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Adverse Events. On bad affects and the antidepressant wars.

Monday 5 June 2017 5 – 6.30pm

Professor Elizabeth Wilson

Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, **Emory University**

SRWB Theatrette, Sir Roland Wilson Building (Building 120), ANU



In this lecture Professor Elizabeth Wilson will address the issue of psychopharmaceuticals, harm and adverse effects. The lecture will begin by considering the arguments against antidepressant medications developed by a loose alliance of critics (feminists, anti-psychiatry activists, clinicians) who maintain that these medications pose a significant threat to the patients who take them: are adolescents, in particular, more susceptible to suicidal ideation when they take antidepressants?

The lecture will then argue for the necessary entanglement of harm and cure in psychological treatments and it will consider the importance of over-interpretation of pharmaceutical data. It will set out some challenges for a feminist politics of adverse events in the pharmaceutical era: what underlies the phantasy of harm-free psychological treatments? Do such phantasies produce their own adverse effects? What roles should bad feelings and toxic psychological states have in feminist accounts of psycho-pharmaceuticals?

Elizabeth Wilson is Chair of the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Emory University. She has held appointments at the University of New South Wales, the University of Western Sydney, the Australian National University, and the University of Sydney. She has also been awarded fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton (2003-2004) and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard (2011-2012).

Her work explores how biological data, psychoanalysis, and affect theory can be used to foster conceptual innovation in feminist theory. Currently she is co-authoring an introduction to the affect theory of Silvan Tomkins (with Adam Frank, University of British Columbia). In her new book *Gut Feminism*, she turns her attention to the gut and depression. She examines research on anti-depressants, placebos, transference, phantasy, eating disorders and suicidality with two goals in mind: to show how pharmaceutical data can be useful for feminist theory, and to address the necessary role of aggression in feminist politics. Her previous books are *Affect and Artificial Intelligence* (2010) University of Washington Press; *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body* (2004) Duke University Press; *Neural Geographies: Feminism and the Microstructure of Cognition* (1998) Routledge.

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