

SPRING 2010 DHA NEWSLETTER

© Disability History Association

In this issue: Don't miss the exciting announcement of a DHA Graduate Student Scholarship, available starting this year (details on page 3).

2 MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT (Penny Richards)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

3 DHA Graduate Student Scholarship (Susan Burch)

3 Rembis is Scholar in Residence (David Gerber)

4 Maya Riviere Ward Papers are Now Open

4 Jacobus tenBroek Papers will Soon be Open (Edward Morman)

5 Words on the Wall Fundraiser (Geoffrey Reaume)

5 Call for Papers: Historical Perspectives on Disability and Work (Block/Patterson)

7 Shorter Items

8 UPCOMING CONFERENCES

9 NEW DISABILITY HISTORY IMAGES ON FLICKR

10 DHA @ AHA: Four session reports

(Penny Richards, Michael Davidson, Steven Noll, Alice Wexler)

16 An institutional model of disability in Thailand (Iain Hutchison)

20 Disability History and the Arts

“Journey to the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin” (Petra Koppers)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Penny L. Richards



Welcome!

In this newsletter, you will find ample evidence of what we've been up to at the Disability History Association. Check out the detailed reports from our four sponsored sessions at the American Historical Association. And be sure to check out and share the important announcement on page 3: we now have an annual conference scholarship for graduate students! If you know a student doing disability history who is serious about attending a conference in the coming year, and could use some help to make that happen, pass along our announcement. This has been on our wishlist for years, and it couldn't have been realized at a better time. We hope it will bring more students to serious study in the field--and let us learn about the newest scholars in our field, too. Scholarship winners will report about their conference experience in this newsletter, so stay tuned for that.

On the website, we're updating the "recent books" list on a rolling basis now, with a five-year rule: so books from 2006 will be removed when the books with 2011 publication dates start appearing. If you have a disability history book published since 2006 that isn't already on the list, send me the cite and I'll get it on the website promptly. (Thanks to those who have already helped us make the list as complete as it is now.) An update to the "recent dissertations" list is high on the to-do list for the coming months, so watch for more there, soon.

Are you getting calls to comment on the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 yet? We recently had our first inquiry at DHA. If you're a disability historian who would *like* to receive such inquiries as they come in, let me know and I'll forward any serious queries your way. I promise not to share your contact details with anyone without permission.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DHA Graduate Student Scholarship

As part of our commitment to promoting the work of disability historians, DHA is proud to announce an annual graduate student scholarship to attend professional academic conferences. This award is not restricted by the geographic location or type of professional academic conference. The fellowship committee will award either 2 applicants \$250 or one applicant \$500, depending on strength of proposals and need. The Association will cover expenses to convert currencies if necessary.

To apply for this scholarship applicants should provide a one-page (roughly 250- word) cover letter outlining when, where, and what kind of conference will be attended. Applicants should clearly explain their reason for wanting to attend the conference and what benefits are anticipated by this experience. For example, a candidate may have been accepted to present a paper or may want to interview for jobs at the conference; another may want to do both or may want to learn more about subjects presented that relate to his/her own work.

This year's award covers Fall 2010 through summer 2011; the due date for applications is September 10, 2010. The current scholarship review committee this year includes DHA members Mike Rembis, Susan Burch, and Graham Warder.

Awardees will be announced on the H-Dis listserv. In accepting the scholarship, winners commit to writing a brief article (500-750 words) about the conference for the next DHA newsletter appearing after the event.

For more information on the scholarship please contact Susan Burch at sburch@middlebury.edu

Rembis is Scholar-in-Residence

David A. Gerber

Michael Rembis is currently the first scholar-in-residence of the new Center for Disability Studies at the University at Buffalo (SUNY). The center is the product of a unique partnership between UB and People, Inc., a regional provider of services to people with disabilities which has long had an interest in encouraging community education about disability through an annual film festival and both a virtual and traditional Museum of disAbility. The center is dedicated to encourage academic research in the Humanities and Social Sciences on disability and work with People Inc. on its community education activities in Western New York and beyond. During 2010-2012, the Center will host a visiting scholar in each of three semesters, and it will participate, alongside People Inc. and the UB College of Arts and Sciences, in the work of finding resources to place itself on a permanent footing within the university.

Maya Riviere Ward Papers are now open

Announced on H-Disability, 3 December 2009

Archives & Special Collections at Columbia University's A.C. Long Health Sciences Library is pleased to announce the opening of the papers of Maya Rivière Ward (1908-1989). Ward, who used her maiden name Rivière professionally, was a leading U.S. expert in the rehabilitation of the disabled. As Director of Rehab Codes, Inc., she was responsible for developing a controlled vocabulary and an information management tool for those involved in the rehabilitation of the disabled. Among other goals, Rivière and her colleagues were hoping to shift the public perception and professional focus of rehabilitation from managing individual handicaps to maximizing individual assets and capabilities in order to improve the social status of rehabilitated persons.

