‘Façade of success’: Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum 1865-1969

Julie Ann Bradshaw, B Nurs., RN, M Nurs. (Hons)

Doctor of Philosophy

CQUniversity

School of Nursing and Midwifery

February 2016

Abstract

This thesis explores the beginning years of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, Queensland, 1865-1869. It examines what it was like for the people who lived and worked in this institution and the trajectory of the Asylum. During the period 1865 to 1869, the Asylum was subjected to four public Inquiries and these Inquiries provide the structure for this thesis and the lens through which the Asylum is explored.

By examining a short period of time, this thesis captures the interaction between social, political and economic factors that characterised this period of colonial Queensland history and demonstrates their influence on the Asylum. While situating the Asylum within this broad frame, other more specific influences are also apparent and include particular personalities and the press, which had an impact on the trajectory of the Asylum, and the experiences of the patients and staff.

This thesis demonstrates that patient experiences at the Asylum were largely negative and the Asylum from its inception was unsuitable, and further, its conditions would continue to deteriorate as the Government neglected its needs. Finally, this thesis concludes that the trajectory of the Asylum's first five years was a consequence of a complex interplay between broad socio-political and economic factors as well as more specific influences of particular personalities and the press, all interacting with the many institutional layers of a new asylum staffed by inexperienced people.

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been a long journey and there are many people who have helped me along the way. My heartfelt thanks must go to my current supervisors. Dr. Jenieffer Barr who encouraged me with her warmth and enthusiasm to jump some seemingly insurmountable hurdles to reach the finish line. Dr. Wendy Madsen, who has been there all along and has been so valued for her wisdom, intelligence, and astute guidance. I would also like to thank my colleagues. There are too many of you to name individually, however, your encouragement and your 'never give up' attitude has continued to inspire me.

Finally, I need to thank my family. All of you have helped me in so many different ways. Firstly, Alan, my husband, who has always believed in me, challenged me to think more critically, and whose editing skills are so admirable. My daughter Abbie, whose enthusiasm for the archives made my initial research less daunting. Elliot, Michelle and Adam whose support was always tangible. My sister Michelle who gave up her time to proof read, and my father, who never forgot to ask 'How is that study thing that you are doing?'

Certificate of authorship and originality

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted either in whole or in part for a degree at CQUniversity or any other tertiary institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the material presented in this thesis is original except where due reference is made in text.

Signed:

Date: 17.02.16

Copyright Statement

Signed:

Date: 17.02.16

Table of Contents

Publications arising from this thesis work

Bradshaw, J. Madsen, W. 'Gender and domesticity in Woogaroo Asylum 1865-1869, in B. Knight, B. Walker-Gibbs & J. Delamoir (eds), *Research into 21st century communities,* Post Pressed, Teneriffe, 2007, pp. 33-46.

Introduction

Lying on the banks of the Brisbane River, in the Brisbane suburb of Wacol, traces of Queensland's first lunatic asylum and its successors are evident. The Asylum's original 1865 building has long gone. Other buildings have also disappeared; a number destroyed by a flooded Brisbane river. The site is now a curious mixture of the old, and the less old. Once proud buildings are dilapidated and fenced off from the public; old tool sheds are littered with aged fence palings and rusty tools; pump houses are abandoned; a Saint Dymphna statue, patron saint of the mentally ill, symbolises the site's function; and early twentieth century buildings, imposing in their presence, have been adapted for twenty-first century use. The spacious surrounds composed of lush green lawns, sports grounds, formal gardens, and large shady trees are reminiscent of large asylums from a long-gone era. Institutional spaces are now shared with the local community; the female recreation area is part of the Wolston Park Golf Course and the original cricket ground and pavilion built by patients is the Wolston Park Cricket Ground. The Asylum's most recent descendent, 'The Park – Centre for Mental Health, Treatment, Research and Education', sits to the north of the original Asylum.

Situated on 450 hectares, the site is approximately half way between Brisbane and Ipswich, South-East Queensland. Sitting on Jaggera land, it was originally occupied by the Yerrongpan people.[1] The name Woogaroo, meaning 'waterhole',[2] reflects the area's original indigenous occupants. Woogaroo was an early nineteenth century farming community[3] and proclaimed a village in 1856.[4] Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum constructed nearby, was named after this village. The site is now classed as significant by the Queensland Heritage Register: it reflects Queensland's history and changing practices in the treatment of mental illness; it evokes a strong sense of place; it has a

[1] 'Goodna, Queensland', https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goodna,_Queensland
[2] 'Indigenous place names', http://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/8690/indigenous_place_names.pdf
[3] Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage, 'South east Queensland 2001. Cultural heritage places study stage 1: volume 1 - overview', p. 19, https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:243545/SEQ2001_Cultural_Heritage_Places_Study.pdf
[4] Ibid., p. 8.

special association with the Queensland mental health community and has social significance for the general Queensland community.[5]

The institution's past is evoked in a number of ways. It is evident in the historical buildings and grounds. Its more recent history was made tangible through the 'Remembering Goodna' exhibition held in 2007 at the Brisbane Town Hall. This exhibition celebrated the closing of the main institution and featured artifacts, largely from the twentieth century, and narratives recorded by past patients and staff.[6] Little remains from the site's earliest history. Floods irreparably damaged the original building in 1890, and the Asylum's first cemetery.[7] The female building constructed in 1866 remains standing, but only serves as a skeleton from the past. Its original sandstone core is hidden under brick and timber additions. Its interior is gutted and marred by rubble and graffiti, and timber joists and cast iron columns stand as silent sentinels to its past. Ghost hunters capture images and sounds of various phenomena, claiming evidence of those long gone.[8] The original asylum is legendry in the term 'Woogaroo Screws'. This nickname, well known to Queensland mental health nurses, is part of their vernacular. Signifying the punitive origins of the original male and female warders of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, the label has became timeless and denotes nurses who worked at this site throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. Other traces of the Asylum's beginnings are found in historical Government records and newspapers.

