

Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History

Veranstalter: Centre for the History of Emotions, Max Planck Institute for Human Development

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The international and interdisciplinary conference „Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History“ organized at the Centre for the History of Emotions of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development from 29 November to 1 December 2012 in Berlin brought together new research in the fields of childhood, education and emotions. The conference organizers STEPHANIE OLSEN (Berlin) and JULIANE BRAUER (Berlin) convened the conference to lay the foundations of a comparative history of educating children’s emotions through the exploration of formal and informal educational contexts. Conference participants outlined the intersectional approach to the history of childhood education. The societal focus on children and their education from the nineteenth century onwards led to productive discussions on the actors involved, the preferred modes and significance of childhood education, and a growing scholarly interest in emotions.

The keynote speaker, PETER STEARNS (Washington), focused on the changing emotions accompanying obedience among American children during the nineteenth century. He demonstrated how these emotions were redefined so that children were no longer frightened into obedience but instead keen and happy to become obedient. Using quantitative data from digital databases, he raised methodological questions about these new sources by highlighting both their limitations and opportunities, namely in their failure to provide explanations and in their usefulness to demonstrate transitions.

The first panel „Schools, Space and Discipline“ examined the importance of space in childhood education. JANE HAMLETT (London) focused on the importance of dormitories for public-school boys in South-East Eng-

land in building notions of masculinity; ROY KOZLOWSKY (Boston) dwelt on the importance of the architecture of playgrounds and hospitals as sites for the production of knowledge and the management of children’s emotions. By concentrating on the management of emotions within families and public schools in Belgium, JOSEPHINE HOEGAERTS (Leuven) showed how emotional values are imparted in distinct educational spaces and the ways in which shifts occur.

The second panel, „Media and Emotional Knowledge Acquisition,“ examined the distribution channels of specific emotional knowledge. In his talk, MATTHEW EDDY (Durham) explained how inscription and pictures were used in eighteenth-century Britain as methods for the emotional therapy of children, specifically for anger management. DIANE BJORKLUND (Normal) analyzed American picture books regarding their depiction of grief, finding that most books advocate openly discussing feelings with children, whereas HARALD SALOMON (Berlin) showed that children in the media culture of 1930s Japan, while becoming a national preoccupation, mostly inhabited their own spaces and had to deal with adverse situations on their own. Lastly, MANUELA BEYER (Berlin) inquired into the changing feeling rules in the most popular German youth magazine, BRAVO, from the 1960s until today, highlighting a change starting at the end of the 1960s and favoring internal emotional control over external social sanction.

The third panel addressed the role of religion in the education of children’s emotions. HUGH MORRISON (Dunedin) analyzed the religious roots of emotional norms for children in late colonial British settler societies, arguing for a transnational approach and using a methodology of „affective communities.“ MARY CLARE MARTIN (London) contrasted this with a closer look at the situation in nineteenth-century England, concluding that encouraging positive feelings towards religion in children was more widespread in English society than previously thought.

The close connection between the burgeoning nationalism of the nineteenth century and the education of children’s emotions was the topic of the fourth panel, discussing how

emotional communities and regimes were linked to the perceived community of the Nation. MARCELO CARUSO (Berlin) gave an insight into early post-independence Latin America, contrasting the „cooling-down“ of emotions influenced by the Enlightenment with a more positive approach to passions stemming from the construction of a Latinized self. SUSAN MILLER (Camden) discussed how in the fin-de-siècle United States, children became the focus of an intended „re-birth“ of the American Nation through a renewed focus on the revolution via organizations such as the „Children of the Revolution.“ ELENA TABACCHI (Florence) examined the education of emotions with the use of schoolbooks in nineteenth-century Italy, highlighting how religious emotions in the early Empire were transformed into nationalist emotions, forming a „national catechism“ of love and anger. KATHARINA ROWOLD (London) concluded the panel by comparing child-rearing advice from National Socialist Germany and Interwar Britain, identifying a specific national socialist approach in Johanna Haarer’s insistence on the blood line between mother and child.