The bulk of the papers is comprised of Rivière's records as Director of Rehab Codes, Inc., ca.1958-1968, and includes correspondence, committee minutes, annual and project reports, financial records, and newspaper and magazine clippings. In particular, there is much on the testing of the newly designed standards in real-life settings at various sites around the U.S. Besides these professional records, there is also considerable personal material including correspondence with family and friends, genealogical records, diaries, notebooks, newspaper clippings, educational records and photographs.

A special feature of the collection are the hundreds of ephemeral publications relating to the rehabilitation of the disabled collected by Rivière in Great Britain in the early 1950s and in the US in the period 1957-1968. The bulk of the papers is open without restrictions, though for some material researchers may need to follow HIPAA Privacy Rule regulations. The finding aid can be found at:

<http://library.cpmc.columbia.edu/hsl/archives/findingaids/riviere.html>

Jacobus tenBroek Papers Soon to Open

Edward T. Morman

We're pleased to announce that we've completed basic processing of the Jacobus tenBroek papers and look forward to opening the collection to researchers in the near future. A series-level finding aid in MS-Word is now accessible through a link on our web-page: <http://www.nfb.org/nfb/JtBLibrary.asp>. An EAD-encoded version will be available very soon and will be searchable both on our site and through ArchiveGrid.

This project has been funded by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Besides being the founding president of the National Federation of the Blind, Jacobus tenBroek was a major legal scholar and among the first to articulate the constitutional principles that underlay modern disability law. In many ways his early leadership of the NFB established a model for the disability rights movement.

Words on the Wall:

A Fundraiser for Plaques for the 19th-Century Patient-Built Wall

Geoffrey Reaume

The Psychiatric Survivor Archives of Toronto (PSAT) is giving out bricks to serve as the basis for a work of art. Artists and groups are welcome to use the medium of their choice. Works will be displayed and sold as part of a silent auction to help raise funds for historic plaques to commemorate the history of the patient-built wall at the Queen Street Site of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Words on the Wall will be held on April 21, 2010 at the Gladstone Hotel in conjunction with This is Not a Reading Series. There will be a wall tour led by historian Geoffrey Reaume, followed by a relaunch of the 2nd edition of his book, Remembrance of Patients Past (University of Toronto Press). We will end the evening with a silent auction of the bricks donated by artists.

To request a brick or for more information, please email psychsurvivorarchives@gmail.com or phone 416-661-9975 or 416-809-1013. For more information about PSAT visit www.psychiatricsurvivorarchives.com For more information about This Is Not A Reading Series visit www.tinars.ca

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: APRIL 7, 2010

Call for Papers: Historical Perspectives on Disability and Work

Pamela Block and Stephanie Patterson

We invite the submission of proposals for papers for a special issue of the Review of Disability Studies focusing on historical perspectives on disability and work from the 17th century through the post World War II era. Currently, scholarly information concerning the history of disability and employment is almost nonexistent. While cursory examination of employment issues may be included in discussions about past social movements and legislation, these discourses are secondary to the main subject matter. With few exceptions (studies on freak shows, for example) it appears that scholarly, historical pieces specifically about disabled people as workers are rare.

One must ask the question – why? Why the prevalence of charity models depicting disabled people as unemployable, relying on others for their means of survival? How did it become so commonly accepted that disabled people were considered incapable of gainful work? Might just the opposite hold true – that people with disabilities have always been an important part of workforces around the globe? And if this idea of incapacity is a myth, might this historical inaccuracy serve as a foundational component to the employment barriers that disabled people face today?

Contributors to this special issue will explore work/employment histories to create a collection that chronicles the diversified occupations of disabled people in different

historical, cultural, socio-economic, and geographical contexts. We seek papers that explore the many factors effecting career choice for disabled people throughout modern history and analyze the importance of their work contributions to their communities. For example, what were the socio-economic predictors of career choice? Did socio-economic status matter? How did rural vs. urban economies, industrialization, and immigration influence work prospects for disabled people? What was the relevant historical legislation, and what was the significance of early vocational training programs, such as those within institutions and for veterans?

By seeking answers to these and other questions, this collection will address this under-represented aspect of disability history and its relevance to modern employment experiences. The editors will review all proposals submitted by April 30, 2010 and make a selection based on quality and relevance to the project's themes. Authors may choose non-blind editor review or blind peer review for their papers. Both established and emerging scholars are encouraged to submit proposals. Full manuscripts (no more than 4500 words, including references) of accepted proposals will be due by July 31, 2010.