This thesis examines the first institution on this site, Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, and analyses its first five years. It establishes what life was like for the Asylum's patients and staff and draws a trajectory of its beginning years. The short time frame of five years allows the inter-relationship between the Asylum, the Government, the community and the colonial Queensland context to be brought into sharp focus and clearly situates the asylum in Queensland's history.

---

[5] Queensland Heritage Register, 'Wolston Park Hospital Complex', 2006, https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600340#

[6] 'Remembering Goodna: Stories from a Queensland mental hospital', Museum of Brisbane. Exhibition 23 March 2008. Sponsored by Griffith University, Brisbane City Council and Queensland Government, https://www.museumofbrisbane.com.au/whats-on/remembering-goodna/

[7] 'Wolston Park site history: overview', Wolston Park Centenary Cricket Club, http://www.wpccc.com.au/index.php/history/6-wolston-park-site-history-overview

[8] See: 'Wacol mental asylum Brisbane Queensland', https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2oiUaGkdl4

Thesis structure

The starting point for this thesis is 1859, when Queensland separated from New South Wales and the new Queensland Government was faced with the quandary of where to house their lunatic population. The end point is 1869. However, the focus of the thesis is the Asylum's first five years, 1865 to 1869. These years were punctuated by four public Inquiries[9] and it is these Inquiries that provide the structure for this thesis. Analysis of the events precipitating each Inquiry, the Inquiry, and the consequences of the Inquiry elicit a public representation of the usually private asylum world. Further, this evidence provides an understanding of the inter-relationship between the Asylum, the people who lived and worked at the Asylum, the community and the Government. Each Inquiry presents a beginning and a finish, and offers different aspects of the Asylum and its historical landscape. A series of case studies based around these Inquiries forms the structure for this thesis.

The first chapter situates this thesis within a historical landscape and a body of knowledge and explains the methods used to interact with the primary sources and draw conclusions. In situating the thesis in a historical landscape, the reasons for choosing the study time frame are explored. For example, this period is associated with the beginning of the Asylum and four Inquiries. However, the dominance of political and economic issues during this period in colonial Queensland history, allows exploration of these in relation to the Asylum. Understanding this interaction continues to be significant in each chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 2 explores Queensland's early history and explains the impact of this early history on government decision-making and the journey to establish Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. Queensland's early history explored in this chapter includes: its convict past; its newness as a colony; its minimal infrastructure; and its need to prove itself as a sustainable and progressive colony. An association between lunacy and criminality is established and the influence of this on Government decision-making in relation to lunacy. This is contrasted with humanitarian concerns from the community and the British Government. What becomes evident throughout this thesis is that the type of Government decision-making in relation to the Asylum apparent before the

[9] The Inquiries were as follows: 1866 Lunacy Commission Inquiry; 1867 Commission of Lunacy Inquiry; 1869 Civil Service Commission of Inquiry; 1869 Joint Parliamentary Inquiry.

opening of the Asylum, as explored in this chapter, would continue over the next five years. Further, the budgetary constraints and lack of Government priority that resulted in the construction of an unsuitable Asylum environment would negatively affect the lives of the inmates and staff over the next five years. The foundations of this argument are outlined in this chapter and will be consistently drawn on as the thesis progresses.

The third chapter establishes the persona of Dr. Kearsey Cannan, the inaugural Surgeon Superintendent of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. Dr. Cannan is a significant figure in this thesis and its end-point is the same year that Cannan was dismissed. This chapter depicts Cannan's early career successes as a consequence of arrogance, manipulation and ambition and explains how these same traits dominated his first eighteen months as the Asylum's surgeon superintendent. Dr. Cannan's personality characteristics are important to establish; the power of individual personalities, including Cannan's, in shaping the Asylum's trajectory and broader political outcomes, is apparent throughout this thesis. The significance of this chapter is also that it provides the context to comprehend the social and political importance of doctors in the colonial landscape. While the focus of this chapter is on Dr. Cannan, it also outlines Government response to events in the Asylum during its first eighteen months. What became apparent, and is reflected in each succeeding chapter, is the Government's predilection to ignore any negative reports of the Asylum that would reflect lack of Government attention and investment, and instead, present a picture of success as an effective moral agent.

Chapter 3 examines the 1866 Lunacy Commission Inquiry, and Chapter 4, the 1867 Commission of Inquiry. These two Inquiries were instigated around moral concerns about the same female Asylum patient. Both chapters step inside the Asylum and provide a picture of institutional life for staff and patients. Chapter 3 also presents insights into Asylum management practices condoning relaxed patient role definitions and blurred staff-patient boundaries. While presenting aspects of the minutiae of Asylum life, a particular significance of these chapters is in situating the Asylum within the broad colonial context. Chapter 3 draws on colonial moral expectations and explains their impact upon Government decision-making in relation to the Asylum. Chapter 4 offers a more detailed understanding of colonial expectations through the concept of 'ordinariness'; a sense of comfort derived from perceiving social structures

imported from Britain, in particular, those based around gender. Chapter 4 thus presents the inter-relationship between expectations of ordinariness, colonial expectations, Government decision-making and the Asylum.

