Abstracts

Christian Schmitt, Ulrike Winkelmann
Who is childless? What socio-structural data tell us about childlessness amongst women and men

Official statistics and demographic research on childlessness have to date focused primarily upon female fertility. The aim of the current study is to expand this perspective by investigating the various socio-structural factors that foster or hinder the transition to parenthood – for both women and men, given that a higher proportion of men than women report themselves to be childless. We find that transitions after the age of 45 are rare for both women and men, and that men tend to delay the initial transition to parenthood longer than women. Especially among the more highly educated, we find a dominant pattern of the postponement of parenthood. Yet we cannot find any evidence of the massive proportion of more highly educated women who, according to the official statistics, remain childless. This high rate of female childlessness appears to be a statistical artifact related to delayed family formation among the more highly educated. Finally, we find a clear link between decreasing stability in relationships and childlessness, which is especially true of men.

Keywords: Childlessness, Fertility, Family Formation, Male childlessness

Tanja Krones
Reproductive decisions ranging from abortion to assisted reproduction – a critical view of current feminist debates

In the article, the current German feminist debate on new reproductive technologies and prenatal diagnosis is presented, then compared to the recent Anglo-American feminist debate, and criticized in the light of Rosemary Tong's feminist philosophical framework and of empirical results from studies of high genetic risk and IVF couples and the general population conducted between 2000 and 2004. For historical reasons, most influential German feminist bioethicists have adopted an argumentation that is currently trying to unequivocally protect the dignity of the human embryo and concurrently defend women's right to abort in general, whilst being fundamentally critical towards prenatal and preimplantation genetic diagnosis at the same time. In contrast to this line of argumentation, the ambivalence of all reproductive decisions is stressed and a context-sensitive approach that takes both autonomy and difference into consideration is called for.

Keywords: Feminism, Bioethics, PID, PGD

Stefanie Hohn
Anais Nin and her ambivalence towards motherliness

Anais Nin, writer and notorious bigamist, struggled all her life to be considered a serious artist, but the fame second-wave feminism brought to her Diary was only fleeting. When the sordid details of her life became known to the public, feminist criticism turned away from her. The issue of childlessness sheds a new light on Anais Nin's importance in the context of female modernism. The literary reworkings of Nin's stillbirth experience provide the key to her complex personality, which was trapped between the traditional role model she was educated to fulfill, and her own ambitious need for (sexual and artistic) self-fulfillment. The article investigates the transformation of the birth-episode – from the biographical incident as recorded in the unpublished Diary, to the highly stylized literary text 'Birth' – and reveals
how Anaïs Nin worked her life into art, thereby creating her own ideal woman personae.

By reconsidering Anaïs Nin's biographical work without condemning the «inaccuracies» of the published Diary as lies, I argue, feminist criticism could gain a deeper insight into the conflicting impulses modernism brought to the female consciousness.

Keywords: Motherhood, Modernism, Woman/Artist Dilemma

Angela Wegener

Lesbian and gay parenthood between heteronormativity and acceptance

Homosexual mothers and fathers, children with homosexual parents – these are issues that are hardly being addressed in German research, if at all. Also, as regards perceptions in everyday life, the prevailing public opinion is that lesbians and gays have no children. However, many different kinds of family patterns with lesbian and gay parents have been formed, especially within the past few years. Their number is increasing because young lesbians and gays are now expressing their wish for a life with children more openly.

If the group of homosexual parents was included within the scope of scientific investigations of parenthood and the perspective and importance of biological, social, and legal parenthood were defined more clearly, it could help to question the present heteronormative models of parenting which have, up to now, been regarded as natural.

Keywords: parenthood; homosexuality; heteronormativity

Sandra Beaufays, Beate Krais

The production of academics and the reproduction of power relations in the scientific field

On the basis of two ethnographic research projects which analyzed academics' work culture in different university faculties and research institutions, this paper asks how processes of «doing science» and «doing gender» are interrelated. By looking at the self-perception of historians and bioscientists, it shows how shared beliefs regarding the nature of a proper academic and of good academic work combine and contribute to the exclusion of women.

Keywords: doing gender, university, academic culture

Rosi Braidotti

The material foundation of virtual subjectivity

Rosi Braidotti emphasizes the concrete material nature of a so-called virtuality. She points to the bio-power effects of both bio- and communication technologies in the process of globalization and calls for a viable representation of the changes and transformations currently under way. While the dominant mode of representation oscillates between techno-eu-
phoria and techno-doom, what Braidotti is seeking is an empowering perspective in terms of a feminist materialism and a politics of location. Accordingly, suggestions are made for an alternative mode of accountability, which would start from »figurations« of alternative feminist subjectivity. Braidotti sees feminist thinking as one of the major critical forces of the recent past and present, but she calls for a revision of the canonical status of social constructivism, in pointing out its weaknesses and theoretical shortcomings especially with regard to feminist discussions on bio-technology. Thus, while it criticizes the social effects of globalization and the monstrous social imaginary that sustains the intertwined technological culture, the article also argues for a post-humanist ethics of complexity and embodied differences, one which makes use of the insights of theorists like Deleuze and Irigaray, and indeed of Braidotti's own concept of nomadic subjectivity.

**Barbara Stambolis:**

Male and female service clubs and chances in the topography of gender

Women respond to the male policy of forming exclusive dominions by creating female networks. Female clubs in particular are telling examples of the way women have organized themselves and reacted to traditional male organizations. Female service clubs like Zonta and Soroptimist are likely to be compared with their male counterparts. Their success-story is still to be critically examined, yet it demonstrates not only that women have exerted an influence on the changing pattern (»topography«) of gender roles, but gives evidence how this was done.

Keywords: service clubs, Germany, women's organizations

**Florence Vienne:**

Writing the history of male sterility, 1933–1945

In Nazi Germany, not only female but also male sterility was defined as a disease for which free medical treatment was made available. By analyzing the medical discourse on the diagnosis and treatment of male infertility during the Nazi regime this article pursues two objectives. First, it presents some research outcomes of a larger project on the emergence of »man« as an object of medical knowledge in the first half of the twentieth century. Secondly, it discusses why, compared to the numerous studies on the pathologization of women (particularly through gynecology), the issue of the medicalization of men has so far been neglected by historians and in gender studies.

Keywords: History of medicine, sterility, masculinity, National Socialism

**Elisabeth Kneuper**

Some women do not have children – comparative perspectives from medical anthropology

Some Non-Western cultures know social positions reserved to childless women. Exploring the Gikuyu in Kenya and the Northamerican plain indians, the article argues that women outside Euroamerica neither necessarily have to give birth to children to have descendants nor are generally restricted to biological motherhood. This insight gains special importance as thoughtless generalizations about »women« or »the« female body are likely to influence health development policy.

Keywords: medical anthropology, motherhood, Gikuyu, Berdache, health development policy