Please submit a 300-500 word abstract by April 30, 2010. Authors will be notified of acceptance before May 31st. Queries and/or completed proposals (in a Word document) should be sent to Stephanie Patterson (contact information below.) *** Acceptance of proposal and submission of paper does not guarantee a publish in RDS.

The Co-Editors for the collection are:

Stephanie Patterson, MA
Clinical Assistant Professor
Stony Brook University
School of Health Technology and Management/Disability Studies Concentration
HSC/Room 2-450
Stony Brook, New York 11794-8200
631.444.6499 (phone) 631.444.1515 (fax)
stephanie.patterson@stonybrook.edu

Pamela Block, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Stony Brook University
Occupational Therapy, School of Health Technology & Management
Stony Brook, New York 11794-8206
631-444-3197 (phone) 631-444-6305(fax)
Pamela.Block@stonybrook.edu



IN BRIEF

Disability History Book Wins Award

On the Margins of Citizenship: Intellectual Disability and Civil Rights in 20th Century America, by Allison C. Carey (Temple University Press 2009) has been awarded the Scholarly Achievement Award of the North Central Sociological Association.

The ADA turns Twenty

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 turns 20 this summer, as the anniversary of its signing comes along on 26 July. Watch for events and news stories where disability history is or can be a part of the story. This anniversary is a chance to place a timely commentary in a local newspaper, or otherwise to bring disability history into current conversations, on and beyond campus.

Syllabi Requested

We're still interested in receiving disability history course syllabi for the DHA website. We've got the beginnings of a nice collection, but every course outline and reading list will bring some new idea to the mix. Please consider submitting yours to Phil Ferguson for uploading.

New Blog on the History of Madness

Greg Eghigian, Eric Engstrom, Andreas Killen, and Benoît Majerus recently started a group blog on the history of madness and mental health, named H-Madness (not to be confused with H-Net listservs). It's multilingual and quite active.

<http://historypsychiatry.wordpress.com>

New Website on German Disability History

Sebastian Bartsch has recently launched a German-language wiki-style website on disability history. He invites visitors!

<http://www.disability-history.de/>

Vocalist's Wheelchair Discovered

In news of material culture, DHA board member Susan Burch passed along a bit of news about Connee Boswell (1907-1976), the 1930s singer who was part of the Boswell Sisters. The custom-made wooden wheelchair that Boswell used for years of appearances was presumed lost, but was in fact found in 2008, in the attic of a home where her sister had once lived.

<http://www.bozzies.com/buz/ConnecesWheelchairDiscovered.php>



UPCOMING CONFERENCES

22 June 2010

Scientizing the Other: Science, Medicine, and the Study of Human Difference, 1800-1950 is a one-day postgraduate student conference to be held at Churchill College, University of Cambridge (UK). Keynote address will be presented by Gavin Schaffer.

25-26 June 2010

Disability History Conference: Looking Forward to a Better Past will be held at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston, UK. Plenary speakers will be Catherine J. Kudlick and Eva Simonsen. Further information on the conference can be found on the DHG website at

<http://www.disabilityhistory.co.uk/node/86>

6-8 August 2010

Madness and Literature: The 1st International Health Humanities Conference will be held at the Institute of Mental health at the University of Nottingham, UK. Also note that membership in the Madness and Literature Network is free.

<http://www.madnessandliterature.org/>

14-16 September 2010

3rd Global Conference: Madness: Probing the Boundaries will be held at Oriel College, Oxford (UK).

<http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/probing-the-boundaries/making-sense-of/madness/>

19-22 September 2010

8th Global Conference: Monsters and the Monstrous will be held at Oriel College, Oxford (UK).

<http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/at-the-interface/evil/monsters-and-the-monstrous/>

21-23 October 2010

A Centennial Celebration of the History of Civil Rights in Hattiesburg MS will include papers and panels on the long Civil Rights Movement, as part of the University of Southern Mississippi's centennial celebration. Deadline for the submission of abstracts is 1 June 2010, program will be announced in August 2010.

22-23 October 2010

Politics and Practices: The History of Post-war Women's Health will be held at the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine, University of Manchester (UK). Proposals on women's mental health, institutionalization, health activism, carework, and many other topics are specifically invited in the call for papers; deadline for submissions is 1 June 2010.