The strength of the press in influencing Government decision-making is the focus of Chapter 6. While not explicitly focusing on an inquiry, this chapter traces the press's actions to provoke Government action, which culminated in two Inquiries into the Asylum in 1869. Although ostensibly focusing on the power of the press, this chapter also demonstrates power originating from other sources to effect political outcomes in relation to the Asylum: the power of particular personalities; and the power of moral discourses appealing to symbolic harm grounded in colonial expectations. The importance of this chapter is in establishing the salience of external influences on the Asylum. However, as is apparent in all of the influences on the Asylum discussed in this thesis, that while the press possessed its own insidious power, this power was also a consequence of the interplay between broader social and political factors.

Chapter 7 again moves inside the Asylum and explores the impact of a negative asylum environment on the Asylum culture. A culture of contrasts is depicted: a negative male culture condoning inhumane treatment sanctioned within an Asylum moral discourse; and a culture characterised by acts of benevolence. Evidence for this chapter is derived from the 1869 Civil Service Commission Inquiry. Throughout this thesis it is shown that Government actions, in relation to the Asylum, were a response to an unstable political climate and the need for the Government to gain or regain community regard. The consequences of this Inquiry, in deflecting blame away from the Government and placing responsibility for all harm on Asylum senior management, is similarly explained as a consequence of the Government's political situation and the need to garner public confidence.

Chapter 8 analyses the 1869 Joint Parliamentary Committee Inquiry. In using expert witnesses at this Inquiry, the Government presented itself as progressive and intent on implementing contemporary practices at Woogaroo. The most significant finding presented in this chapter was the Government's failure to act on recommendations from a noteworthy expert witness that would reverse deleterious Asylum conditions. This chapter consolidates a strong thread connecting each of the thesis chapters; the Government presenting a 'façade of success' in relation to the Asylum in order to

promote community confidence, when, in reality, the people of the Asylum continued to suffer.

Finally this thesis concludes by drawing parallels between the thesis findings and what contemporary Australia.

This thesis paints a picture of the first five years of an Australian colonial lunatic asylum. The short time span of the thesis allows the Asylum to be clearly situated within the broad social and political context that also shaped the colony of Queensland during this period. The thesis thus depicts an institution whose trajectory was a consequence of: colonial social expectations; an unstable political environment; the need for an inexperienced government to posture success; and a colony experiencing financial distress. Using public Inquires as a structure provides a unique lens with which to understand the Asylum. While offering an avenue to explore the Asylum's place in the broad social and political context, the Inquiries also provide a means to depict and understand life inside the Asylum. Evidence around the Inquires portrays patients and staff living and working in deleterious conditions. However, the Inquires provide a public representation of these peoples' lives, and their experiences are therefore understood within social and colonial expectations. As such, this thesis provides an understanding of the trajectory of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum's first five years, and that of the people who lived and worked there within a social and political context.

Terminology

As this thesis is situated in the mid-nineteenth century, it employs those terms commonly used at that time to aid authenticity and to reflect the tenor of the nineteenth century primary evidence. It is important to clarify the meaning of these terms and acknowledge that the contemporary use of some of these words is deemed offensive.

'Lunacy', 'insanity' and 'madness' were used interchangeably in the mid-nineteenth century by the medical profession and the public and generally denoted what is currently termed mental illness, mental health illness or mental health issues.

‘Lunatic’ was used to represent a person suffering from lunacy. The terms ‘idiot’ and ‘imbecile’ referred to patients with intellectual disabilities. Patients incarcerated in the asylum were called ‘inmates’ or ‘patients’. Other terms of significance are associated with the staff. Male staff were referred to as ‘warders’ and female staff as ‘female warders’ or ‘nurses’.

Referencing style

This thesis followed the documentary-note system using end-notes provided in *Style Manual for authors, editors and printers,* 6th edn, John Wiley & Sons, Singapore, 2010. At times, when the *Manual* did not offer clear guidelines, as with archival sources, I adapted the guidelines to ensure clarity for the reader.

Chapter 1

Researching and understanding the historical landscape

This thesis investigates the beginnings of asylum care in Queensland between 1865 and 1869. It has two broad objectives: to comprehend what it was like for the mentally ill population and the staff of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum between 1865 and 1869; and to trace and understand the factors affecting the Asylum's trajectory during this time period. This chapter provides an understanding of how these objectives were met and explores the significance of this thesis for understanding nineteenth century asylums and specifically, the beginnings of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. In order to situate this thesis within its historical context, an overview of the 1865-1869 colonial Queensland backdrop is provided and the historical background on the growth of asylums. This chapter also explores the historiography around Asylums generally and colonial Australian asylums expressly, to determine the significance of this study in relation to the literature. Further, the methodology and theoretical frameworks used to arrive at answers to the study's research questions are described.

1.1 Thesis time frame and the Colonial Queensland context

This thesis is set in colonial Queensland between the years 1865 and 1869. Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum opened on 6 January 1865 and this is an obvious beginning point for this thesis. By the end of 1869, the Asylum had endured four public Inquiries. These Inquiries offer a rich source of data to meet the study's objectives. Further, 1869 marked the dismissal of the first Asylum Surgeon Superintendent, Dr. Kearsey Cannan. Dr. Cannan featured prominently in the Inquiries and was integral to the narrative of the Asylum's beginnings. It is appropriate that 1869 be the thesis end point in order to clearly encapsulate the beginning of this Asylum's history.

