrast with the pictures, seemingly earnestly complimenting a reader for her frugal home decorating tip that can help others to renovate and beautify their homes. In sum, like the other entries, this example explicitly highlights and transgresses the norms of motherhood; while imitating these normative discourses and practices, it also constitutes a parodic version of these.

Finally, Figure 5.13 illustrates yet another key activity of good home making. The design for the picture seems deliberate: we are given a gloomy view of dead flowers, with an empty beer can as an additional adornment in the composition. The verbal framing, in turn, includes a deadpan plea for help in gardening. Once more, the entry transgressively highlights one of the norms of good motherhood – the skill of tending flowers – simultaneously flagging its absurdity with respect to the alleged life style choices of the "shitty mother".

Figure 5.13: http://paskamutsi.vuodatus.net, accessed 12 January, 2019.

Extract 5.5 – Translation of verbal framing of Figure 5.13

"Help with plucking flowers.
Garden life is at its peak now and I have a problem. When I bought this flower the sales person said that I had to pluck the dead flowers off, otherwise it won't make new flowers. So which ones of these I should have plucked off? Initial situation: (relatively dry already)."

Part of the transgressive business of *Shitty Mother's Diary* is that the entries appear to be commented on by followers. In their own ways, the comments develop

the themes and contents of the entries, amplifying and directing the reader's attention to the transgressiveness of the actions of the alleged mother. Comments of this kind are illustrated by Extract 5.5:

Extract 5.6: – Translation of comments on Figure 5.14/Extract 5.5

"Well that's not true. I almost had a Freudian. I thought that you had started drinking coke. :)))))))))))). Well now I can say this when I learnt the truth."

"Aulikki come ooooooooon!!!!!"

"Oh yes if anyone has any time to do something to the grass, the neighbour is getting noisy so that friends please move this way, alias the garden needs more than plucking"

"I know, I know! From those flowers in the hanging pot in the lower picture you need to bluck all flowers one by one, so you learn if loved or not. (. . .) These are the lessons by ancient folks. (is that a compound word BTW?) (. . .) i've become so careful with this compounding and hyphens, better to ask if you're not quite sure cos there's always so good advice here for everything. ❤ ❤"

Extract 5.6 shows how none of the (alleged) commentators, except the last one, actually responds to the blogger's call for help with her flowers. Instead, they attend to the beer can as the most salient detail in the picture, voicing relief over the realization that the can is after all not Coke but beer. The image of the mother as the one who is air-headed, and more interested in beer than flowers, cooking or even children gets its confirmation and legitimation by the assumed collective of other like-minded "shitty mothers" connecting with each other through the channel of *Shitty Mother's Diary*.

To summarize, *Shitty Mother's Diary*, in principle, depicts, discusses and comments on similar topics as the homing blogs. However, in all other respects its relationship with homing blogs is a parodic one: it constantly relies on transgressive revisualizations and recontextualizations of the themes and styles for representing motherhood in homing blogs. This shows in every aspect of its design: the pictures which are deliberately "non-aesthetic", snapshot-like, with little colour coordination, filtering or editing, as well as the layout which is usually cluttered, unorganized and peppered with excessive emoticons. In terms of its language and verbal features, a similar impression of a lack of control and refinement is produced through spelling mistakes, the use of vernacular Finnish or slang, and the lack of conventional punctuation. This is a vision/version of mother that is altogether less refined than the mother emerging in the homing blogs: she is (presented as) less educated, frivolous, untidy, boozy, and even immoral.

6 Conclusion: Ambiguity of the revisualized mother

In this chapter I have had three main aims. Firstly, building on the notion of recontextualization, I have argued that, in informal and interest-driven digital media, revisualization is an increasingly pervasive phenomenon. Secondly, I have demonstrated revisualization in action with the help of two examples of Finland-based mother blogs: first, homing blogs and then *Shitty Mother's Diary* posts. I have showed how, in the latter, the imagery and visual styles typical of homing blogs are taken up and transformed. Thirdly, I have argued how in *Shitty Mother's Diary* revisualization, along with its associated textual recontextualizations, served the purpose of subverting the norms and discourses of middle-class motherhood and the ways in which these continue to be recirculated, evaluated and legitimated in different public and media discourses. In doing so, the bloggers behind the *Shitty Mother's Diary* both display their familiarity with, and meaningfully deviate from the "appropriate" genre conventions, content preferences and modes of representation of homing blogs. More specifically, they do this on at least three levels:

a) To create parody, they imitate, exaggerate and/or invert visual, linguistic, stylistic and content choices typical of homing blogs (see also Halonen & Leppänen 2017).

b) To drive home their transgressive messages, they often create an ironic contrast between the visual and textual content of the blog entries.

c) By transgressively re-articulating the norms and ideals of middle-class motherhood, they both highlight the pervasiveness of these discourses and critically tackle them.

This final point deserves to be discussed in more detail. On the one hand, *Shitty Mother's Diary* could indeed be seen as a form of political critique that uses parody to ridicule normative discourses and (visual) representations of gender, class and motherhood. At the same time, it could be seen as an attempt to giving voice to the lower-class mother, and to being unashamed of how she deviates from the ideals of motherhood. Following Hatherley (2018:358), the contents and styles of representation in *Shitty Mother's Diary* could be seen as voicing "an alternative femininity, via an "Anti-Pygmalion" aesthetic" that deliberately transforms and resists the hegemonic middle-class preferences. In this sense, *Shitty Mother's Diary* could even be argued as an act of the lower-class mother writing back and re-seizing the weapon of taste that Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992: 114) have argued to have been in possession of the elite in the struggle for social status and power.

On the other hand, *Shitty Mother's Diary* could also be interpreted as attacking, from an educated middle-class perspective, the lifestyles and tastes of lower-class women. This interpretation has a lot to do with authenticity. In homing blogs, we see accounts, stories, and representations that are created and disseminated by real women in the context of their lifeworlds. The messages they give us may be aesthetized, filtered and edited, but in their blog entries what we witness are *their* words, thoughts, predicaments, perceptions and visions. In *Shitty Mother's Diary*, in contrast, we are given the perspective of the imagined or at least anonymized "shitty mother" who is most likely a fictional creature. If this is indeed the case, it could be asked, what or who are actually being disparaged. It is possible, for instance, to conclude that "the shitty mother" emerging in the blog entries is a grotesque continuation of the bad – working class and poor – motherhood that used to be highlighted in modern Finnish discourses, in other words, a mother branded by ignorance, lack of education and indifference.

On a more general level, it should be noted that the ambiguity highlighted by *Shitty Mother's Diary* is actually a recurrent feature of parodic recontextualization on social media. It seems that, while the ambiguity of parody can function as a useful strategy to attract different audiences, it also raises the question of what is the context according to which audiences should/could orient to and make sense of it. In social media, it is often the case that what gets disseminated, sometimes in viral ways, is the spectacular meme, but not its societal, cultural, and political code. However, as Beverley Skeggs (2004: 29) argues, ambivalence itself can be valuable and essential for many forms of social reproduction in late-modern societies (see also Kolehmainen 2017). In this way, ambivalence, too, can serve as a means for destabilizing existing power relations.

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