<http://www.chstm.manchester.ac.uk/index.asp>

17-18 February 2011

The Stimulated Body and the Arts: The Nervous System and Nervousness in the History of Aesthetics will be held at the Centre for the History of Medicine and Disease, Durham University, UK. Deadline for submission of abstracts is 31 July 2010. More information:

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/chmd/news/eventdetails/?eventno=7283>

17-19 February 2011

Carson McCullers: An Interdisciplinary Conference and 94th Birthday Celebration will be held at the Carson McCullers Center at Columbus State University in Columbus, GA. Deadline for submission of abstracts is October 1, 2010, and disability topics are specifically invited. For more details:

<http://www.mccullerscenter.org/conference>



NEW IMAGES ON FLICKR COMMONS

Looking for new disability history photographs to use in the classroom? The **Nationaal Archief** recently uploaded two images of particular interest to disability historians to the Flickr Commons project:



The first (above left) is captioned “Apparaat maakt licht hoorbaar voor blinden/Blind man hearing light.” The photograph is dated 1912, and was uploaded to the Flickr Commons on 18 December 2009.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationaalarchief/4192749347/>

In it, two white men are standing together; one is engineer E. E. Fournier d’Albe (1868-1933), and the other is the blind man of the title, holding a box in each hand and

wearing headphones. The machine is an “exploring optophone,” first exhibited by Fournier d’Albe in 1912 at a convention in South Kensington. It used a selenium detector to control a sound output. There’s more about this device and other similar inventions in Michael Capp and Phil Picton, “The Optophone: An Electronic Blind Aid,” *Engineering Science and Education Journal* (June 2000): 137-143.

The second, above right, is “Piano voor aan bed gebonden zieken/ Piano for the bedridden,” dated 1935, uploaded to Flickr Commons on 17 December 2009.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationaalarchief/4192748677/>

In this image, a pale young woman slightly propped in a bed is playing a keyboard that unfolds from a cabinet; the cabinet can wheel over the foot of her bed, and the angle of the keyboard is adjustable, to optimize positioning.



Also on Flickr Commons, the **Smithsonian Institution** posted dozens of artworks by William H. Johnson (1901-1970) in February 2010. Johnson was an African-American printmaker who experienced mental illness and was institutionalized for the last twenty-three years of his life. Above left, one of his prints, titled “Blind Singer” (c.1940) features a stylized man and woman with dark skin, dressed in thirties-era clothing rendered in bright colors; the woman holds a guitar, the man a tambourine. The man’s eyes are depicted as closed.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/smithsonian/sets/72157623263871511/>

And finally for this roundup, the **National Library of Wales (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru)** posted “Harri Bach, Bodedern” on 27 January 2010, a photograph by John Thomas, c1875, depicting a bearded man using a crutch or cane and a “peg-leg” prosthesis, posted next to a donkey cart in the street; two boys are sitting in the cart. (Above, right)

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/llgc/4309160202/>

DHA at AHA: REPORTS FROM OUR SPONSORED PANELS

As a newly-affiliated society, the Disability History Association took its first opportunity to sponsor four sessions at the American Historical Association meeting in San Diego, January 2010. (A few other sessions were sponsored by the AHA's Taskforce on Disability.) Below, reports from those four sessions, by the session chairs **Penny Richards, Michael Davidson, Steven Noll, and Alice Wexler**. Thanks to all who presented, attended, or otherwise participated in a very useful and exciting series of panels.

RICHARDS: "Rethinking American Disability Movement History"

This panel, like the DHA-sponsored session "Constructing a National Body," was held in a room with a large conference table instead of the usual audience-and-podium arrangement. We had seventeen in attendance, which was perfect for the room and meant that everyone literally had a seat at the table. This happy circumstance seems to contribute to a nice conversational tone for the presentations and the discussion afterwards, and I would love to attend more such conference sessions.

The papers presented in this session shared an interest in the history of disability activism in the twentieth-century United States. **Paul Longmore's** paper "American Ideologies of Disease, Disability, and Charity: Clashing Late-Twentieth-Century Perspectives" (read with clarity by Justin Housman) explored the fraught relations between charity telethons and the populations they have purported to "help." In his study of the history of anti-telethon activism, Longmore takes on issues of popular culture, infantilization, volunteerism, suffering, sentimentality, taste, and pride. In "Disability, Solidarity, and the Black Power of 504" (presented, again with clarity, by Bess Williamson) **Sue Schweik** reexamined the noted participation of Black Panthers in occupation of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) offices in San Francisco in 1977. A further exploration of the topic came in **Victoria Lewis's** spirited presentation, "The Sweet Land of Disability: the 1977 Occupation of the HEW Offices and the American Stage." Lewis combined audio content and audience participation to lead the gathering into an excellent discussion of pedagogy, theatre, and how to tell history from multiple perspectives and in the overlapping voices of individuals and groups.

As the first of the four panels sponsored by the Disability History Association at AHA 2010, "Rethinking American Disability Movement History" started our time together on a warm, thoughtful, and creative note.