The period from 1865 to 1869 was salient in colonial Queensland. In 1865 Queensland was still a young colony as it had only separated from New South Wales in 1859. The impact of Queensland's history prior to separation was particularly evident in its need to leave its punitive convict past behind. Further, it framed the economic and social imperatives to establish Queensland as a successful colony, and thus provides the backdrop for Queensland's political and social context between 1865 and 1869. The period between 1865 and 1869 was also a period of political and economic instability. At the beginning of 1865, the Government appeared to be able to claim success; the colony's population had burgeoned through an assisted immigration scheme and pastoral occupation was rapidly growing. However, in mid 1866, Queensland was plunged into a financial crisis through Government mismanagement. The consequent economic depression lasted until the 1870s. Political turbulence characterised these years; frequent changes of government, poor decision-making and cronyism offered little credibility to the Queensland community. This political and economic landscape provides clear markers to understand its impact on Government decision-making in relation to the Asylum.

The colonial Queensland social context was also an important consideration in this thesis. Traditional British social structures, presenting a sense of security to colonists, interacted with a colonial Queensland landscape and a strong culture of masculinity, arising from frontier experiences and a male population bias. The resultant social structure acted as a foundation for all aspects of Queensland colonial life. In particular, this thesis draws on this context's importance in underpinning Government decision-making, shaping Asylum structures and in forming judgements on the Asylum. The interplay between the political and economic climate and social context in influencing the Asylum trajectory, and in turn, the experiences of the patients and staff, is significant in this thesis.

1.2 The growth of Asylums

The founding of the Australian colonies in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century occurred at the same time as a major paradigm shift in the

conceptualisation of madness and its treatment.[1] Previously the mad person had been conceived as having loss of reason,[2] lacking humanity and possessing animal-like attributes.[3] The development of 'Reason' created cultural changes in the meaning of madness;[4] the mad person was seen to be capable of reason and to possess humanity, although 'lacking in self-restraint and order'.[5] Kathleen Jones argued that three very tangible events occurring amidst the reconceptualisation of madness brought public attention to the plight of the mentally ill. First, changes to the Vagrancy Act (1811 and 1845) allowing detention of the mentally ill, saw lunatics being perceived as a distinct cohort separate to other deviant groups such as criminals. Second, negative media reports describing the abuses occurring in private mad houses alarmed the public. Third, the madness of King George 111 challenged long held convictions related to mental illness; the belief that madness was a result of spiritual deviancy and associated with animal traits could not be sustained in the light of the high regard held for the ruling monarch.[6] A reconceptualisation of madness and increased public awareness demanded fundamental changes in the management of the mentally ill.[7] The use of restraint and coercion, an apt form of treatment while the mad person was conceived as an animal requiring taming, was no longer acceptable.[8] As a consequence of changed cultural meanings and public attitudes, lunacy legislation was introduced requiring the construction of carefully designed institutions to accommodate and treat the insane. These asylums were visualised as offering a curative environment where the insane could be treated via moral treatment, a social-psychological approach, accompanied by kind yet firm supervision combined with appropriate medical treatment.[9]

---

[1] S Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales 1880-1949*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1988, p. 5; C Coleborne & D MacKinnon, 'Psychiatry and its institutions in Australia and New Zealand: an overview', *International Review of Psychiatry,* vol. 18, no. 4, 2006, p. 371.
[2] A Digby, *Madness, morality and medicine: a study of the York Retreat, 1796-1914*, Cambridge University Press Cambridge, 1985, pp. 118-119.
[3] G Boschma, *The rise of mental health nursing: a history of psychiatric care in Dutch asylums, 1890-1920*, Amsterdam University Press, 2003*,* p. 31.
[4] Ibid.
[5] A Scull, *Museums of madness: the social organization of insanity in nineteenth-century England*, Allen Lane, London, 1979, pp. 64-65.
[6] K Jones, *A history of the mental health services*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1972. pp. 13-22.
[7] L-A Monk, *Attending madness: at work in the Australian colonial asylum*, vol. 84, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2008, p. 10.
[8] A Scull, 'The domestication of madness', *Medical History*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1983, p. 234.
[9] G Boschma, *The rise of mental health nursing: a history of psychiatric care in Dutch asylums, 1890-1920,* Amsterdam University Press, 2003, p. 31.

1.3 Revisionist historiography: challenging assumptions

The emergence of asylums and accompanying moral treatment resonated with the movement generally towards humanitarian ideals and presented a 'new optimism'.[10] Nineteenth century treatises on asylum care posited the asylum as an institution for 'the recovery of the curable, the improvement of the incurable, [and] the comfort and happiness of all the patients'.[11] Early progressivist asylum histories echoed these sentiments. Richard Hunter and Ida MacAlpine[12], and Albert Deutsch, portrayed psychiatry as moving from a dark past to a benevolent one marked by progressive scientific thinking: 'We have travelled a long road upward from the ideal of repression to the ideal of prevention, from manacles to mental hygiene'.[13]

