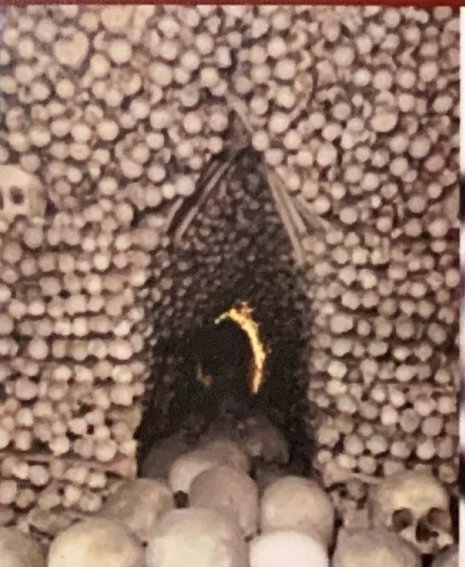


# HISTORY STUDENT TIMES

*Making old news big news*

Issue 2: 2014/15

'Death and Disease'



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello,

Welcome to the second edition of the History Student Times for 2014/15!

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas, and New Year, and made the most of your time off. I can't believe we are already half way through this year!

The second edition is based on the theme of 'Death and Disease', so expect an array of articles covering Ebola, dangerous make up, remembering the dead and all sorts in between! It has turned out to be a very interesting edition, with everyone submitting impressive and interesting articles surrounding this theme.

I am also still looking for people that would like to contribute to the online blog that has been created, so please do get in touch if you would like a regular spot!

Once again, I would just like to say thank you to all of our writers who have contributed to this edition, the School of History for funding the costs of the printing, and everyone who has supported this issue.

I hope you enjoy the second issue!

Frankie Reed



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# LETTER FROM THE HISTORY SOCIETY

A very Happy New Year to you from HistSoc!

We hope you all have had a fantastic Christmas break and are now ready for another packed semester! We have got so many more exciting socials and events planned for you to start off 2015, so be sure to get involved again this term. Our first semester was spectacular; we broke a society membership record and we now total 514 members, including some fabulous Postgraduates, also a society first! This means for the third year in a row we are the largest Arts society in the entire Union. We also won the £1000 Citi Society Challenge back in October - we were up against Women's Cricket and LUBS for the top prize and after your amazing voting, HistSoc has won yet another competition within a year. So, I start the New Year with a thank you to you all!

There are so many highlights from last term... we kicked it off with our HUGE Otley Run, where 200 of us took on the famous Leeds pub crawl in HistSoc annual tradition, dressed head to toe in military attire! We then had two more socials in the term, one at Hifi's Mixtape and our incredible Week 9 hand-in social at Mint Mondays. Over 150 of you were at both of these amazing nights and I think they definitely go up in society history as some of our best socials! Our footballers and netballers have had a great semester too, concluding with our annual boys vs. girls netball match. The girls clinched victory again, for the third year running, with some of the boys impressively learning the rules within 5 minutes and making it incredibly close! Watch this space for a rematch next term as the boys continue to dispute the results! Our netballers and footballers have also got an impressive kit this year, sponsored by Deloitte. They certainly look the part to play in, and it's clearly reflected in the amazing results the girls have achieved in the netball league. The boys are also doing well, after avoiding demotion at the end of term they are back and ready for semester two! The biggest night of the year was our Christmas Ball; I can honestly say it was one of the best nights of my life! Our wonderful Social Secretary Katie did an absolutely amazing job, and as with all of the events we organise, the rest of the committee helped to ensure that all 240 of you who came had the most magical evening at the Royal Armouries. Everything from the venue, food, band and photographer all contributed to making it a fantastic end to the term. An amazing first for last semester was our Careers Networking Dinner, funded by the RateMyPlacement victory prize of £5000 from last year's committee. This event was a massive success, with 100 attending and meeting representatives from some incredible companies across the city, country and the world. I cannot wait to see what the next committee do with this event as it has provided our members with some fantastic opportunities. It has shown that the society is here for you academically as well as socially, enhancing your career prospects.

This semester expect a continuation of our enormous evening socials and more academic opportunities.

January 2015 is all about DUBLIN! We are delighted to be taking 86 of you to the Emerald Isle at the end of exams. This is the biggest trip the society has ever done and we can't wait! Keep your eyes peeled for our post Dublin social, as well as our GIAG Pub Quiz in February. I'll give a special secret mention to our exciting end of year summer charity extravaganza which is in the planning, we can't wait to share with you more details! Be sure to keep on reading our Academic Secretary Harry's fortnightly newsletter Primary Sauce, sharing with you information about historical trips and talks, and most importantly exciting events with our prestigious sponsors. In Week One we're commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day by holding an event with J-Soc, so be sure to attend one of the many workshops and talks throughout the day, to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Holocaust.

As always, we'll be updating you about all these events and more on Facebook and via email so you won't miss out on anything!

Keep working hard and we'll see you all very soon,

Lauren – President





# The Scourge of Ebola

Andrew Jackson

Ebola is currently ravaging the underdeveloped world, in particular the Western African countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. It is a classical zoonotic disease; one that is capable of crossing the chasm between animals and humans. For Ebola, the pathogen was thought to originally reside in wild bats, naturally immune to its effects. This exotic and rather rare disease was first discovered in 1976 along the Ebola River of the Democratic Republic of Congo. With five different strains having since been identified, four remain deadly to humans. Mortality rates can range anywhere between 25-90%, depending on conditions and treatment; current mortality stands at a stable 50%. To put this into context, the Black Death that decimated Europe had comparable mortality rates; with estimates suggesting that this caused anywhere between 75-200 million deaths.

This virulence gives the Ebola virus a lot of potential. Indeed, one of the main reasons this outbreak has been the worst yet, is because it sprung up in a highly populated urban area. Previous outbreaks have almost exclusively been in self-contained rural villages allowing for relatively easy containment. Despite the advances of modern medicine however, the urbanisation of the disease has locked the global heavy weights in a fierce battle against it. If anything, this recent outbreak has spectacularly highlighted our inability in combating nature; we are simply not as successful as we think. Luckily for us, Ebola is not an airborne virus. Indeed, this factor alone could substantially increase its lethality. Sierra Leone for example, has well over 350 flights per week leaving the continent, bound for major cities in Europe, the Middle East, and the US. This poses a significant risk for increased transmission and the disease reaching global pandemic proportions in record time.