DAVIDSON: "Disability in Global Context"

The three papers for this panel, "Disability in a Global Context," span a wide space of time—from the 16th century to the 1950s, thus offering a good opportunity to situate disability studies in several historical contexts but also explore what "global" means prior to our current understanding of the term. They also illustrate some of the

difficulties of configuring disability in isolation from, as in Jeff Brune's paper, issues of race and gender or in Sara Scalenghe's case, issues of religion and citizenship.

Jeff Brune's paper, "Blind Like Me: John Howard Griffin, Disability, and the fluidity of Identity in Modern America," contributes to the growing literature on racial passing by foregrounding the important role of disability in the construction of race. Unlike texts that read disability as a narrative prosthesis for race, thereby erasing one identity by showing its similarities to another, Brune shows how Griffin's twelve years of blindness prior to writing his famous journalistic account of racial passing, *Black Like Me*, helped articulate race for him—by destabilizing his identity in one sphere he was able to explore another. Griffin performed his blackness at the same moment that Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) had made the visibility of stigma a key thematic in the racial tensions of Jim Crow America. Griffin, paradoxically, becomes invisible as a black man because, as Ellison illustrates, being African American is to be, in every respect, "invisible" to the liberal consensus ideology of the day. Griffin offers a fascinating instance of the ocularcentric nature of both disability and racial discourse by being, in his lifetime, both the subject and object of a scopical regime.

Sara Scalenghe's paper, "Does God Hear Silent Prayers? Deafness in Ottoman Syria," raises a fascinating question about the role of deafness in civil society—whether in a culture based on orality, a deaf or mute person may be denied full citizenship. She shows that in Ottoman society from the 16th through the 19th centuries, deafness and muteness were not obstacles to most aspects of Islamic law or religious ritual, despite the great importance placed on oral testimony. The paper notes a series of significant accommodations and provisions for the prelingually deaf that permitted them access to religious ritual, marriage and divorce, inheritance, and legal testimony. Scalenghe asks how in an oral society where the ability to speak is essential to religious practice, can a deaf or mute person's prayers be heard by God? Is prayer something that must be performed audibly or does it exist, as in Pascal, in intention? Sara's paper answers these questions by exploring the legal status of muteness and deafness in Ottoman Society. This issue leads to a further question, namely the religious meaning of the performative utterance itself—the extent to which the fulfillment of certain rituals demands a vocal articulation as its felicity criteria. In J.L. Austin's terms, the performative utterance is defined by the institutional authority vested in the one making the utterance. The paper's title, "Does God Hear Silent Prayers?" raises the question of what would be the equivalent of a Deaf performative and to what extent is J.L. Austin's concept dependent on an oral tradition? Her paper shows that the seemingly self-evident transfer from hearing to deaf worlds, from speech to signs, is never seamless and is mediated by a host of cultural frames that determine what a specific speech act means.

Kristina Richardson's paper, "Discourses on the blighted body in Qur'an and Hadith," complements Scalenghe's, by focusing on the status of the body within Islam and specifically the status of the "blighted body" within the Qu'ran itself. What seems most salient here is Richardson's observation that Islam is a "praxis oriented religion" expressed through the body—prayer, fasting, dietary restrictions, dress, pilgrimage. These traditions and activities are intimately connected to having certain kinds of

bodies, but although difference appears to be tolerated in doctrine and moral imperative, the fact that disability is seen as a “blight,” like that on crops, suggests that there is a fundamental understanding of stigma surrounding impairments. Richardson quotes Tobin Siebers on the process by which a blemish or mark becomes coded as good or evil, but she differentiates the situation of Islam from what she takes to be Siebers’ social-constructionist (or cultural relativist) position saying that in Koranic writings there are traditions that support the association of *blighted body* with immorality and avoidance which have corollaries in Jewish and Christian thought.

All three of these papers propose intersectional readings of disability that are necessary if we are to advance beyond both the medical model, which often ignores the cultural contexts of identity formation and stigmatization, and the social model, which often avoids the material body and the historical conditions surrounding impairment. If we are to move into something like a third wave of disability studies, it will be through culturally sensitive, historical approaches to the “volatile body” like the ones we have here.

