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Notes from the Underground

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The Historical Underground

The Journey of the Mentally Ill

Throughout Western history, people have treated the mentally ill in a despicable manner by exposing the victims to several types of torture and horrid conditions, all in an effort to try to "cure" them in institutions known as asylums. In ancient times, people would trephine them, or drill holes in the skull, because they believed evil spirits were trapped inside. Then, some began to believe that exorcisms were needed to release the spirits. It was not until after the Dark Ages that this belief in demonology began to decline and the first physician, Johann Weyer, started to study the brain. By the mid-sixteenth century, old monasteries and hospitals turned into asylums for mentally ill patients. These places often overflowed with patients who were treated like savages. The callous people who tended to the patients restricted their movement and senses by limiting their line of sight and binding them in place with restraints or chains. Even though an asylum is defined as a place to offer help and shelter to the mentally ill, these European asylums were wretched.

The first asylum in America started in Philadelphia, PA in 1751-55 with the help of Benjamin Franklin. Although some of the patients did have a mental disease, a few unfortunate ones were admitted for questioning higher authorities or just being different. Children could be admitted because of a birth defect, such as a speech impediment or blindness, and women were commonly admitted because they were not obedient to their husbands. Thanks to the reformer Dorothea Dix, asylum facilities slowly began to improve conditions by the mid-nineteenth century as the overall population grew and urbanization increased. Patients came to be treated more humanely, which was known as "moral treatment." Restraints and chains began to fall off the victims as they found better methods of treatment. These reformers used moral therapy combined with therapeutic employment to start a trend of humane methods of treatment. By 1839, mechanical restraints of any kind were obsolete and no longer required for any patient. The United States also began establishing state mental health systems that were paid for by the taxpayers.

Sadly, the humanity in these asylums decreased dramatically when in the early- to mid-twentieth century new treatments were introduced and conditions deteriorated. Some of the new treatments included different types of shock therapy, seizure therapy, and leucotomy, which developed into a lobotomy. A lobotomy was a surgical procedure that severed the nerve tracks in the brain's frontal lobes in order to subdue patients. From 1936 to the early 1950s the surgery was commonplace, but it was eventually replaced by psychotropic drugs. In the early-twentieth century, asylums experienced overcrowding and some patients even starved to death during the Great Depression. In addition, they experienced abuse from the caretakers.

By the mid-twentieth century, antipsychotic drugs emerged as a popular treatment. The first major drug, chlorpromazine, or thorszine, was discovered by French psychiatrist, Pierre Deniker in 1952. He popularized the drug, and it inspired psychiatric studies investigating the effectiveness of drugs in treating psychosis. New, improved drugs began to emerge from this discovery, such as early antidepressants, mood stabilizers, and muscle relaxants. These drugs allowed for patients to be "cured" and fewer hospitals were needed. However, even as the introduction of drugs improved the long-term outcomes for some patients, sterilization programs, which targeted the mentally ill and mentally impaired, continued on until the 1960s. While the sterilization movement has faded, the use of drugs to treat mental illness has come to dominate treatment and fewer people are being institutionalized.

~ Samantha Vorsino, Dual Credit Student

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How and when did you become interested in history?

I became interested in history as a child. My father taught (and still teaches) history at the local community college in my hometown. There were history books everywhere in the house. He would also tell me bedtime stories of Abraham Lincoln's assassination, famous generals, weird historical trivia, etc. He always had funny stories that made history interesting. In retrospect, perhaps it was odd to have those particular events as bedtime stories, but it did make me intrigued in the subject.

What is your area of interest and where did you go to graduate school?

My area of interest is twentieth-century U.S. history. I did my Master's at Angelo State University in San Angelo. And, I did my Ph.D. at Texas A&M University.

What do you think history can offer our students, and how can they benefit from studying it?