The fifth panel shifted the geographical focus to the colonial world. SWAPNA BANERJEE (New York) analyzed personal narratives from late colonial Bengal to emphasize the role of fatherhood as the cornerstone of „colonial masculinity“ and the culture of childhood in India, both in norms and practice. KAREN VALLGARDA (Copenhagen) also focused on India, probing the nexus of childhood, emotions, and colonial agendas among the Danish evangelical missionaries. She argued that the feelings towards, and relations to, children became a decisive marker of European identity not only in the colonies but also at home. KRISTINE ALEXANDER (Saskatoon) added a gendered perspective by exploring the world-wide Girl Guide movement. She identified „happifying“, the movement’s performative ideal of cheerfulness, as gendered emotion work, part of a civilizing mission in the Global South.

The sixth panel featured an interdisciplinary approach to the study of adolescence, medicine and the body. MICHAELA RIEDIGER and KATHRIN KLIPKER (both Berlin)

presented the contributions of contemporary developmental psychologists to the study of emotional experiences in adolescence, highlighting the context of concepts such as emotional experience, emotional variability (fluctuation of emotions over time) and emotion regulation. LUTZ SAUERTEIG (Durham) investigated the discourse on puberty around 1900, and how biological and medicinal findings influenced the notion of puberty among pedagogues, sex educators and artists. BETH LINKER (Philadelphia) examined how the „Milwaukee Brace“, a metal cast used for the treatment of scoliosis affected the emotions and psychology of female adolescent patients. She highlighted the link between the device and the notion of a „straight personality“ as well as how brace wearers brought the emotionality of the treatment to the foreground, forcing medical professionals to take note. ISHITA PANDE (Kingston) concluded the section by scrutinizing the role of sexology literature produced in India between 1891 and 1929 in defining the notion of childhood, taking the age of consent as a measure.

The seventh panel focused on emotional education in an out-of-school context. TAMARA MYERS (Vancouver) opened with an exploration of the various methods used by police in North America in the late 1940s and 1950s to keep children safe, particularly in the „safety“ films and photographs used to teach children to fear specific city areas and to avoid certain kinds of behavior. KAISA VEHKALATHI (Turku) discussed the Finnish experience of gendered emotional assumptions of child welfare institutions regarding teenage girls. Relating the policies to the growing post-war anxieties about girls’ morals, she argued that despite changes in terminology, ways of controlling emotions persisted through the decades. CHRISTINE VON OERTZEN (Berlin) examined the emergence of the Child Study Movement in Gilded Age America, which drew heavily on the domestic efforts of adult family members and especially mothers acting as scientific observers. Exploring the notes of Milicent Shinn on her niece’s development, she showed the increased scholarly interest in the physiological and mental changes in infancy. ANNE KATRINE GJERLOFF (Aarhus) explored

the discourse on children's emotions in the Danish teacher Vilhelm Rasmussen's diaries on the development of his two daughters. While positioning the diaries in a broader scientific and social context, she addressed the way in which the emotions of children were described, and more importantly, explained in early twentieth-century Denmark.

Finally, in the round-table session, COLIN HEYWOOD (Nottingham), RAINER SILBEREISEN (Jena), UTE FREVERT (Berlin) and PETER STEARNS concluded the conference with a discussion, which stressed the importance of continuity and change in expressing and forming children's emotions as well as the significance of comparative methods. Researchers were also urged to maintain a critical distance when investigating historical emotions, in order not to claim false familiarity and to treat emotions ahistorically. Various forms of primary sources were critically problematized: children seldom speak for themselves and lower classes are underrepresented in written sources; it is far easier to analyze how emotions were discussed (emotionology), than to attempt to address the important question of how emotions were felt by historical actors. This successful conference illustrates how the history of childhood and youth benefits from interdisciplinary approaches and theoretical and empirical interventions from the history of education, and especially how fruitful its intertwining with the history of emotions can be.¹

Conference Overview:

Opening

Ute Frevert / Juliane Brauer / Stephanie Olsen (all MPI for Human Development)

Panel 1: Schools, Space and Discipline

Jane Hamlett (Royal Holloway, University of London): „The Moral Discipline of Common Life?“ Space and Relationships in Dormitories for Public School Boys in South-East England, 1845-1918.