NOLL: "Constructing a National Body: Disability, Race, and Gender in the United States"

Our session, "Constructing a National Body: Disability, Race, and Gender in the United States," took place on Friday afternoon, January 8th. We had about 20 people attending the session, all of whom were very engaged in the topics discussed. The lay-out of the room was very conducive to a discussion format, as instead of the usual podium with the panel members in the front of the room & attendees in rows, the room had a large table that both panel members & audience members sat around. At first, I thought this would be a problem, but it turned out to be a really good way to get everyone involved in the discussion. The session seemed more like a graduate seminar than a conference panel (this is a GOOD thing!) The papers were all given in the usual conference manner, with **Sara A. Vogt**, University of Illinois at Chicago; **Paul Lawrie**, University of Toronto; and **Anna Stubblefield**, Rutgers University-Newark giving great papers that really complemented each other. They provided a good counterpoint of theoretical discussions and specific historical examples to build the case that disability is an important category of historical analysis. **Michael Rembis**, University of Notre Dame provided excellent comments that both tied the papers together intellectually and offered specific opportunities for each panel member to think about how to improve their papers. Though this part of the session was very good, the highlight was the discussion that took place after the formalized presentations and comments were delivered. I usually find the question part of a panel discussion unproductive, as audience members often resort to "gotcha moments" or use their questions to show how smart they think they are. None of this happened in this session as the question period was used as a springboard to both examine the particulars of each papers and the broad relationship of disability to history. It was wonderful. One of my grad students (who is not involved in disability history at all) attended the session and came away excited about the interactions that took place and the possibilities of integrating this type of history into the "mainstream" of historical analysis. These types of session should be

continued- they are valuable and I hope they begin to attract a broader audience that sees the connections that are being made there.

WEXLER: “Reclaiming the Disabled Subject in Historical Research and Representation”

Geoffrey Reaume’s presentation, “Interpreting and Archiving Mad People’s History,” began with the observation that the history of madness has been, until recently, mostly about the changing ideas around madness, rather than about the perspectives and lived experiences of mad people themselves. Emphasizing the need for people who have experienced “madness” to collect and preserve their past, he explained that the 1980s “saw the first serious efforts to collect materials on mad movement history,” which led to a new organization, the Psychiatric Survivor Archives, Toronto (PSAT) founded in 2001 to ensure that psychiatric survivors remain in control. After showing and describing many compelling visual images of publications written by psychiatric patients and ex-patients, Reaume concluded his presentation with a discussion of the work of PSAT in preserving historical sites related to this history, particularly the boundary walls surrounding the sides of the former Toronto Insane Asylum (now the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health). When the walls were in danger of being torn down, PSAT argued successfully that the wall was a tangible symbol of the patients’ labor and the exploitation that often took place in such institutions and could be used for public education and awareness. “A symbol of exclusion is thus made into a symbol of pride in our abilities and remembrance of those people whose work was exploited or diminished because of their being psychiatric patients, past and present.”

Michael Rembis’s paper, “The Social Creation of Disability,” addressed different theorizations of disability over the past several years, starting with Douglas Baynton’s statement that “Disability is everywhere in history, once you begin looking for it, but conspicuously absent in the histories we write.” Comparing disability as a category to that of gender, Rembis emphasized the critical insight of disability studies that disability can be conceptualized as a way of living differently in the world. He underscored the historical construction of disability in relation to race, gender, class, and sexuality, and described the work for his forthcoming book, which used case files and other records from the 1890s to the 1950s at the state training school for girls in Geneva, Illinois. Noting that experts identified a high percentage of “feble-mindedness” and “mental defect” among these inmates, Rembis found that eugenics and other psychological discourses were critical to the construction of this “mental defect,” although these discourses were not without contestation and negotiation. Emphasizing that about 20 % of the US population is disabled (about 54 million people), Rembis took issue with the dominant claim that the alienation disabled people feel is primarily a consequence of American individualism and of the medicalization and pathologization of disability. He argued that while these ideologies are powerful, an even more crucial factor is the poverty of most disabled people and their lack of access to needed support and economic resources. “It is time we reconsider how disability is socially created,” he

concluded, “through war, famine, inadequate healthcare, fierce competition for scarce resources, as well as rising profit margins and general neglect.”

Rachel Gorman’s paper, “Materialism and the ‘disabled subject’ in Disability History,” argued in favor of a historical materialist analysis of disability which “must take people’s experience as a start-point,” while she also critiqued several aspects of a historical materialist perspective. In pursuit of her argument, Gorman then reviewed the work of a number of feminist and disability theorists, including Brendon Gleeson, Ann Borsay, Himani Bannerji, Dorothy Smith, and Rich Gibson. Gorman particularly argued in favor of Bannerji’s claim that social relations must be understood in terms of human activity. “By employing a framework that takes particular experience as an *entry point* into an analysis of the social organization of disability oppression, I argue that we can avoid two of the concerns I have raised in relation to disability studies theory: we can avoid a vague and abstract discussion of disability without eclipsing the serious consequences of disability oppression. By starting from a local and partial understanding, we can follow what Bannerji calls ‘Ariadne’s thread’ from the immediate to the larger organization of social relations. ..The abstract category of ‘disability’ can be understood concretely by tracing how the experiences of an individual are mediated through relations of ruling.”





