



Centre for Parenting
Culture Studies

CPCSForums@Kent
Autumn 2013

These events are designed as a space for colleagues in and around Kent to come together to discuss parenting culture. We hope that they will foster some interesting cross-disciplinary conversation, and lead to collaborative events in the future. All are welcome, so please spread the word!

(1) A Cultural History of Breastfeeding: Notes on a New Project of Research

Dr Katja Haustein, Lecturer in Comparative Literature SECL, University of Kent

Wednesday 23rd October 3-5pm, Cornwallis North West Seminar Room 1

Armin Horowitz' lithograph "Stillende Mutter [Nursing Mother]" of 1926 shows a young woman in bed, her swelling breasts exposed to the eyes of the onlooker as well as to the baby which she is tenderly pulling towards her. The picture emphasizes the "naturalness" of breastfeeding and combines female sensuality with the ideal of maternal love. Putting this representation into historical perspective, however, we realize that the cultural practice of breastfeeding was not always regarded as a self-evident form of nutrition, nor was the nursing mother always necessarily associated with love or even linked to an ideal of "fulfilled womanhood" at all. On the contrary – and in contrast to Horowitz' depiction – debates on breastfeeding would rarely stick to the facts, be highly ideological and often extremely controversial. In my research project I examine sources that range from visual art (Greuze, Picasso, Gauguin, Modersohn-Becker), advertisements and propaganda (Kollwitz, Soppelsa), letters and literary sources (Mozart, Goethe) to philosophical treatises (Plato, Kant, Rousseau, Kühn), pediatric texts and advice books on infant rearing (Archenholz, Campe, Tugendreich) to discuss breastfeeding as a topic where personal experience and artistic imagination intersect with gender-ideological and political debate. In this way, I pursue the often conflicting representations and discourses of womanhood as they crystalize around images of the nursing body in order to shed light on the as yet little-studied history of this aspect of female identity from the eighteenth century to the present day.



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(2) The Sociology of Postnatal Depression

Reading Group, introduced by Dr Ellie Lee.

Wednesday 11th December, 3-5pm

Cornwallis North West Seminar Room 1

Reading:

Rebecca Godderis:

<http://hea.sagepub.com/content/14/5/451.short>

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jhbs.21590/full>

Ellie Lee:

<http://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2FBF02698485.pdf>