Revisionist historians from the 1970s and 1980s challenged the prevailing progressivist histories of mental illness and the asylum. Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilisation*[14] largely spurred this critical debate. While earlier histories perceived humanitarian reform and enlightenment in the growth of the asylum, revisionist historians perceived social control and professional imperialism.[15] Revisionist historians reflected Foucault's concern with the nineteenth century formation of scientific knowledges, their organisation and links to specific social situations. For example, he argued that the emerging medical science of lunacy was dependent on the establishment of asylums for its survival. Only after the insane were confined could the science of lunacy begin to create a classification system, a list of characteristics defining the lunatic population, and claim ownership of treatments that could be only administered through doctoring.[16] Foucault challenged the notion that changing

---

[10] L-A Monk, *Attending madness: at work in the Australian colonial asylum*, vol. 84, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2008, p. 11.
[11] J Conolly, *The construction and government of lunatic asylums and hospitals for the insane*, Dawsons of Pall Mall, London, 1968. pp. 1-2. See also: S Tuke, *Description of The Retreat, an institution near York, for Insane Persons of the Society of Friends*, 1813, Google Books, https://books.google.com.au/books?id=SwEIAAAAQAAJ&dq=Tuke+Description+of+the+retreat&lr=&source=gbs_navlinks_s
[12] R Hunter & I McAlpine, *Three hundred years of psychiatry*, Oxford University Press, London, 1963.
[13] A Deutsch, *The mentally ill in America. A history of their care and treatment from colonial times*, 2nd edn, Columbia University Press, New York, 1949, p. 518.
[14] M Foucault, *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the age of reason*, Random House, New York, 1965.
[15] L-A Monk, *Attending madness: at work in the Australian colonial asylum*, vol. 84, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2008, p. 8.
[16] S Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales 1880-1949*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1988, p. 4.

cultural meanings of madness meant the beginning of an enlightened era. Rather, he saw it as the beginning of the 'great confinement' and oppression of the mad.[17] The validity of Foucault's arguments has been questioned. For instance, Marlene Arieno suggested his work was founded on abstractions with minimal logical explanations and definitions of concepts.[18] Karen Lane argued Foucault's Marxist and structuralist presuppositions resulted in biased selection and interpretation of facts[19] and Anne Digby claimed his arguments lacked any substantial historical evidence.[20] However, Foucault's work unquestionably inspired a body of significant literature that provided alterative explanations to that of the progressivists in understanding the growth of asylums.

Revisionist historians, Andrew Scull[21] and David Rothman,[22] similar to Foucault, disputed that nineteenth century lunacy reforms were symbols of a progressive society that valued science and social welfare. Instead, they argued reforms were a means to create institutions that ensured social control and class domination; separating and excluding those who did not meet the bourgeois criteria of productive citizens within a capitalist society. Scull, echoing Foucault's concern that scientific knowledges were associated with social control, argued that lunacy and asylums presented doctors with an avenue to expand their professional domain and power. In order to gain professional legitimacy, nineteenth century doctors successfully claimed an array of abnormal and eccentric behaviour as belonging within their scientific expertise, justifying their existence and assuming control over increasing areas of human experience.[23]

---

[17] M Foucault, *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the age of reason*, Random House, New York, 1965.
[18] MA Arieno, Victorian lunatics: a social epidemiology of mental illness in mid-nineteenth century England, Doctor of philosophy in history thesis, The University of New Mexico, 1984, p. 2.
[19] KC Lane, Benevolent self–interest: a factor in social policy governing lunatics, 1808-1862 (England), Master of Arts thesis, San Jose State University, 2000, p. 6.
[20] A Digby, 'Changes in the asylum: the case of York, 1777-1815', *The Economic History Review,* vol. 36, no. 2, 1983, pp. 218-239.
[21] See: A Scull, *Madhouses, mad-doctors, and madmen: the social history of psychiatry in the Victorian era*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1981, pp. 5-32; A Scull, *Museums of madness: the social organization of insanity in nineteenth-century England*, Allen Lane, London, 1979; A Scull, C MacKenzie & N Hervey, *Masters of Bedlam: the transformation of the mad-doctoring trade*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1996.
[22] DJ Rothman, *The discovery of the asylum: social order and disorder in the new republic*, Little Brown, Boston, 1971.
[23] A Scull, *Museums of madness: the social organization of insanity in nineteenth-century England*, Allen Lane, London, 1979; A Scull, *Madhouses, mad-doctors, and madmen: The social history of psychiatry in the Victorian era*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1981; A Scull, C

The growth of asylums was part of a broad system of poor reforms within Britain. Revisionist critics argued that these reforms served to impose moral regulation on the lower classes by the middle and upper classes. With the birth of capitalism, large numbers of paupers were viewed as a threat to economic and social stability.[24] David Rothman suggested that asylums and prisons evolved to meet a fear of social disorder arising from the poorer classes; acting only to exclude, neither were therapeutic or rehabilitative.[25] A growing hygiene movement reinforced a need to impose control on the lower classes. Raised public awareness of the threat of disease compounded fears as the sick-poor became associated with dirt, sickness and contagion. Separating the sick-poor from the rest of society through institutionalisation was justified as social betterment and a way forward for the inmates to become productive citizens.[26] As Mark Finnane suggested, asylums were seen to embody 'the ideals of a bourgeois society' and a return to rationality was 'imbued with the values and habits of those who endorsed and controlled'.[27]

Feminist historians have been similarly concerned that asylums and lunacy medicine were an institution of social control. Feminist historians, such as Elaine Showalter,[28] blamed the over-abundance of women in nineteenth century asylums[29] on the ease with which women could be deemed lunatic and incarcerated. Madness was perceived as a deviation from the narrow Victorian sex stereotype of womanhood, 'quiet, virtuous and immobile'.[30] Asylum routines revolved around activities reflecting bourgeois middle-class values and behaviours. In order to be considered suitable to be returned to society, female inmates were obliged to conform to rigid expectations of Victorian womanhood.[31]

MacKenzie & N Hervey, *Masters of Bedlam: the transformation of the mad-doctoring trade*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1996.

