States of Blue: American writing on depression Daisy Christodoulou, English & Comparative Literature Student, Warwick University Supervisor: Dr Stephen Shapiro

Introduction

This overall aim of this project was to examine the links between affluent market societies and increasing instances of melancholy and depression. My role was to compile an interdisciplinary literature review on mental illness and writings on mental illness over the last decade and a half. Whilst the main focus of the overall project was on American writing, I was to look at British and American sources and at the prevalence of depression globally.

Methodology

As this was an interdisciplinary project, I used a wide variety of sources. I carried out searches on paper and internet archives and databases. started by investigating British and American online newspaper and magazine archives for articles on depression, mental illness and use of antidepressants. I then used the general newspaper databases Lexis Nexis and Factiva for more accurate and specific searches and access to full text articles. I used a lot of the information I found in these sources to start investigating popular writing on depression on Amazon.com. Finally, I moved on to searching for scholarly articles on the subject of depression, looking at sociological. literary and historical scholarly journals. I filed all the information I found into Endnote bibliographies, and saved many of the articles as PDF files.

The New Hork Times

June 6, 2006

Use of Antipsychotics by the Young Rose Fivefold

By BENEDICT CAREY

sources for Generation X, study shows John Com W Ehe New Hork Eimes

3nne 2, 2004

Large Study on Mental Illness Finds Global Prevalence No letter

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TIMESONI From Times Online

May 18, 2004

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The New Hork Eines	depression rise a	1
ngdimes.o	am an	larms doctors
July 27, 1999		

Some Still Despair in a Prozac Marrow Pills cannot cure the human condition By ERICA GOODI The Hork Eimes PORTRAIT Sociologist Examines Depression From Personal Perspective By Courtney Leatherman oer 6, 1996 Help for Depression Put in the Foreground EXECTION SUPPLEMENT In sickness and in health: Prozac nation - roles Higher Education Supplement Th18 Juna 2007 Breaking a conspiracy of silence Olga Weitas Published:

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION THE

H The Neurotic Artist: Romanticizing Depression EDU BUPPETER D. KRAMER

Not all in the mind

The New York Times

Depressed? New York City Screens for People at Risk

Findings

My research showed me that over the past 20 years there has been an increase in the prevalence of, study of, writing about and treatment of depression. I was particularly surprised to discover that depression, often characterised as a Western, privileged disease, has been increasing worldwide, not just in the West. However, both scholarly articles and popular, anecdotal writing seem to Britain becomes a Prozac nation lifestyles. suggest that depression is exported with Western

Evaluation

I had never been involved in a project like this, and it was very satisfying to be able to thoroughly research a topic beyond the level required at undergraduate level. Practically, the project helped me improve my research and IT skills, which is hugely beneficial for any further academic study I may do, but also in everyday life.

It was also very exciting to be engaged with such a topical issue. The week before I started the project, UNESCO published a report saying that British and American teenagers are the unhappiest in the Western world. This project offers some suggestions as to why that might be.

Taking part in this URSS project has also been useful for me at a personal level. I am currently working as a teacher in a secondary school in London, where these issues are very relevant. have also gained a practical idea of what is required for academic research, which will benefit me if I ever decide to do further academic study.