[Visual description: Exterior photo of the entrance to the Foundation for the Welfare of the Crippled; in the foreground statues of three children with crutches and a walker face a seated image of the late Princess Mother; photograph by Iain Hutchison]

AN INSTITUTIONAL MODEL OF DISABILITY IN THAILAND

Iain Hutchison

While Europe and North America were experiencing snow and ice during January 2010, I was enjoying more benign weather conditions in Thailand. While there, I was invited by friends to join the ‘sponsoring’ of lunch for the 200 children at The Foundation for the Welfare of the Crippled in Nonthaburi, just outside Bangkok.

I had mixed feelings about the visit, and especially about the invitation to take photographs during the lunch and tour. It all seemed a bit voyeuristic. Indeed, our visit seemed reminiscent of genteel Victorians making Sunday afternoon promenades around Bedlam to gawp at their unfortunate inmates.

There is much about the Foundation’s facility that echoes Victorian perspectives of disability. The role of philanthropy is pervasive here, the Foundation being funded by private donation. Marble plaques on the walls list the subscriptions of large benefactors, children are trained to be self-supporting adults including textile-training on weaving looms, values of respect and appreciation are instilled, education is dispensed including religious inculcation, and the institution has a roughly fifty-fifty mix of day students and boarders. In respects, the ethos seemed quite in keeping with aspects of nineteenth-century disability provision which is my normal comfort zone. The Foundation appeared to suggest that the institutional option is alive and standing

firmly in the way of integration of children with disabilities into mainstream education. But, rather like the old European religious/moral model of disability, disability can face prejudice in a normally benign Buddhist society, which nonetheless subscribes to belief that the station in the next life depends upon an individual's conduct in the previous life. We arrived just before lunchtime and the younger children were soon streaming into the dining hall to take the first lunch serving. Once they had eaten, the older children would take their places. We helped the staff serve lunch to the children, which was better than the prospect of being intrusive spectators. The tables were soon turned upon my fears of being voyeuristic when I had the embarrassment of being the centre of attention twice, as both sittings of children were informed that I had had a birthday a couple of days earlier and that they should sing 'Happy Birthday' to me – which they did while I stood before them like a prize chump.

The children were served a typical meal of rice, vegetables and suitably spiced-up meat, and followed by fresh fruit. If children had difficulty self-feeding they were aided by helpers and family members who also come to assist, but the children also assisted each other. Although Thailand is a Buddhist country there is a Muslim minority of around four percent. A Muslim father tended to his child's lunch to ensure that he had the correct Halal diet. Here I was reminded of the difficulties that Glasgow Jews, a hundred years ago, had in accessing Kosher food in hospitals with strict regimes and the distress that this caused, especially in their psychological approach to recovery from debilitating illnesses.

I overcame my reticence about using my camera. It proved to be a great icebreaker with the children who enjoyed having their photographs taken and instantaneously seeing the results on the viewing panel thanks to the wonders of digital photography. I also thought of the difficulties that sometimes arise in gaining images of the past and therefore surmised that a few photos would contribute to the historical record, or at least would convey some impression of the Foundation for DHA readers.

The Foundation was established in 1954 and the following year it received Royal patronage from Her Royal Highness Somdej Phra Sri Nakarindra Baromraj Chonni, the Princess Mother (1900-1995). The Foundation is housed in modern, well-equipped buildings which comprise residential accommodation, classrooms, workshops, and recreational facilities including an attractive swimming pool. The Foundation sets itself a range of objectives which consist of [medical] treatment, welfare, education, rehabilitation, and vocational activities.

Medical intervention focuses on physiotherapy and general healthcare, while wider welfare takes on the role of providing artificial limbs, braces and wheelchairs as well as scholarship funds and occupational training courses. The motto of the Foundation, in rather stilted English, is 'Help them to be self-reliance' and this is apparent, not only in the way in which children are encouraged to overcome obstacles on their own, but in the way that they help each other. I saw one child rotate the wheels of her own wheelchair with one hand while also pushing and steering the wheelchair of another child who did not have the power in her arms to propel herself. Another child with power in only one

arm, alternatively turned each wheel of her chair along a zigzag but effective course from classroom to dining hall. The philosophy is one of independence and self-help.

