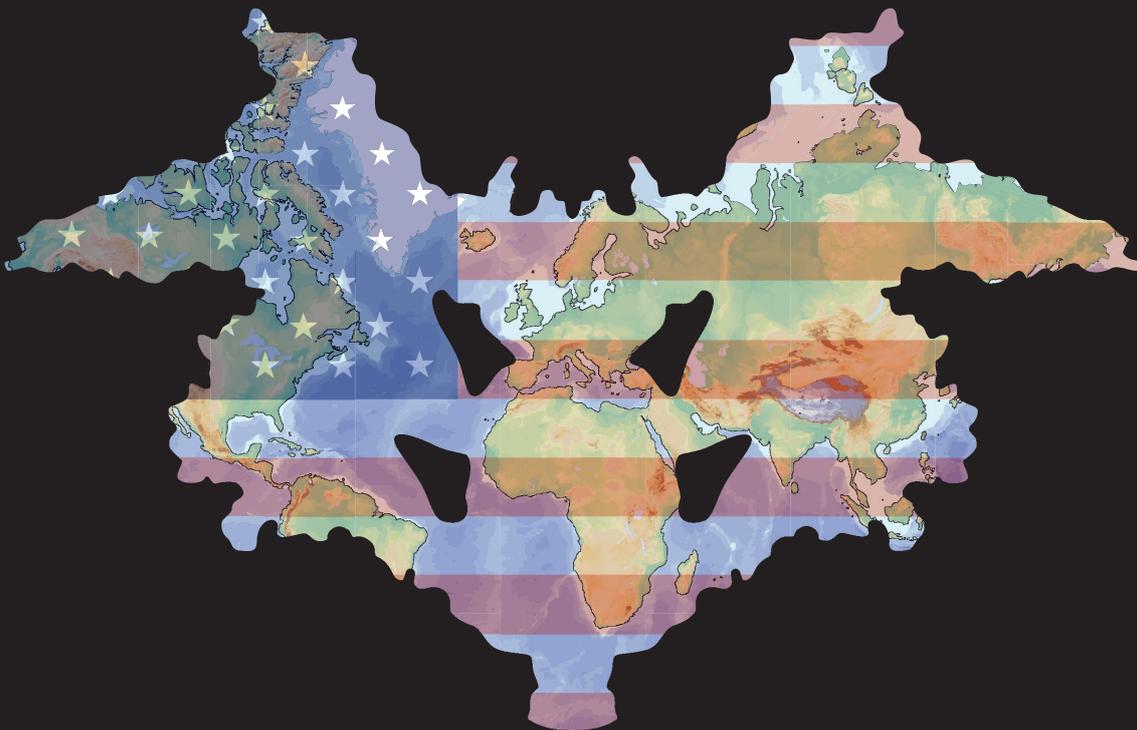




# Driving Us Crazy:

The Globalization of Western Mental Health and  
the Historicity of Emotions

25th February 2016



**Organizers:**

Edgar Cabanas  
Bettina Hitzer

*Center for the History of Emotions  
Max Planck Institute for Human Development*

## 25th February, 13.00 – 15.00

Large conference room. Max Planck Institute for Human Development

**13.00** Introduction

**13.15** Ethan Watters: *The Globalization of the American Mind*

**14.00** Round Table Discussion / Open Discussion\*

*with Bettina Hitzer, Uffa Jensen, Anja Laukötter, Daphne Rozenblatt, Olga Runciman*

**15.00** End of discussion

\* Edgar Cabanas, Bettina Hitzer, Uffa Jensen, Anja Laukötter and Daphne Rozenblatt are currently working at the Center for the History of Emotions / Max Planck Institute for Human Development. Olga Runciman is a psychologist and qualified psychiatric nurse currently working as a recovery coach in Denmark and the UK.

## Ethan Watters (San Francisco)

*The Globalization of the American Mind*

There is now a solid body of research to suggest that mental illnesses are not, as sometimes assumed, spread evenly around the globe and across history. In a talk based on his recent book, Watters will review the body of work by cross-cultural psychiatrists that has shown that mental illnesses appear in different cultures and periods in history in endlessly complex and unique forms. Because the troubled mind has been perceived in terms of diverse religious, scientific, and social beliefs of discrete cultures, the forms of madness from one place and time in history often look remarkably different from the forms of madness in another. But with the increasing speed of globalization, things are changing quickly. The remarkable diversity once seen among different cultures' conceptions of madness is now disappearing. A few mental illnesses identified and popularized in the United States, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anorexia among them—now appear to be spreading across cultural boundaries and around the world with the speed of contagious diseases. Indigenous forms of mental illness and healing are being replaced by disease categories and treatments made in the USA. To lay bare these international trends, Watters will explore four case studies: The rise of anorexia in Hong Kong in the 1990s; the spread of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and western trauma therapy to Sri Lanka after the Boxing Day tsunami; the changing notions of schizophrenia in Zanzibar; and the selling of depression to Japan after that market was opened to SSRIs.

### Biography:

Ethan Watters is a journalist who has spent the last two decades writing about psychiatry and social psychology. Most recently, he is the author of *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche*. The book suggests that America is homogenizing not just the categorization and treatment of the mentally ill but the subjective experience of being mentally ill as well. Prior to that, he wrote *Urban Tribes: Are Friends the New Family*, an examination of the growing population of the “never marrieds.” He began his career writing about day care abuse scares and other urban hysterias of the early 1990s. He was the first national magazine writer to expose the excesses and mistakes of therapists who lead their patients to uncover „recovered memories“ of early childhood abuse. That work culminated in a co-authorship (with UC Berkeley social psychologist Richard Ofshe) of *Making Monsters: False Memories, Psychotherapy and Sexual Hysteria*, a groundbreaking indictment of the recovered memory movement. Also with Ofshe, Watters co-authored *Therapy's Delusions: The Myth of the Unconscious and the Exploitation of Today's Walking Worried*. Watters is a frequent contributor to *The New York Times Magazine*, *Discover*, *Men's Journal*, *Details*, *Wired*, and *This American Life*. His writing on the new research surrounding epigenetics was featured in the 2003's *Best American Science and Nature Writing* series. Watters is co-founder (along with Ethan Canin and Po Bronson) of the San Francisco Writers' Grotto, a workspace for journalists, novelists, poets and filmmakers. He lives in San Francisco with his wife and children.





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#### From Railway Station Hauptbahnhof

- 🚊 S7 S9 to Potsdam/to Spandau → 🚊 Zoolog. Garten
- 🚊 U9 to Steglitz → 🚊 Spichernstraße
- 🚊 U3 to Krumme Lanke → 🚊 Breitenbachplatz

#### From Airport Tegel

- 🚌 109 Airport Tegel → 🚊 Jakob-Kaiser-Platz
- 🚊 U7 to Rudow → 🚊 Fehrbelliner Platz
- 🚊 U3 to Krumme Lanke → 🚊 Breitenbachplatz

#### From Airport Schönefeld

- 🚌 Shuttle Bus → 🚊 Schönefeld
- 🚊 S45 to Westhafen → 🚊/🚊 Heidelberg Platz
- 🚊 U3 to Krumme Lanke → 🚊 Breitenbachplatz