Some may downplay Ebola's threat citing its rarity, yet this

is a moot point. Other zoonotic diseases on record have continually ravaged mankind for millennia. In the last century alone, the Spanish Influenza caused between 50-100 million deaths; the same sub-type H1N1 virus that caused the 2009 swine flu pandemic. Aids has similarly, for the last forty years, run amok of global health systems with high infection rates and no known cure. With so many differing and ever evolving strains of disease, combined with humanity's continuing trend of urbanisation, many more maladies will arise. And as good as our intentions are, keeping one step ahead isn't always possible.

*"We are in a Cold War-era arms race against disease."*

Diseases are inherently more sophisticated than we are. They can evolve and adapt at lightning speed whilst maintaining a certain ethereal awareness of themselves. Take quorum sensing for example. Through this signalling mechanism bacteria are able to effectively communicate and coordinate their attack. They can switch on or turn off virulence genes that can make themselves more or less infectious and deadly. More importantly, it also allows them to collectively alter their genetic makeup to become antibiotic resistant, combating our most effective pharmaceuticals. Ultimately, we are in a Cold War-era arms race against disease. Whilst Ebola will itself undoubtedly fail to bring the world to its knees, one important lesson has been learnt; that world governments are in no way prepared, and one day the perfect disease could ultimately doom us all.

Wikipedia, Martin H, 2008.

# The Bengal Famine

Ravi Mistry



Wikipedia, 2012.

The Bengal famine of 1943 led to the death of approximately 3 million people in the province of Bengal in British India. Some estimate this number to be upwards of 4 million. This is one of the most controversial, but lesser known events under the rule of the British crown in India. This is because this was a manmade famine. The famine was produced primarily through the incompetence of the colonial government, and was aggravated by the failure of the war cabinet in London to act decisively. At the start of WWII, it was agreed by the provisional governments of India that the distribution of food would be dealt at the provisional level instead of the centre, which proved to be a fatal decision. Provincial governments had their own interest at hand, so where there was an excess of foodstuffs, there was an inherent unwillingness to redistribute surplus stocks.

In 1943, the availability of food had lessened to a certain degree. The Japanese conquest of British Burma in 1942 meant that key imports of food were lost, as well as putting the province of Bengal on the frontline of the Eastern front in WWII. The army's consumption of food, which had been prioritised, more than tripled as the threat of Japanese invasion became a real possibility. A cyclone which had hit the province had also affected the crop the following year. Nevertheless, the amount of food lost through these means did not automatically constitute a famine. In fact the Famine Inquiry Commission, set up by the British themselves to examine why the famine occurred, concluded that the failure of crops "was a secondary phenomenon, and not a primary cause of the famine." The failure lied with the incompetence of the colonial government. The inability to declare a famine and establishing measures to deal with the situation had disastrous consequences. It led to mass hoarding, rapid inflation of food prices, and a

thriving black market. What is even more profound is the attitude of Churchill and the war cabinet, as pleas from the Viceroy of India, Linlithgow, were met with sheer apathy. They were unwilling to act, seeing the situation as an issue of inflation. This is despite the Imperial Japanese army being on the doorstep of the Bengal, Calcutta being the second most populous city in India, and also being home to key munitions factories.

There were many people who suffered during the famine, but poor peasants who worked on the land were not the worst hit. It was often artisans such as carpenters and textile workers who suffered most, as people would spend all their money on food to survive. Furthermore many did not die of hunger, but of disease, as people became malnourished and weak, with corpses lying out on the street to rot in the open. Consequently, India has never suffered a famine after the departure of the British. Never too have the British taken responsibility or apologized for their part in the Bengal famine either.



Wikipedia, Unknown Source, 1943.



# Memento Mori

## Victorian post mortem photography

Holly Ashworth

The image of a dead person often stirs unsettling emotions in us. Indeed many people today have not seen a dead person in real life and open caskets at funeral services are rare. It is therefore understandable that many of us find the practice of Victorian post mortem photography macabre and eerie.

In the Victorian era, death was commonplace and infant mortality was high. Photographing corpses in life like poses helped family members cope with the grieving process and created a memory of the deceased sleeping peacefully or dressed in everyday clothes and surrounded by their family. This form of memorial portraiture was a normal part of European and American culture in the 19th and early 20th century. With the dawn of photography there appeared a way for people to memorialize their loved ones. As photography became more affordable more people chose this practice to capture the image of the deceased. They were often posed with family members as this might be the only family photograph they would possess.

The techniques used to manipulate a corpse into a pose to obtain an image where they appear alive often make the present day viewer feel uncomfortable. However, there is still a fascination with the practice as it is often incorporated with popular culture horror entertainment. One might view such images in movies such as "The Others".

In the early stages of photography the process was an

incredibly long process. The shutter would have to stay open for a frustratingly long time so subjects (living or dead) chose a pose they could hold for a while. Subjects usually forewent smiling as it was too difficult to hold for long periods. Photographs were therefore, invariably, very sombre.

Early photographs in this style have more variety as the photographer had relative freedom to place and pose the body. Later as customs changed the undertaker would direct proceedings and photographs were taken of caskets and there was less of an endeavour to capture recreated lifelike poses.

Visual imagery of death in the 19th century shows a diversity of ways of trying to come to terms with the discontinuity and disruption of death. This practice is unique to the period in which it was popular, possibly seen as a romantic and sentimental method of coping with separation. At a time when propriety, religion and sexual constraint was prevalent, it was possible to treat death with less restriction.

British sociologist Geoffrey Gorer in his 1955 article "The Pornography of Death" intimates that death in the 20th century is treated quite like sex was in the 19th century- a subject avoided with children and spoken of in euphemisms. Memento mori shows us that death was a part of everyday life and children were familiar with losing siblings, many photographs being posed with dead and living members of a family.

# Take a Trip to the Holy Land...

## ... Jerusalem

Natalie Cherry



As you hurtle towards Jerusalem, navigating the busy high-ways and noisy traffic, it's not the views or the people but interestingly the road signs that give a taste of what is to come. Religious Studies lessons come streaming back in an instant as you peer down roads that lead to cities only otherwise mentioned in the pages of holy books. Signs directing you to Nazareth, Hebron, Bethlehem and the Dead Sea flash past the windows, making it seem as though time has stood still in this ancient land, scarred by its years.

Spend a few days in Jerusalem, however, and you'll find a surprisingly dynamic city; one that, against all odds, continues to be caught somewhere between tradition and modernity, rise and ruin and peace and war.

In order to get the most out of a trip to this historically fascinating city, you'll need to be prepared for a lot of walking. The Old City, a mix between Pan's labyrinth, Aladdin's cave of wonders and a rabbit warren, is almost entirely pedestrianized, with only food carts and a few ambitious drivers daring to take on the narrow and winding streets. This is the beating heart of Jerusalem, where despite centuries of spilt blood and uneasy co-existence the bread has always been baked, the meat cooked and the spices sold. Life goes on here, amidst the mayhem.

