

Childhood, Pain and Emotion

Situated between the history of pain, history of childhood and history of emotions, this innovative work explores cultural understandings of children's pain, from the 1870s to the end of the Second World War. Focusing on British medical discourse, Leticia Fernández-Fontecha examines the relationship between the experience of pain and its social and medical perception, looking at how pain is felt, seen and performed in contexts such as the hospital, the war nursery and the asylum. By means of a comparative study of views in different disciplines – physiology, paediatrics, psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis – this work demonstrates the various ways in which the child in pain came to be perceived. This context is vital to understanding current practices and beliefs surrounding childhood pain, and the role that children play in the construction of adult worlds.

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Childhood, Pain and Emotion

A Modern British Medical History

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For Ángel González García

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Acknowledgements

I began researching the history of childhood pain ten years ago when I was a PhD student living in London, trying to come to terms with the pain of my own childhood. Many things have happened since then. I finished my PhD and moved to New York, hoping to secure an academic position. I experienced the fear that comes with academic precarity and found other ways to keep writing. I then moved to Iowa City to pursue an MFA in Spanish Creative Writing, where I met my husband in a poetry seminar. Less than a year after we first met, we got married in a parking lot in the middle of a pandemic. Soon after, I became pregnant, and nine months later, we welcomed our first child. At the end of this journey, I returned to this project and realised it needed to become a book. I worked on it during the last months of my pregnancy and the first months of my child's life. During those nights of writing, I came to realise how much I had grown and learned while working on this project, and how much this book has given me over the years.

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