I think history can offer students an understanding of why their world is the way it is. Why things that are important or that are going to affect them are in fact happening. All of it goes back to

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Dr. Jennifer Lawrence is an Associate professor of history and the new Chair of the Global Studies Department at Southeast Campus

Ethan Watters, *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche*

Ethan Watters' most recent book, *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche* (2010), examines the spread of American ideas about the human mind over the last 30 years. He synthesizes evidence from interviews, scientific and anthropological studies, and the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (the *DSM* for short) to question whether American mental health treatments are effective in different cultural contexts.

In the first three chapters, Watters lays out several major arguments. First, he conclusively demonstrates that the sources of mental illnesses around the world are never the same. However, when Western experts on mental illness begin educating others about the cause of illnesses in their American iteration, the populations they are working with begin to mimic American pathos. Thus, American experts are caught in a precarious position as they seek to educate people about diseases; yet, they inevitably mold the behavior of the population they hope to help. The second major argument is that other societies have developed methods of coping and dealing with mental illnesses that have had similar – or better – results as the current American approach of heavy medication.

The most important chapter details changing perceptions of depression in Japan. Up until the 1990s, Japanese psychiatrists only recognized and treated severe depression. In fact, in Japan, having a melancholic personality was something that was prized as it supposedly reflected introspection and enlightenment. When the first anti-depressant medications were unveiled in the early 1990s, pharmaceutical companies did not market their medications in Japan because no one there believed that having a gloomy personality necessitated medication. However, after a decade of economic recession and increasing rates of suicide, an opening presented itself. Specifically, GlaxoSmithKline launched a mass marketing campaign to spread awareness about the symptoms of depression. Then, it funded and ghostwrote a study in which they falsified data about their drug Paxil. Several influential American academics attached their names to the study even though Paxil, in adolescent populations, actually increased hospitalizations and thoughts of suicide by five times vis-à-vis a placebo group! With this information buried, under a media and "scholarly" blitz, the Japanese had come to believe they were depressed, and "[b]y 2008 sales of Paxil were over one billion dollars per year in Japan."

This book reveals the dangers of projecting American ideas about mental illnesses around the world. As American "experts" erase localized understandings of diseases (stemming from emotional distress), the people begin to adopt American explanations for their disorders (chemical imbalances, self loathing, etc.). This process serves to unmoor those afflicted with mental disease from their ability to express themselves in local idioms. This unhinging could potentially serve to increase patients' suffering. More distressing is that the Western approach to medicating mental illness has so thoroughly dominated the rest of the world's thinking about illness that many cultures are abandoning their traditional beliefs (usually a mix of religion and mysticism), which have oftentimes mitigated symptoms better than Western drugs. And, in the case of Japan, the *DSM's* vague criteria for depression directly led to antidepressants being massively overprescribed. Rather than steamrolling other cultures and allowing corporations' bottom lines to shape our understanding of the human mind, perhaps we need more cultural understanding and more stringent ethical rules governing the interaction between academics and drug companies.

~ Greg Kosc, Faculty

American Naval Innovations

From its birth on October 13, 1775, the United States Navy has endeavored to become the best in the world. A large portion of achieving this goal was accomplished through multiple innovations in the 18th and 19th centuries. Born in the shipyards of Philadelphia, the navy was behind the eight ball against the greatest fleet of the age, the British Royal Navy.

The first significant stride was made by David Bushnell who invented the submersible *Turtle*. In 1776 this primitive submarine was launched in New York Harbor. This one man vessel contained pumps for water intake to submerge and release valves to surface. Propulsion was achieved via a pedal and the armament included a keg of powder attached to the hull. The plan was to sail out towards the British ships and use a bore to insert the powder and withdraw before the timer fuse detonated. Unfortunately, the *Turtle* did not succeed in its mission as the crewman was unable to punch a hole into the British vessel and had to abandon the torpedo.