Being the origin of the world's three largest monotheistic religions, Jerusalem's religious sights are unrivalled. Essential visits include the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Dome of the Rock - otherwise known as Temple Mount - the Al-Aqsa mosque on the same compound, and the Hurva Synagogue and Western Wall in the newly rebuilt Jewish Quarter. Some less busy but equally impressive sites include St Anne's Church, standing next to the supposed pool of Bethesda, the mosque of Omar and the Church of All Nations, with the

Garden of Gethsemane alongside it. This is one of the holiest sites for Christians, famed also for its olive trees that predate the religion itself.

The latter sites lie at the foot of the Mount of Olives, which offers a magnificent view of the Old City walls and the huge Christian, Muslim and Jewish cemeteries that dwell in the city's shadows. The Greek Orthodox Tomb of the Virgin Mary is also worth a trip if only for the architectural and decorative style of the 12th century church. A journey to the Garden Tomb also allows time for quiet contemplation in a peaceful environment, and if you have time, walk the Old City Walls from the famous Damascus Gate where the marketplace is seemingly never-ending.

A centre of faith, intellect, power and modern Middle Eastern politics, Jerusalem is a maze of overlapping holy lands and waters. Over the centuries it has seen multiple empires rise and fall, from the Byzantines and Sassanids to the Ottomans and Colonial powers, who carved up the region on post-war drawing boards. Now, in a modern era of tourism, this historic city is opening its doors to the world. If you get the chance, go.



en:User:Chiaro - en:Image:Temple5.jpg  
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Andrew Shiva, Wikipedia, 2013—licenced under Creative Commons



## Remembering Bhutto

### Seeking Justice in Pakistan

Katie Milne

On the 27<sup>th</sup> December 2007 the ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, was assassinated during an election rally in Rawalpindi upon her return from self-imposed exile. In the 7 years since speculation has run rife, yet no individual or organisation has been found guilty for her death which removed what many perceived to be the potential return of democracy to Pakistan. The main target of suspicion remains to be General Pervez Musharraf, the former tyrannical President of Pakistan at the time of Bhutto's return, who has been indicted with charges of murder. As the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bhutto's death draws near, the prospect of revealing the truth is becoming increasingly distant as the prospect of a fair trial disintegrates. Although overlooked by mainstream Western media, Bhutto's life and death should still be remembered as a noteworthy example of instability and injustice in Pakistan.

Throughout her political career Bhutto became a crusader figure for democracy and resistance to Pakistani's traditional military regimes. She aspired to challenge military rule through transforming the nation into an economically developed, democratic and socially tolerant modern state. As the leader of the Pakistani People's Party, Bhutto opposed the military regime of General Zia ul-Huq and undermined him through reversing extreme Is-

lamisation policies and advancing rights for women. Bhutto then went on to enjoy electoral success in 1988 and 1993, becoming the first and only female Prime Minister of Pakistan. Bhutto's view of Pakistani politics notably characterized the right wing Islamist Afghan Jihad as the virus which infected numerous individuals and governmental institutions during ul-Huq's regime. She publicly and explicitly identified the extremist Jihadist apparatus as a danger not only to democracy, but to the nation state of Pakistan.

Threats to Bhutto's governance arose primarily due to relations with the army within the ruling coalition after the 1988 elections. Between her and the military generals there was a mutual distrust which intensified with Bhutto's attempts to democratise Pakistan. This distrust pulled apart the foundations of stability and led to the general's dismissal of Bhutto in August 1990. After working to improve relations with the army from 1990-3 whilst leading the opposition in parliament, Bhutto once again aroused the liberal enthusiasm of the masses and won the 1993 election. However, her second attempt to democratise Pakistan was hindered by a corrupted administration which repelled public opinion, leading to a second dismissal and self-imposed exile to Dubai and London.

**IHP CORNER - IHP CORNER - IHP CORNER - IHP CORNER**



By 1999, General Pervez Musharraf had risen to power in a military coup and coined Bhutto's rule as an 'era of sham democracy'. However his military regime was widely unpopular and support for Bhutto continued to exist. Disaffection of public opinion reached its climax in November 2007 when he declared a State of Emergency and Martial Law, suspended the Constitution and dismissed the Supreme Court. Public protests were sparked, serving as a movement to nurture popular support for Bhutto once again. In response to threats to his sovereignty, Musharraf went on to sign the power sharing deal of the National Reconciliation Ordinance with Bhutto which would see her return from exile to participate in the national elections of January 2008. Upon her return, Bhutto publically stated that she was willing to risk her own life at the hands of the corrupt militants in order to save the nation of Pakistan and fight for democracy. In light of her assassination by gunshot and suicide bomb not long after, it appears Bhutto eerily foretold her own death.

In the immediate aftermath, al Qaeda and the Taliban seemed a likely explanation for her death. An Interior Ministry Spokesman stated that the killing had been ordered by Baitullah Mehsude, a terrorist allied to al-Qaeda. However, Mehsude passed the baton of blame onto Musharraf who he believed to be attempting to divert attention away from his own responsibility for reasons of self-preservation. The Pakistani people responded with calls for a strong government which would impeach Musharraf and bring about constitutional reform. This was a duty which the re-elected PPP failed to fulfil as they struggled in the absence of Bhutto's political leadership, despite their vision of 'democracy for revenge' in the years after her death.

In Pakistan today, Nawaz Sharif is the Prime Minister after being elected due to his important promise of an end to Musharraf's escape from impeachment through self-imposed exile. When Musharraf returned to Pakistan in 2013, he was put under house arrest and disqualified from standing in elections. He has also found himself fighting an array of charges put forward by Sharif which included criminal conspiracy to murder, facilitation of murder and treason. The charges run parallel to the suspicion of the UN Commissioner Heraldo Muñoz who in 2010 reported that her death could have

been prevented had Musharraf cooperated in providing sufficient protection. Bhutto herself even wrote in October 2007 that she had 'been made to feel insecure'. The fact that the police were ordered to hose down the site of the assassination investigation further supplements the aura of suspicion surrounding the general.