When the Foundation opened nearly sixty years ago, the largest category of impairment was infantile paralysis. As elsewhere, polio has been brought under control and in the beginning of the twenty-first century cerebral palsy is the greatest disabling condition. In the 1950s, cars were few in Bangkok and the canal system was still important to the communication network. Now most canals have been filled in and multi-lane streets and expressways, and networks of narrow lanes, often struggle to cope with traffic volume. Victims of road accidents, especially motorcycles for which crash helmets are not compulsory and on which five school students can sometimes be seen astride, have noticeably increased at the Foundation in recent years. Like Victorian institutions, it likes to specialise in a particular field of disability, so does not receive children with sensory impairments or epilepsy. Multiple-impairment always seems to have been problematic for regimes that like to offer a 'specialisation'. Disabling conditions of Foundation attendees in 2009 are given as follows:

Cerebral Palsy	210
Spinal Cord Injury	18
Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenita	17
Spina Bifida	14
Congenital Limbs Deformity	12
Muscular Dystrophy	8
Osteogenesis Imperfecta	7
Spinal Muscular Atrophy	7
Congenital Hip Dislocation	1
Poliomyelitis	1
Hydrocephalus	1
Larsen's Syndrome	1
Brain Tumour	1
Total	298

The schooling at the Foundation, another key objective, is diverse, covering the usual academic curriculum, but developing children's musical, theatrical and artistic talents. Courses are planned to deliver lower secondary level to all children, but some of the children attain university entrance and some return to the Foundation as teachers. The age range of students attending the Foundation spans from four years to eighteen years. Rehabilitation is an important aspect of the institution. I asked how children coped with life after perhaps spending several years at the Foundation either as boarders or day visitors. Here they are supported by people who understand their needs and where disability is the 'norm'. How did children who had spent their lives with peers of shared circumstances in the school adjust to life 'outside'? – I recalled a man who had spent his childhood in a Scottish deaf institution during the 1930s who missed his friends upon discharge and felt that he had been educated, but had not been prepared for life in the 'hearing' world. I was told that discharged children receive support from home welfare visitors, while they can also make short returns to the Foundation to help them through the transition to life on the 'outside'. The transition can be made difficult in a society where little provision is made for the likes of disabled access – Bangkok streets are

horrific places even for agile people who are light of foot – aggressive driving and high kerbs make no concessions to wheelchair users and represent just one of the challenges outside the gates of the Foundation.

The Foundation is funded by old fashioned charity and philanthropy. This continues to work well in Thailand where people like to make personal merit ('tamboon'), donating both to Buddhist temples and to worthy schemes. In addition to donations and gifts from individuals, companies and organizations, occasional fund-raising events are held. Our Victorian ancestors would recognize the system at the Foundation and would no doubt approve. They would however be amazed at the advances in technology across the spectrum of provision, and they would probably be surprised not only at the lack of austerity and discipline, but at the absence of any need for strictness of organization. I have a tendency to be cynical about the role of institutional regimes. In Europe more than a hundred years ago they were already being criticised by some of the people most closely associated with them, but who conceded that there was little likelihood of change because so much capital investment had been consumed by structures intended to last for the duration. However, I have to confess that I was impressed by the ethos here – the aim is independence and integration and the staff are aware of the challenges that have to be overcome to achieve these.

This not to say that all has been sweetness and light in the provision of welfare to disabled children in Thailand, just as news stories have recently been aired about the internal regimes of institutions in other parts of the world. For example, the Pattaya Children's Orphanage, prominently located in the Thai seaside resort of that name, and which also provides homes and education for deaf, blind and physically disabled children, has enjoyed a high reputation over four decades. However, its late director, the American Catholic priest, Father Ray Brennan (1932-2003), in the latter years of his life had to face accusations of inviting paedophiles into the orphanage in response to their promise of charitable largesse, charges which were repudiated in his 'approved' biography, *In the Name of the Boss Upstairs* by Jerry Hopkins (Honolulu, 2004). This particular 'exposé' was widely condemned as a highly unethical newspaper sting operation.

The Foundation for the Welfare of the Crippled may have an anachronistic title, and may aspire to some values that will seem outdated to Western disability activists. That however makes it interesting for scholars who might like to take an anthropological approach in studying disability history in alternative cultural settings. However, the Foundation's aims of independence and self-reliance, giving children agency and aspiration, are perhaps approaches that will seem more familiar to western society. It is perhaps an uneasy compromise that will make its own innovations in time. These might conform to prevailing ethoi in the West, or might chose completely different approaches from which we can all learn.



DISABILITY HISTORY AND THE ARTS



[Visual description: A line of people standing, most of them visible from the shoulders down, most of them in blue jeans or colorful clothing. A woman is touching the ankle of a man towards the front of the line; Neil Marcus is visible in the background, interacting with a woman standing in front of him. Photo by Tim Householder, provided to the DHA Newsletter by Petra Kuppers]

Petra Kuppers shares the above photograph from her “**Journey to the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin: A Participatory Score**,” which focuses on issues of memorialization, accessibility, embodiment, and the stories we tell. “A different way of looking at historical inquiry,” she notes. More photographs from the journey at her website:

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~petra/journey.htm>