Robert Fulton was another innovator working in Europe. He completed his own submersible *Nautilus* for France under the Consulate of Bonaparte. His most important innovation was two horizontal fins that predated modern diving planes. His explosive mines would be released by a line and detonate on impact with the enemy vessels hull. This never came to fruition in combat and Fulton moved on to Britain where he continued developing a more modern torpedo. Returning to America in 1806, Fulton would focus his efforts on the first steamship, the *North River* (later dubbed the *Clermont*). Eight years later he would apply this to his proposed warship, *USS Demalogos*. Essentially a steam gun battery, the vessel was double hulled with the paddle wheel and steam engine protected by the five foot hull from enemy fire. This allowed Fulton to mount two 32 lb. cannon fore and aft, with six both port and starboard. The end of the War of 1812 and Fulton's untimely death in 1815 ended its immediate usefulness.

In the 1830s, Swedish immigrant John Ericsson introduced the screw propeller, which allowed for faster steamships. He was actively recruited by USN Captain Stockton to develop the first screw propelled warship. Upon completion the *USS Princeton* set new speed records. Unfortunately during a demonstration of her heavy guns in 1844 one exploded killing the Secretary of State, Secretary of the Navy and several others in attendance. Captain Stockton shifted the blame to Ericsson, thus ending his involvement with the navy for over a decade. The *USS Princeton*, once refitted would see service in the Mexican War.

These innovations would serve as launching points for future developments as the U.S. Navy took a more prominent role in American history. Many subsequent innovations by Ericsson and others would prove their worth in the Civil War. Submersibles, steam technology, and screw propellers would help revolutionize the U.S. Navy and, ultimately, allow the U.S. to become a true global power by the end of the century.

~ Scott W. Maloney, Faculty

Hemp: An American Tale

Hemp has been an essential survival tool for humans for at least 10,000 years. The word canvas is derived from the word cannabis, which is the botanical name for hemp. Various parts of the plant can be manufactured into paper, fuel, food, clothing, building materials, and a host of other beneficial products. In fact, many researchers have argued that hemp may be the most ancient crop ever cultivated. Under various mandatory orders by the English during the 17th and 18th centuries, colonists in the New World were required to grow hemp for its value as a naval store (rope, sail cloth, etc.) These materials were exported to England, only to be sold back to Americans as finished/manufactured goods — creating a dependency that would eventually contribute to igniting a desire for independence.

Benjamin Franklin owned a hemp paper mill factory. He, more than likely, printed all of his scholarly works on hemp paper. The kite in his famous lightning experiment may have been made of hemp. And no, despite his audacious behavior (he once chased a lightning storm) and wild partying, there is no evidence that Ben was smoking it! George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were also hemp farmers, and the Declaration of Independence that Jefferson drafted was written on paper that might have been made from his farm. In fact, Jefferson was so involved in hemp farming that he patented a hemp breaking machine around 1815.

The 20th century ushered in an entirely new direction for hemp in America. Despite the fact that the 1930s witnessed the creation of the hemp *decorticator*, which was supposed to revolutionize the way hemp is separated and processed, the Marihuana Tax Act was introduced in 1937. Many argue that this tax was designed to put an end to industrialized hemp. After all, a 1938 article in *Popular Mechanics*, entitled, "New-Billion Dollar Crop," claimed hemp cultivation could create thousands of jobs and significantly help to displace foreign imports. Hemp farms were still scattered across Kentucky, Missouri, Virginia, and Tennessee. However, some believe that William Randolph Hearst, owner of newspapers, magazines, timber acreage, and paper manufacturing companies, may have worked with the petrochemical giant, DuPont, to put an end to the hemp industry to benefit their financial interest in paper and chemicals. This may or may not be true, but the innovations to manufacturing hemp may have given Hearst some stiff competition. Hemp pulp is more economical to produce, is annually renewable (unlike trees), and requires minimal chemical treatment. Hearst attacked the flowery bud that is grown on the strain of psychoactive varieties of cannabis, which he supposedly later coined as "marihuana." With access to media resources, Hearst began a smear campaign, which included claims that users of cannabis (mostly jazz musicians and minorities) would go crazy, rape white women, become crazed killers, and harm their children. The propaganda movie, "Reefer Madness," is an excellent example of these fears.