Whilst the first ever indictment of an army chief has made history in a country where the military has controlled political power for 66 years, the trail of Musharraf is rapidly losing its ground for justice. The case has been pushed aside by the deepening contention surrounding the charges of treason. When Musharraf's defence pushed for 600 other military figures to be tried alongside Musharraf for their collaboration in the 2007 State of Emergency, the Supreme Court agreed. Therefore the trail will undoubtedly collapse with this burden, and especially as the Court becomes increasingly tentative in its actions against the army in attempts of pacification. Thus, Musharraf has continued to enjoy political influence in spite of criminal charges. He regularly uses social media platforms to rally his supporters, an example of which would be his recent expression of the belief that the 2014 Peshawar school attack was a result of India's supposed support and training of the Taliban. He also gives interviews and hosts dinner parties for his supporters at his home in Karachi whilst dodging the gradually diminishing charges. Therefore, Bhutto's assassination to this day remains in a cloud of mystery and contest, serving to reflect the enduring instability of the Pakistani system and reinforce Bhutto as a symbol of democracy in its midst.



Khalid Mahmood, Wikipedia, 2010 — Creative Commons

iFaqeer, Wikipedia, 2004 — Creative Commons

## IHP CORNER - IHP CORNER - IHP CORNER - IHP CORNER

IAN MCEWAN  
THE CEMENT  
GARDEN

Book Review:

The Cement Garden

Rachael Hughes

Parading themselves proudly at the front of my bookcase are a few well-known books by Ian McEwan: *Atonement*, *Saturday* and *On Chesil Beach*. Lurking behind in the dark recesses is one of his novels so compelling for its sickening narrative that I am yet to publically admit my admiration for it: *The Cement Garden* (1978).

It took me a while to realise the slim likelihood of me finding a copy in a shop. To satisfy my guilty desire, Amazon proved itself as the only solution for acquiring the book. It is on this basis that I am approaching the very thought of reviewing *The Cement Garden* with trepidation. Ultimately, *The Cement Garden*—repeated here in hushed tones—is miles away from the flowery, Keira Knightley-esque world of *Atonement*. It is, quite frankly, a story that crawls under your skin and stagnates there for a very long time. However, I'm about to persuade you why you should look past the obvious immorality pervading the narrative, and towards the brilliance of McEwan's writing style, along with the ultimate reaction it evokes.

*The Cement Garden* is a novel infected by the negative implications of losing the two pillars of stability in a typical family: the patriarch and the matriarch; the father and the mother; the daddy and the mummy.

Jack (16), Julie (17), Sue (13) and Tom (6) are left orphaned once their father dies, followed shortly by their mother. Had this novel taken an ethical route, McEwan might have guided us on a nice journey: maybe we would have, after 138 pages, been faced with some sort of modern satire on society and its handling of orphans. Prepare yourself for a reaction much more jarring. Instead, we bear witness to the children firstly burying their mother in a vat of cement in their basement, and thereafter sliding down a slippery, debauched slope into a world of sexual tension, incest, the smell of corpses, the

smashing of the cement and finally—FINALLY—police intervention.

In terms of character likeability, it seems very difficult to connect with the children once their degeneracy bubbles to the surface. When reading fiction, it is always comforting to find a little glimpse of cordiality in at least one character - however minor that speck of relativity may be. In this novel, there is a massive obstacle preventing this connection from forming. I suppose a redeeming feature for the children is the very obvious: that they are now orphans - grieving, and misled by their inability to locate their place in a newly formed, domestic—yet parentless—infrastructure. But this one chance of character redemption is diminished by the extent to which McEwan pushes the children's respective depravity. I repeat: you will read graphic descriptions of incest, the smell of corpses and the smashing of the cement encasing the mother's corpse.

So when situating the characters within the narrative they navigate, I am left in no doubt as to why it is quite so difficult to find a common ground. Description embeds itself so far in McEwan's writing style that it is hard not to imagine the story as anything but realistic. As such, I didn't find it difficult to connect with the children because they were implausible characters; quite the opposite. I didn't connect with the children because the story crawled so far beneath the skin, and with such realism, that it became absolutely out of the question to associate my own conscience with theirs. Remaining a voyeur to this story is imperative if you want to finish it without assuming the foetal position.

# The Bone Church

Lauren Eglén



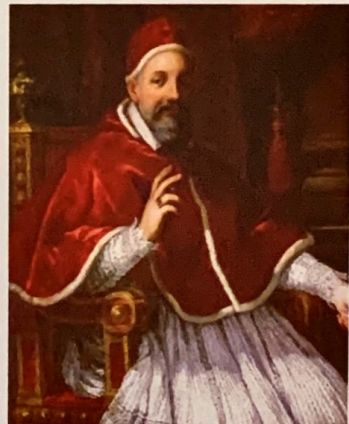
In 1626 Pope Urban VIII commissioned the construction of the church Santa Maria della Concezione dei Cappuccini. Located just off Piazza Barberini this church is a little known sight of Rome that makes for a fascinating visit. Everyone knows that no trip to Rome would be complete without a visit to the Colosseum, Trevi Fountain, Pantheon or any other world famed sight. However if you are looking for something a bit different, the Santa Maria della Concezione dei Cappuccini or 'Bone Church' as it has come to be known, should not be missed.

The church itself while from the outside appears as ordinary as one can imagine, carries a dark secret as you descend into the crypts beneath. The crypt contains the bones of around 4000 Capuchin friars decorating the rooms. Bones taken from friars who died between the 1500s and 1800s are now adorning the wall and ceilings, even used as light fixtures and arranged in different rooms as a silent reminder of the rapid passage of our time on earth and our own mortality. Though silence is not required, everyone finds themselves whispering as they walk through the amazingly chilling rooms of the crypt.

There are six rooms in the crypt each is unique with bones used in intricate and elaborate ways to convey the Christian message of everlasting life and the belief of resurrection. When entering the first room, the Crypt of Resurrection you are greeted by the sight of human bones arranged around a painting of the resurrection of Lazarus to again remind the visitor of the Christian belief that death is not the end of everything, but the beginning of eternal life. The Mass Chapel is the only room in the crypt to not have any bones and is still occasionally used by Capuchin monks. The Crypt

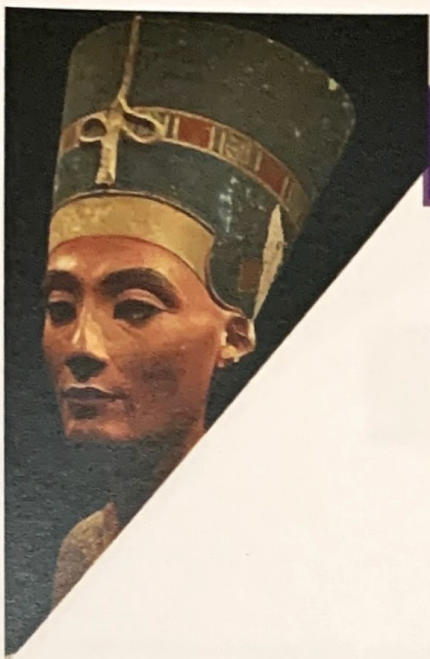
of Skulls, as well as some intact skeletons draped in their disintegrating robes, is filled with piles of skulls lining the walls of the room. The Crypts of Pelvises and The Crypt of Leg bones and Thigh bones are rooms decorated as the names suggests with masses of bones, again with some dressed skeletons eerily appearing to stand upright without support. Finally the Crypt of Skeletons contains the fully intact unadorned skeletons of three children, likely to show that death can take all ages. In the centre of the vault is a skeleton holding in one hand a scythe, the symbol of death, and in the other the set of scales of good and evil deeds weighed by God in judgement. As you are leaving the last room there is a sign that reads 'What you are now, we used to be. What we are now, you will be'.