Roy Kozlowsky (Northeastern University): The Architecture of Emotion.

Josephine Hoegaerts (University of Leuven): Fatherly Pride, Filial Love and Repressed Anger. Exploring children's emotional agency

in the late nineteenth century primary school.

Panel 2: Media and Emotional Knowledge Acquisition

Matthew Daniel Eddy (Durham University): „Filthy Scribble Scribble:“ Children, Inscription and the Emotional Therapy of Pictures.

Diane Bjorklund (Illinois State University): „Sad, Mad and Scared:“ Lessons about Grief in American Picture Books during the Second Half of the Twentieth Century.

Harald Salomon (Humboldt University): „Children in the Wind:“ Representations of Childhood in the Media Culture of 1930s Japan.

Manuela Beyer (Freie Universität Berlin): „Listen to Your Heart:“ Historical Developments in the Advice on Emotions in a German Youth Magazine since 1961.

Panel 3: Religion, Emotion and Children

Hugh Morrison (University of Otago): „Torch Bearers in the Cause of Christ and Humanity:“ Religion and „Growing Up“ in British Settler Societies, New Zealand and Canada 1890s to 1930s.

Mary Clare Martin (University of Greenwich): Children, Youth and Religion in Nineteenth-century Britain.

Keynote

Peter Stearns (George Mason University): Obedience and Emotion: A Challenge in the Emotional History of Childhood.

Panel 4: The Nation and its Exclusions

Chair: Benno Gammerl (MPI for Human Development)

Marcelo Caruso (Humboldt University): Patriotic and Republican Sentiments: Educating Children's Emotions in Early Independent Latin America.

Susan Miller (Rutgers University, Camden):

¹For further reading: Thomas Dixon, Educating the emotions from Gradgrind to Goleman, in: Research Papers in Education, 27 (2012), p. 481- 495; Ute Frevert / Christoph Wulf, Die Bildung der Gefühle, in: Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft, 15 (2012), p. 1-10.

Bloodties and Lifelines.

Elena Tabacchi (University of Florence): Shaping Citizens and Politics of Emotion: Reading Books for Primary Schools in Liberal Italy, 1882–1900.

Katharina Rowold (Queen Mary, University of London): Johanna Haarer and Frederic Truby King; or When is a Baby Care Manual an Instrument of National Socialism?

Panel 5: Emotional Education in Colonial Settings

Swapna Banerjee, (Brooklyn College, CUNY): Exploring Emotional History: Everyday Practices of Fathers and Children in Colonial India.

Karen Vallgård (University of Copenhagen): Loving the Colonized Children—Danish Missionaries in Colonial South India.

Kristine Alexander (University of Saskatchewan): „The Mission of Happyfying:“ Cheerfulness and Colonialism in the History of the Girl Guides.

Panel 6: Adolescence, Medicine and the Body

Michaela Riediger and Kathrin Klipker (MPI for Human Development Berlin): Emotional Experiences in Adolescence: A View from Contemporary Developmental Psychology.

Lutz Sauerteig (Durham University): The Emotional Turmoil of Puberty around 1900.

Beth Linker (University of Pennsylvania): Brace Yourself: Scoliosis Treatment and the Inner Lives of Adolescent Girls in 20th-century America.

Ishita Pande (Queen’s University): Sexology, the Education of Desire and the Conduct of Childhood in Late Colonial India.

Panel 7: Policing, Child Welfare and Child Observation

Tamara Myers (University of British Columbia): Happy or Dead: Safety and Fear in Postwar Policing of Childhood.

Kaisa Vehkalahti (University of Turku): Policing Emotions: Youth, Gender and Delinquency in Finland, 1920-1965

Christine von Oertzen (MPI for the History

of Science): Observations of Early Childhood Development in Gilded Age America

Anne Katrine Gjerløff (University of Aarhus): „Today Ruth Was Happy:“ Diaries of Childhood Development and Emotions.

Round Table

Colin Heywood (The University of Nottingham), Rainer Silbereisen (Friedrich Schiller University, Jena), Ute Frevert (MPI for Human Development Berlin), Peter Stearns (George Mason University)

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