[24] G Boschma, *The rise of mental health nursing: a history of psychiatric care in Dutch asylums, 1890-1920,* Amsterdam University Press, 2003, p. 31.

[25] DJ Rothman, *The discovery of the asylum: social order and disorder in the new republic*, Little Brown, Boston, 1971.

[26] G Boschma, *The rise of mental health nursing: a history of psychiatric care in Dutch asylums, 1890-1920*, Amsterdam University Press, 2003, p. 33.

[27] M Finnane, 'The ruly and the unruly. Isolation and inclusion in the management of the insane', in C Strange & A Bashford (eds), *Isolation. Places and practices of exclusion*, Routledge, London, 2003, pp. 95-96.

[28] E Showalter, 'Victorian women and insanity', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1980, p. 157.

[29] Nineteenth century Australian asylums were different and had more male than female inmates.

[30] E Showalter, *The female malady: women, madness and English culture 1830-1980*, Penguin, New York, 1985, p. 320.

[31] E Showalter, 'Victorian women and insanity', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1980, p. 157.

Other histories presented less critical interpretations. While rejecting the revisionists' argument of social control being the driving force behind nineteenth century lunacy reforms and the growth of asylums, these histories acknowledged the asylum's limited success. Gerald Grob argued that the rise of psychiatry in the United States was founded on humanitarian and curative ideals. However, he conceded that asylums quickly became overcrowded due to a multitude of factors: under-funding, immigration, poverty and increasing numbers of elderly, chronic and incurable patients. Overcrowding meant an inability to operate under the humanitarian and curative ideals on which they were founded, and inevitably asylums became solely custodial.[32] Kathleen Jones similarly contended that developments in British psychiatry were always altruistic in their intent despite their lack of success; the 'whole story is one of good intentions going wrong, advances and backsliding, misunderstandings and misinterpretations'.[33] Anne Digby maintained that economic reasons led to asylums becoming custodial. Humanitarian ideals became squashed under the need to operate at a profit. Custodial care offered a cheap and simple system for managing large institutions.[34]

1.4 Asylum case studies

While the 1970s were dominated by revisionist histories questioning and debating the history of madness, the 1980s saw the birth of a series of asylum case studies. These case studies allowed an exploration of the 'rich manuscript materials that have survived in hospital basements' and 'opened up new angles of approach' to historians of psychiatry.[35] These are somewhat limited because, as Ann Hardy wryly observed, while hospital histories commemorated their histories and achievements in a celebratory style, asylum histories were generally less enthusiastic.[36]

[32] G Grob, *Mental illness and American society*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1983.
[33] K Jones, *A history of the mental health services*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1972, p. 3.
[34] A Digby, *Madness, morality and medicine: a study of the York Retreat, 1796-1914*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985.
[35] A Scull, 'A generous confidence (book review)', *Journal of Social History,* vol. 19, no. 3, 1986, p. 521.
[36] AV Hardy, "...here is an Asylum open..." Constructing a culture of Government care in Australia 1801-2014, Doctor of philosophy thesis, University of Newcastle, 2014. p. 14.

Most asylum histories established what everyday life was like for those who lived and worked at nineteenth century asylums. However, what was of significance in some international histories was their depiction of moral therapy; initially defining the optimism associated with the growth of asylums, its demise and replacement by more stringent, custodial and medicalised treatment, echoed the pessimism associated with late nineteenth century asylums. The histories by Ann Digby and Patricia D'Antonio from the 1980s were indicative of this narrative of moral therapy. Digby's history, *Madness, morality and medicine: a study of the York Retreat, 1796-1914*, case studies an institution made famous for its introduction of moral treatment by founder, layman and Quaker, Samuel Tuke. While Digby depicted life inside this renowned early Asylum, she also provided an understanding of the trajectory of moral therapy. Her broad time frame established the ideals surrounding Tuke's conception of moral therapy and traced its journey to when it was partially replaced by medicalisation late in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[37] D'Antonio's thesis, *Negotiated Care: a case study of the Friends Asylum, 1800-1850* offered similar insights. In studying the day-to-day life of people from The Friends Asylum in early nineteenth century Philadelphia, she argued that operating from a family structure situated in moral therapy within a lay institution ultimately became untenable and led to the medicalisation of care when the assistance of physicians was sought.[38]

Nancy Tomes[39] presented a positive picture of nineteenth century asylums in *A generous confidence: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the art of asylum keeping, 1840-1883*. Tomes traced the psychiatric division of the Pennsylvania Hospital from when it was established as an asylum to the early 1880s. This time period coincided with the superintendence of Thomas Story Kirkbride, one of the founders of the American Psychiatric Association. While Kirkbride and the Pennsylvania Asylum were not representative of the majority of asylums and superintendents, Tomes' account presents the possibilities and hope associated with nineteenth century asylums and moral therapy. Kirkbride's optimistic outlook and vigour in his superintendent role is encapsulated in the book's title, 'the art of asylum keeping'. This asylum was for the