The Bone Chapel is a must see in Rome. It is wonderfully creepy and marvellously macabre. Rome's Bone Chapel is definitely worth a visit if you're looking for something very different from the main tourist sights.



"Urban VIII" by Pietro da Cortona - Own work. Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons, 1627,

<http://get-to-know-cz.tumblr.com/post/61871440173/sedlec-ossuary-near-kutna-hora>, tumblr, 2015



# Dying to be Beautiful?

## The Hazardous How-To on

## Historical Handsomeness!

Charlotte Tomlinson

Cosmetics are one of the oldest technologies in history. We've all seen the black eyeliner of the Ancient Egyptians, but did you know that the ancient civilisations – Egyptians, Greeks, Babylonians, are also known to have used hair curler, tweezers, nail polishes and brow combs too? Some of these were even found among the possessions of King Tut when his tomb was discovered in 1922, many still usable. Here's the know-how on becoming historically handsome – but beware, some of these methods from the past come with a little risk...

### Perilous Peepers

Use the black and green eyeliners of ancient Egypt to paint on dramatic dark shapes around the eyes, were pretty dangerous – made with high concentrations of green copper ore and lead kohl, they were known by medics to lead to irritation, insomnia and a range of mental illnesses. Or try a more modern method. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries eye makeup became even more deadly, with people attempting to imitate the wide glossy eyed look of the masses who suffered consumption in the era. To whiten the eyes and dilate the pupils, some women ingested small amounts of arsenic daily. It worked by destroying red blood cells, causing the skin to become paler and eyes to dilate. Washing your eyes in the

deadly juices of the belladonna plant could work too, but it can easily kill within a matter of weeks!

The rise of cosmetics and a commercial beauty industry from the late nineteenth century has brought about more regulation, but it did not dispel the danger of looking your 'best'. During the 1930s, an eyelash darkening dye, 'Lash Lure', led to the death of one user and the complete blindness of sixteen others. Forty years earlier, cocaine was rubbed into eyes to numb them before false eyelashes were sown into the eyelid with needle and thread. Ouch!



Audience applying makeup at lecture by beautician in Los Angeles, circa 1950, Wikipedia (PD-US-NOT RENEWED.)

## A Killer Complexion

Bright eyes are not the only characteristic you can gain by consuming toxic concoctions. A mixture of chalk, iodine and other acids can also be used to lighten the skin, a cosmetic fashion that has stood the test of time. Medical documents from the Middle Ages show both men and women used methods such as regular bleeding to remain pale, which is an option. However, the height of deadly methods of achieving the perfect complexion, the aptly named 'dead pale' look, really peaked in the Georgian era. A mixture of white lead and vinegar (imagine the smell), commonly known as ceruse, was used to paint the face, and was suspected to cause infertility among those who used it frequently. Unlike remedies for enlarging the eyes, ceruse was used by men and children as well as women, and could be mixed with mercury in higher doses to cover blemishes or actually remove freckles and moles completely. Why not give it a whirl?

Remember though, these methods can be rather risky. In 1869, a whitening paste called 'Bloom of Youth' was identified as causing 'fatigue, weight loss, nausea, headaches, muscle atrophy and paralysis'. Cosmetics were not just dangerous, they could be deadly. In 1760, The Countess of Coventry died, reported as a 'victim of cosmetics' in the press. Could you meet the same dashing demise?

## Hazardous Hair

Take a leaf out of the book of the 'Canary Girls' of World War Two, who literally turned yellow from their exposure to TNT in shell filling factories, with some known to apply the powder to their hair to achieve that blonde-bombshell look. Or go one further like America's 'Radium Girls' who became poisoned when they whitened their nails, hair, teeth and skin with glow-in-the-dark radium.

## Fancy An Appointment?

Changing trends in the mid twentieth century have put tanned skin as the ideal in the West, and with this change the deadly mission for super-pale skin has finally come to an end. But this doesn't mean that you can no longer turn to bizarre methods to attain

beauty. Considering that today bird-poo face cream, vampire facials and whole range of cosmetic surgeries are on offer and on the rise, does wrapping your face in raw beef to prevent wrinkles seem so out of place? The world has been *dying* to be beautiful for at least three thousand years.

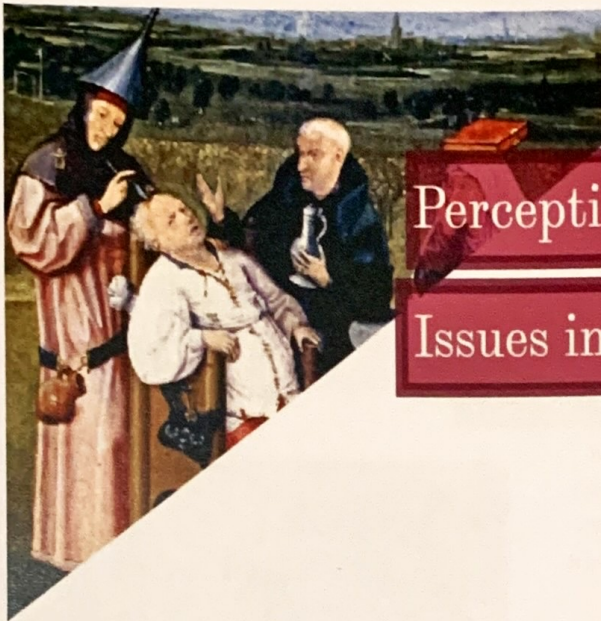
After all, *pain is beauty*, right?



The 'Canary Girls' working with shells in Chilwell filling factory 1917  
IWM Q 30040, Wikipedia.



Pale faced Elizabeth I of England wearing Venetian Ceruse, Wikipedia.