Despite this demonization, when the Japanese blocked supplies of hemp to America during World War II – which the U.S. military used to make everything from parachutes to shoestrings – hemp made a small resurgence in 1942 with the "Hemp for Victory" initiative sponsored by the U.S. government. Mainly grown in Kentucky and Wisconsin, patriotic Americans grew, cultivated, and processed hemp until the war was over. Now, the production of hemp is illegal, despite the fact that industrial hemp has virtually no THC (the resin that is used as an intoxicant). The usefulness of medicinal and recreational marijuana can be argued and debated, but the need for an American hemp industry today that will be economical and environmentally friendly seems like a no-brainer.

~ Marqus Smith, Student

Conversations With History
Jennifer Lawrence

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history. History has created the world we live in, so to better understand the current world, we have to understand the forces that have been behind it. I think studying history gives students a better perspective on current events, but it also, hopefully, gives them an appreciation for what they have, what we have. It's very easy to get caught up in negativity and complaints about all that's wrong with the world today. But, the reality is, we have so much more comfortable lives than what our ancestors could have ever envisioned.

What is your philosophy of history?

I do focus quite a bit on political history. I took a number of courses on diplomatic history and military history, so I know that, too, influences what I teach.

What do you like best about working at TCCD Southeast?

I appreciate the friendliness of everyone on the campus.

If you could have one conversation with someone from the past, who would it be and why?

That's a tough question! I would probably resort to choosing Theodore Roosevelt primarily because he had such an enthusiasm for life. I don't usually think about having a conversation with someone from the past; instead, I often think of what it would be like to be "in" the past. For example, what it would have been like to "see" Washington, D.C., in the early 1800s, or the Western Front in France during World War I.

Besides teaching U.S. History, Dr. Lawrence teaches classes on Texas History and both sections of Western Civilization.

Tarrant County College

Notes from the Underground

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"HISTORY IS OUR WEAPON OF CHOICE"

THE UNDERGROUND HISTORICAL

Join Us: Fridays/12:50pm/ESEE 1224

Contact: Bradley.borougerdi@tccd.edu

Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

We are proud to present to you our seventh issue of *Notes from the Underground*. This issue features two articles on the history of mental illness. It should be pointed out that the featured book, *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche*, is available (as are other books on the history of mental illness) in our Southeast library. Also, the front page article on the history of mental illness in Britain and America is the work of a Dual Credit student, Samantha Vorsino of MISD. We hope this inspires other Dual Credit students to submit articles and/or get involved in our organization. On a related note, we would like to thank the Director of the Dual Credit program, Mike Cinatl, for helping us fund the distribution of *Notes* to Dual Credit students.

We are also excited to roll out another program, which was student-inspired. It is called, "History on Demand;" so, if you have a historically-themed question that you would like answered, or an idea that you think would make for a good article, we want to hear from you. You can message us on Facebook, or email us at gregory.kosc@my.tccd.edu.

As promised, the editors have selected the winners for the best student articles of the year. The first prize for Best Student Article goes to Mahyar Taskindoust for his article on Dr. Seuss. The second prize for Best Dual Credit Student Article goes to Kelsey Hale for her examination of Atlantic connections during the English Civil War. Congratulations to Mahyar and Kelsey for an outstanding job! That said, we also want to thank and congratulate ***all*** of our contributors this year. This has truly been an exciting year getting *Notes* off the ground and running, and we have enjoyed working with all of you in crafting your articles and helping you to improve your research and writing. Even though *Notes* will be on a hiatus until the Fall semester, we hope that students will continue to work on articles and book reviews throughout the summer. We have guides to writing a historically-themed article and a guide for writing book reviews on our CampusCruiser and Facebook pages. Furthermore, all of the editors will be available throughout the summer for consultation and editing purposes. Have a great summer!

~ Brad Borougerdi, Eric Salas, Greg Kosc, and Guest Editor Kallie Kosc