[37] A Digby, *Madness, morality and medicine: a study of the York Retreat, 1796-1914*, Cambridge University Press Cambridge, 1985.
[38] POB D'Antonio, Negotiated care: a case study of the Friends Asylum, 1800-1850, PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1992.
[39] N Tomes, *A generous confidence: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the art of asylum keeping, 1840-1883,* Cambridge University Press, New York, 1984.

rich and contrasted markedly with other overcrowded public asylums, as depicted in Ellen Dwyer's, *Homes for the Mad.*[40] Dwyer studied life inside two American nineteenth century asylums: the State Lunatic Asylum at Utica and the Willard Asylum for the Chronic Insane. Dwyer's work is valuable in explaining the patriarchal family structure inherent in asylums, and its importance in shaping asylum interactions. However, she painted a dismal picture: the asylums were overcrowded and understaffed; tension existed between attendants and staff; violence was commonplace; patient welfare was often not acknowledged; and asylum life was monotonous.

These international asylum case studies originating from the 1980s provide a valuable source to understand the everyday life of the asylum, its complex social structure, the role of superintendents and moral therapy. They also offer an understanding of the optimism associated with asylums at their inception, and the belief that they offered a better life for the mentally ill. However, at the same time, these histories also suggest that the ideals that were associated with asylums and moral therapy could not be realised as other social and economic factors collided with their intent.

1.5 Australian historiography

Australian histories on madness and the asylum are particularly relevant to this thesis. Similar to international studies, early Australian histories of madness followed a progressivist tradition. John Bostock's, *The dawn of Australian psychiatry,* outlined the history of Australian psychiatry between 1788 and 1850. Bostock presented early doctors and administrators as laudable in their delivery of humane and compassionate care to the mentally ill in a harsh new environment.[41] C. J. Cummins, while similarly complimentary of early lunacy doctors, drew a picture of their frustrations in *The administration of lunacy and idiocy in New South Wales.* Cummins suggested that medical staff repeatedly attempted to improve patient welfare, yet, were thwarted by ineffective policies that did little to relieve the suffering caused by overcrowded and

[40] N Tomes, *A generous confidence: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the art of asylum keeping, 1840-1883,* Cambridge University Press, New York, 1984.
[41] J Bostock, *The dawn of Australian Psychiatry*, Australian Medical Publishing Company, Sydney, 1968.

understaffed asylums.[42] Other early histories presented the history of Australian psychiatry as a trajectory beginning with ambiguity and confusion and evolving to a state of scientific and humane treatment despite continuous struggles against public apathy and political negativity.[43] These works, while presenting the issues confronted by medical staff in coping in a young colony, adopted progressivist assumptions, and are generally uncritical of the course of Australian psychiatry. They are useful in their historical detail, yet limited in their interpretation.

In contrast to the progressivist Australian histories, works by Milton Lewis[44] and Stephen Garton,[45] written in the 1980s, offered a critical analysis of the development of mental health services within a social context. The more recent essay collection, *Madness in Australia, histories, heritage and the asylum*, edited by Catherine Coleborne and Dolly Mackinnon, explored the lunatic asylum and madness through various lenses including soundscape, gender and space. The breadth and scope of these essays are valuable in demonstrating different facets of the Australian asylum and the diverse ways that madness in the asylum is constructed.[46]

Roy Porter conceptualised the way in which Asylum studies have moved forward:

> Closer scrutiny and more thoughtful analysis of the historical records … revealed that the asylum was neither just a site for care and cure, nor just a convenient place for locking up inconvenient people… It was many things all at once.[47]

Australian asylum studies have embraced this more complex understanding of the asylum.

---

[42] CJ Cummins, *The administration of lunacy and idiocy in New South Wales*, Department of Public Health, Sydney, 1967.
[43] Examples include: CJ Brothers, *Early Victorian psychiatry, 1835-1905*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1961; R Virtue, 'Lunacy and social reform in Western Australia', *Studies in Western Australian History*, vol. 1, 1977, pp. 29-65.
[44] M Lewis, *Managing madness. Psychiatry and society in Australia 1788-1980*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988.
[45] S Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales 1880-1949*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1988.
[46] C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003.
[47] R Porter, 'Introduction' in R. Porter & D. Wright (eds), *The confinement of the insane. International perspectives, 1800-1965,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 4.

Cheryl Day's study of the Kew Asylum, *Magnificence, misery and madness: a history of the Kew Asylum 1872-1915* is the earliest important Australian asylum history. Cheryl Day's extensive analysis of Kew Asylum between 1872 and 1915 offers an understanding of the dynamics of asylum life for patients and the staff and the interaction between their roles and that of the patients' families. Day also situated the Kew Asylum in the context of the Melbourne community acknowledging its salient role; offering refuge and hope to those who were rejected elsewhere, being the last resort for families who had reached their economic or emotional limits, providing a guaranteed shelter and for some, a curative environment. She also argued that the evolution of this Asylum echoed the many facets of nineteenth century Melbourne.[48]