## Perceptions of Mental Health

## Issues in the Medieval Period

Martha Clowes

*"Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!"*

(Hamlet – Act 1, Scene 2)

When Shakespeare wrote this exclamation of Hamlet's depression, at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was an incredibly understanding account of the feelings experienced by those with mental health issues. Even over 400 years later it still holds resonance and relatability for those who have experienced mental health issues in their life. However, this enlightened instance contrasts strikingly to the historical period which preceded it: The Middle Ages, spanning from approximately the 5<sup>th</sup> century to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Within this medieval period the most common words associated with mental health issues were "lunatic", "madness" and "melancholy". These are examples of the insensitive and completely inaccurate terminology used in this period, especially when compared to the modern terms of "depression" and "mental health issues".

*"lunatic", "madness" and "melancholy"*

In the medieval period those with mental health issue were viewed as being encumbered with madness, or lunacy. Sometimes this was their own fault, as some of the identified causes for mental disorders were an intemper-

ate diet, alcohol, overwork and grief. These are factors which we today would recognise as being a trigger for mental health issues to occur in a person's life. Yet our modern understanding of the involuntary nature of mental health issues means that we as a society blame the sufferer less than medieval society did. "Madness" was also viewed as a moral issue, it being seen as a punishment for sin or a test of faith and character. Immorality was an important concept in the Middle Ages, with the prevailing theory being that immorality was something which was physically visible on those who were of that disposition. It is also important to note that the medieval view of immoral and moral people was very black and white, you were either one or the other, there was no allowance for people to have moral *and* immoral tendencies. Therefore ugliness was linked to immoral people, as was the physical and outward signs induced by mental health issues. The issue of immorality meant that mental health issues in the Middle Ages was not merely a medical matter, but also intrinsically linked to the Church and religion.

A painting by [Hieronymus Bosch](#) depicting trepanation (c.1488-1516), Wikipedia.

**- MEDIEVAL CORNER - MEDIEVAL CORNER - MEDIEVAL CORNER**

The leading medical idea of the make-up of the human body at this time was the Humourist theory. This theory had origins in Ancient Egyptian medicine, but was only systemized under the Greeks. This theory dictated that our bodies contained four humours: Blood, Black Bile, Yellow Bile and Phlegm. The humours were perceived as directly influencing people's temperatures and health. These four humours are each paired with the older conception of temperaments, which help us understand the humours better. Blood is linked to Sanguine (making people pleasure-seeking and sociable), Black Bile is Melancholic (resulting in despondent, analytical and quiet behaviour), Yellow Bile with Choleric (equalling ambitiousness and leadership skills) and Phlegm paired with Phlegmatic (generating relaxation and peacefulness). Therefore if someone was depressed it was attributed medically to an unbalance of these humours, with Black Bile being the prominent humour in the body of the sufferer.

One prominent method of treating mental health issues in the medieval period in Western Europe was Trepanning. This is a medical procedure which consisted of surgical intervention in which a hole is drilled or scraped into the human skull, exposing the *dura mater* (a thick membrane that is the outermost of the three layers of the meninges that surrounds the brain and the spinal cord), to treat health problems related to inter-cranial disease. This method was promoted by Arnaldus de Villanova (1235-1313), who believed this horrific procedure let out demons and allowed for excess humours to escape, two of the main perceived causes of mental health issues. In a time of views which we, from our modern perspective, view as ghastly and backward it is not surprising that their methods are similarly as ghastly and backward. There were of course much less horrific treatments advocated by the clergy and doctors. For example the Franciscan monk Bartholomeus Anglicus (1203-1272) advocated music as a melody for "melancholy".

In this period there was also an important distinction between the "natural born idiot" and the "lunatic". "Lunatics" were defined as only being "mad" periodically, therefore only suffering various periods of mental disorder. This periodic acknowledgment was linked to theories of the influence of the moon. Whereas a "natural born idiot" was someone permanently afflicted, who had never exhibited any period of 'normal' or socially acceptable behaviour.

Crossing the world to Arabia and Persia in this medieval period mental disorders were attributed to a loss of reason. They had a good understanding, as in the European world, that there was link between the brain and these disorders. They believed that there was a spiritual and mystical meaning to these disorders, similar to the link to religion they held in Europe. Under Islam the mentally ill were considered incapable yet deserving of humane treatment and protection.

It is written in Sura 4:5 of the Qur'an:

*"Do not give your property which God assigned you to manage to the insane: but feed and clothe the insane with this property and tell splendid words to him"*

Disorders in the Far East were often attributed to possession by a *djinn* (genie), which could be good as well as demon-like. In these societies treatments included beatings to exercise the *djinn*.

Today over 350 million people suffer from mental health issues worldwide\*, there is mass awareness of this issue and a greater comprehension among the population of the world. It is no longer the uncommon phenomenon that it was in the Middle Ages, prompting the radical ideas of causes and treatments that it did. Yet, as our understanding has developed from the Middle Ages, there is still a greater deal of understanding and sensitivity that can be achieved towards mental health issues. As we look back in despair at the medieval period, in the future we will be seen as not have the optimum comprehension of these often misunderstood disorders that we can possibly achieve.



Early color illustrations of psychiatric treatment methods, as drawn by physician Serefeddin Sabuncuoglu (1385-1470).—Wikipedia



# The Unfortunate Death

## Of Mr. Huskisson

Sonya Grassmugg

*This is the truly sensational and shocking story of the unfortunate circumstances that led to the tragic death of Mr. Huskisson, MP for Liverpool, and the disastrous and bloody birth of the railway.*

Early one September morning in the year 1830, huge crowds were gathered in Liverpool, donned in their Sunday best, to witness the grand opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. It was the world's first passenger railway that exclusively employed steam locomotives, and this opening day heralded the future of public transportation. Eight separate trains, running next to and behind each other on two parallel tracks, left the town amongst much excited cheering, and soon excelled to an unprecedented velocity of something between 20 and 40 miles per hour. Different designs of locomotives and carriages were tested that day, carrying altogether more than 600 passengers. The most luxurious carriage contained the Prime Minister Arthur Wellesley – better known as the eminent Duke of Wellington, hero of the Battle of Waterloo – and another one even a whole trumpeting military band.

For a while everything ran smoothly – that is, apart from a derailed locomotive wheel; a little crash... But nothing that could dampen the general mood of pride and exhilaration. Yet, all that was to change when the trains stopped at Parkside in order for the locomotives to go off on their own and take in water before continuing the journey. Contra to advice, some individuals left their own cars and swarmed around the Duke's carriage, hovering on the tracks next to it. One of those was the aged MP Mr. Huskisson, seeking reconciliation with Wellington after a previous political fall-out. As the two gentlemen

conversed, one of the other trains approached, racing along the rails on which the people had congregated. By the time the driver noticed the obstruction, it was already too late. Being a prototype, this locomotive had no breaks, and to reverse its gear took considerable time. People jumped out of the way as best as they could. The Hungarian prince Esterházy escaped certain death only by climbing into the Duke's carriage through a window. Mr. Huskisson, confused and panicked, clambered onto the closed door, but ill fate should have it that the door swung open, effectively throwing the poor old gentleman onto the tracks and under the heavy wheels of the advancing locomotive. He was yet alive, but his injuries were such that he himself was convinced of his imminent death: his right leg was nearly severed, both above and below the knee. A detached carriage door being used as a stretcher, he was put on the platform of the flat car that had carried the band, and together with his distraught wife and a doctor, he was driven ahead of everyone else towards Manchester. They stopped at Eccles and carried him to the house of a friend. A surgeon was summoned from Manchester, but the worry that the shock of an amputation might be too much for old Mr. Huskisson's heart made the medical men decide against this operation; though they were certain that he would sooner or later die of his injuries.

*'throwing the poor old gentleman onto the tracks and under the heavy wheels of the advancing locomotive'*



Meanwhile, Manchester was on the brink of an enormous riot. Like in Liverpool, crowds had gathered to witness this momentous event. But, unlike in Liverpool, this crowd consisted chiefly out of labourers, who filled the streets and open places with their greasy skins and soiled clothes. They were tense from waiting for trains that ought to have arrived hours ago, and drenched from the rain that had arrived too soon. Ignorant of the reasons for the delay, rumours spread of ambushes and torn-up rail tracks, whilst industrious radicals fuelled the outrage against the government that only served the rich. When the trains finally arrived, they were forced to inch their way forward through a gigantic angry mob that had spilled onto the tracks and was shouting abuse at Wellington. The Duke was too afraid to leave the carriage and attend the festive buffet that had been prepared for the railway passengers. For the sake of his safety the first locomotive that was ready to go again was used to pull the Duke's train out of this filthy, perilous town and drove him back to Liverpool. The rest of the passengers had to bide their time until all other locomotives had returned. To make matters even worse, it was soon discovered that apparently some of the returning locomotives had been travelling on the same track that the Duke's train had left on, and so they were forced to reverse and drive ahead of it all the way to Liverpool, before being able to return to Manchester. Fortunately though, three of the locomotives had not been caught up that way and came to the rescue of the deserted passengers. All remaining 24 carriages were affixed to the three engines with simple ropes. Naturally, this excessive weight slowed the return-journey down even further, and once they reached the inclined plane near Sutton, most of the passengers were forced to dismount and walk.

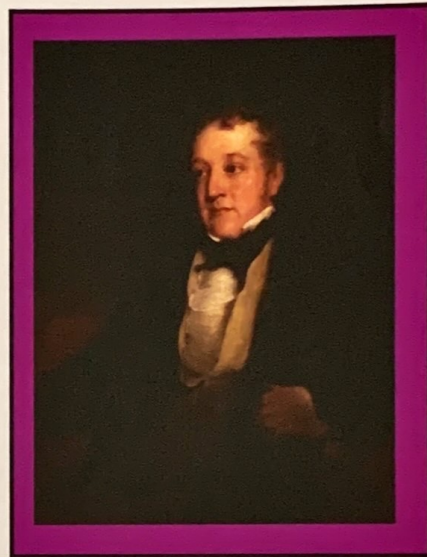
The party returned to Liverpool late at night. Having expected to be back by four o'clock in the afternoon, many had not made provisions for accommodation in the town, and due to the popularity of the day's event, neither bed nor horse were to be got. And this is why you might have found, on this most unusual night, respectable gentlemen wandering the gas lit streets of Liverpool in their finest apparel, and a whole abandoned military band still wading through the muddy moors.

Miles away, in a house in Eccles, Mr. Huskisson, the accidental hero in our story, finally breathed his last at nine o'clock at night and tragically expired.

**Epilogue:**

As already mentioned, a number of different locomotives had been tested on that day. The fateful engine that was Mr. Huskisson's nemesis went by the name of *Rocket*. It had been designed by George Stephenson and was eventually chosen to become the ancestor of all future locomotives. *Rocket* now stands proudly in the London Science Museum as a testimony to progress long past. Should you ever visit it and marvel at this feat of engineering, spare a thought for the unfortunate Mr. Huskisson, who was condemned to exit life and enter history as the first ever railway fatality.

– Well, truth be told, he was not really the first. But who cares about the fate of some blind beggar woman!



Portrait of William Huskisson, Wikipedia.



Unveiling of the Huskisson Memorial, 1913, Wikipedia, 2010



On This Day:

9th November 1989

25 Jahre Mauerfall: 25 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall

Poppy Wesson

The Berlin Wall stood for 28 years, from 1961-1989, dividing Soviet controlled communist East Berlin and American, British and French controlled capitalist West Berlin. Along the wall was the only place where the two fronts met; where capitalist faced communist ideology. Where American troops faced Russian troops. In Berlin, the wall falling was a culmination of much social unrest spreading throughout the Eastern Bloc countries in 1989. Importantly, in May 1989, the dismantling of the Hungarian border with Austria, allowed a passage into the West Germany. Hundreds of East Germans, began to travel through Hungary, the cracks in the communist strong hold were beginning to emerge. Gorbachev, the leader of the Soviet Union took no overt action. Conversely, in June 1989 the Tiananmen Square massacre was violently crushed by the military, under the resolve of the Chinese Communist Party. Important events further added to social discontent with the Soviet Bloc. Crucially, it was the inaction of Mikael Gorbachev, unlike the violent approach of communists in China; the 1989 events leading to the fall of the Berlin wall were peaceful in the majority. With the physical tumbling of the wall, not only concrete fell. Communism ended in Europe. With the Soviet Union being fully disbanded by 1991.

To commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Berlin lit up with illuminated helium balloons along where the wall used to stand through the middle of the city, as a "symbol of hope for a world without walls". Whilst the wall does not exist now, two parallel cobblestones run in the pavement denoting where the wall stood. Serving a constant reminder that even though the barrier is no longer visible, many Germans will speak of East and West. With some areas, being distinctly East. From spending time in Berlin, one strong image lies with me. Along from Postdamer Platz U-bahn station, there is a Starbucks, through which the cobbled stones enter, it would have been divided. It is ironic that a Starbucks coffee shop,

which stands almost everywhere in the world, as a symbol of American capitalism. Has particular resonance standing in place of where such a significant divide once was. The idea of living in a world divided in such a substantial and tangible way, is impossible for me to imagine. Ominously, the 25-year milestone of the fall of the wall is punctuated by the current situation in Syria and in Ukraine and the questionable peace in Europe.

But more poignantly the fall of the Berlin Wall was peaceful. Peace and reconciliation are the most significant mindsets to be taken in memory of the wall.



Photographs taken by Polly Wesson.

# America, Why is Race

## Still So Divisive?

Peter Creagh



In the wake of the acquittal of a white police officer for the shooting of a black teenager, the US has been on a tentative knife edge. The question of race has risen its ugly head once again, leaving us asking ourselves the same recurring question: Why is race still so divisive?

The evidence around this killing is shady at best with Officer Wilson arguing he was under attack and in fear of his life while some witnesses have said the teen had his hands up. Insinuating that it was an act of racially motivated police brutality.

The event has blown way out of proportion as anarchy has spread throughout US cities with protests in Oregon, Seattle and New York. That leaves many people in a state of bemusement as to whether a country, seen as the forefront of civilised society is actually all that it seems.

When you look under the surface of American politics, an ugly truth unravels before you. With African Americans 6.5 times more likely to be imprisoned than their white counterparts, and the income gap at the highest it's been since the turn of the century. You can't help but feel a little sick in the mouth, that a country that is so developed, heeds such intense inequality.

The news of Wilson's acquittal comes amongst a week in which President Obama has outlined plans to shield illegal immigrants who have lived in the US for over five years from deportation. Even for a country founded by immigrants, a plan of this scale is set to be highly contested by the prominent conservative right. This again opens a whole new barrel of hypocrisy and condemns many to continued subordination because of their race.

This apparent institutional racism and vocal right wing, advocating an acceptance of social inequality exists forty years

on from the prominent Civil Rights Movement. The likes of President Johnson fast-tracked new legislation in the 1960s but it failed to lead to a social change, with de facto segregation still prominent. Sub sections of many of the US's most affluent cities are still split starkly into ghettos, made up of predominantly African Americans, Hispanic Americans and other minority groups. But with a six fold growth in the population of Hispanic Americans since the 1970s, maybe it is finally time for Americans to put their prejudices behind them.

### So why is race so divisive?

When something happens like that in Ferguson, you see a level of universal outcry and disillusionment. While politicians fear of speaking about race, the media hype it up. One can't help but think that if race were taken out of the picture, there would have been less outcry. Yet instead we get a blown up story of events that damage everyone involved and empower the boundaries separating races. This preys upon people's fear of racism and hysteria for the purpose of making money.

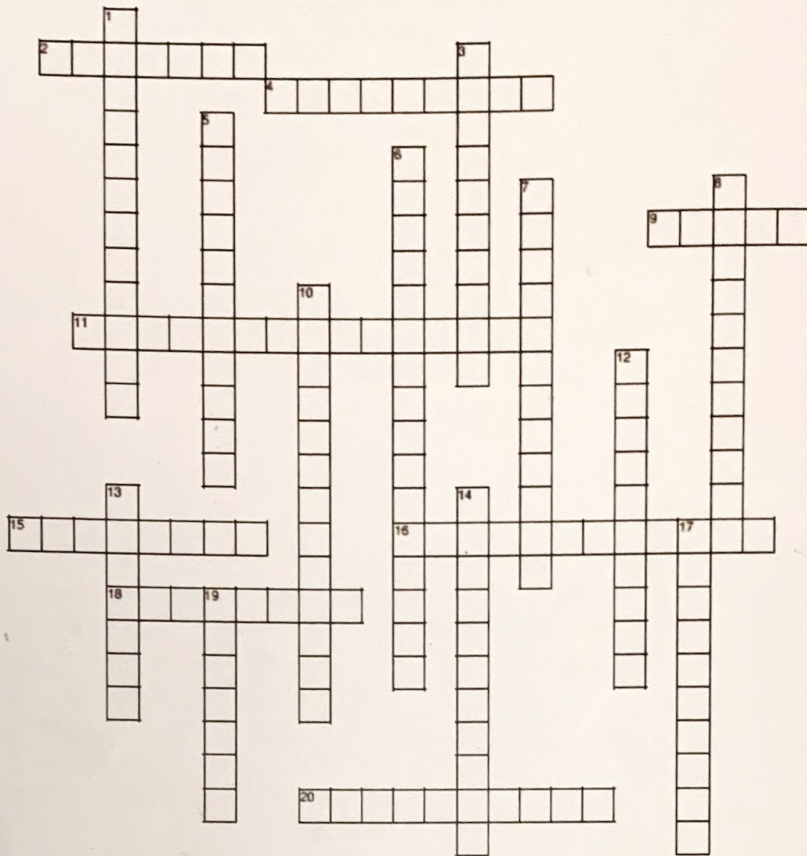
*'Race is only divisive when people make it divisive'*



Jamelle Bouie, 'Signs displayed at Ferguson protest', Wikipedia/Flickr, 2014

# Death and disease

Complete the crossword below



## Across

2. Water borne disease, scourge of 19th century towns and cities
4. The Taj Mahal is one of these
8. Patrick Swayze / Demi Moore movie
11. BBC Drama series set on the island of Saint-Marie (5,2,6)
15. Henry VIII's second wife died this way
16. He introduced the smallpox vaccine (6,6)
18. Poisoned Russian monk
20. Medieval disease spread by rat fleas (5,5)

## Down

1. Nazi SS Doctor – Angel of Death (5,7)
3. Large ancient cemetery, name derives from Ancient Greek "City of the Dead"
5. Location of Jack The Rippers deadly deeds
6. Burial place of Karl Marx, author of Das Kapital (8,8)
7. 19th century murderers who sold the corpses for medical autopsy (5,3,4)
8. Tim Burton co-directed this animated movie starring Johnny Depp (6,5)
10. Comedian who has 1 told you I was ill engraved on his gravestone (5,8)
12. Cloaked and Hooded skeleton - Personification of death (3,6)
13. Biblical bacterial disease
14. The demon barber of Fleet Street (7,4)
17. WW1 killing area (2,4,4)
19. Pharaoh's afterlife pad

Find the answers in the next edition of the History Student Times!

Down: 1. Oxygen, 2. Europa, 3. Patent Office, 4. Santa Maria, 5. Aviator, 6. Avatar, 7. Nikola Tesla, 8. Golden Hind, 9. Vasco da Gama, 10. Golden Hind, 11. Pluto, 12. Species, 13. China, 14. Tutankhamen, 15. Liningsstone, 16. Viagra, 17. Paris, 18. Paris, 19. Paris, 20. World Cup

Answers to 2014/15 'Inventions and Discoveries' crossword:

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