While Day presented an understanding of the asylum's place in the local community, Catharine Coleborne brought a broader understanding to asylums and madness. Coleborne has contributed extensively to Australian and New Zealand historiography on insanity and asylums.[49] The value of her essay collection, edited with Dolly Mackinnon, has been discussed previously. Coleborne's works largely centered on gendered constructions of madness and the asylum in Colonial Australia and New Zealand. *Reading madness: gender and difference in the colonial asylum in Victoria, Australia* was founded on her doctoral study and is indicative of this focus. Coleborne used sexual difference as a platform to explore asylum experiences and the construction of madness, which she argued is dynamic and grounded in colonial and broad social contexts. Like Day, her study, situated at the Yarra Bend Asylum, Victoria, provided insights into everyday asylum life, in particular that of the incarcerated woman.[50] Also similar to Day, Coleborne has shown particular interest in the impact of the asylum on families. *Madness in the family: insanity and institutions in the Australasian colonial world*[51] analysed the many ways that the institution interacted with families. Catherine Coleborne's works have been particularly

[48] C Day, Magnificence, misery and madness: a history of the Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1995.
[49] See for example: C Coleborne, 'Families, patients and emotions: asylums for the insane in colonial Australia and New Zealand, 1880–1910', *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2006, pp. 425-442; C Coleborne, 'Regulating 'mobility' and masculinity through institutions in colonial Victoria, 1870s-1890s', *Law Text Culture*, vol. 15, 2011, pp. 45-71; C Coleborne. 'Insanity, gender and empire: women living a 'loose kind of life' on the colonial institutional margins, 1870-1910', *Health and History*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2012, pp. 77-99.
[50] C Coleborne, *Reading'madness': gender and difference in the colonial Asylum in Victoria, Australia, 1848-1880*, Network Books, Perth, 2007.
[51] C Coleborne, *Madness in the family: insanity and institutions in the Australasian colonial world,* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2010.

informative for this thesis. Her gendered understanding of life inside the asylum is valuable, and her broad interpretation of the asylum and madness within colonial, social and cultural gendered meanings prompted questioning of this thesis' primary sources.

Susan Piddock brought another aspect to understanding asylums in colonial Australia, that of space. *A space of their own. The archaeology of nineteenth century lunatic Asylums in Britain, South Australia, and Tasmania* is the first noteworthy Australian study to examine the impact of asylum spaces. Using John Conolly's nineteenth century exemplar of the 'ideal asylum', Piddock compared this with colonial South Australian and Tasmania asylums and determined that these were lacking rudimentary features to support patient management and provide a therapeutic environment.[52] Piddock's exploration of the relationship between different types of asylum spaces and the asylum's social organisation and functionality, provides a context to understand the effects of Asylum spaces on those who lived at Woogaroo Asylum. Ann Hardy studied another aspect of space. In *…"here is an Asylum open..." Constructing a culture of Government care in Australia 1801-2014*, Hardy explored how the New South Wales government enacted caring practices through the use of space when constructing an asylum at the Newcastle Government Domain.[53] While this thesis describes contrasting Government practices from that of the New South Wales Government as depicted by Hardy, nonetheless, Hardy's explanation of the import of Government attitudes on an asylum offers some parallels with this thesis.

Attending madness: at work in the Australian colonial asylum by Lee-Ann Monk analysed the colonial asylum as a workplace. With limited studies examining the asylum attendant role, this is a useful source to understand the attendant role at Woogaroo Asylum. Monk outlined the types of work undertaken by asylum attendants and argued that the identity associated with the attending role was ambiguous and had to be 'crafted' from shifting asylum discourses. Monk argued that asylum attendants were not the 'first' mental health nurses, and were deserving of

[52] S Piddock, *A space of their own. The archaeology of nineteenth century lunatic asylums in Britain, South Australia, and Tasmania*, Springer, New York, 2007.
[53] AV Hardy, "...here is an Asylum open..." Constructing a culture of Government care in Australia 1801-2014, Doctor of philosophy thesis, University of Newcastle, 2014.

their own job classification.[54] However, her study is the only significant one that researches these Australian workers, which, if not mental health nurses, were the ancestors of Australia's mental health nursing workforce.

Mental health history in Queensland is under-researched. In fact, the only significant work is that of Ray Evans, an important study, but grounded in the strong revisionist arguments of the 1960s. *Charitable Institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919* examined the treatment of disenfranchised and deviant groups, including the mentally ill, within colonial Queensland.[55] Written in 1969 it was described as the 'first of the new social histories to encompass the treatment of lunatics'.[56] Evans proposed that the mentally ill were one of a number of vulnerable groups in colonial Queensland who suffered neglect and treated poorly through a system designed to control and expel deviants to ensure a socially dominant class.[57] The relevance of Evans' study to this thesis is obvious; it is similarly set in colonial Queensland, encompasses the same time frame and also explores the same asylum and lunatic population. Yet Evans' study is broader and narrower. It is broader in its time frame and population group. It is narrower in that his explanation of the Asylum and patient experiences is through a single critical lens. One other historical perspective of Woogaroo Asylum is contained in a booklet by Mark Finnane; *Wolston Park Hospital 1865-2001- a retrospect.*[58] While offering an overview of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum and its successors in its short thirty-two pages, it provides limited contextual understanding of this early institution.

This thesis offers a different understanding of the asylum than other Australian Asylum histories. Other histories have acknowledged the broad social and cultural influences on the asylum patient's experience. Catherine Coleborne's works are particularly significant in their breadth of understanding in this area. Hardy's work focuses on the impact of Government in the construction of an asylum. However, this

---

[54] L-A Monk, *Attending madness: at work in the Australian colonial asylum*, vol. 84, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2008.
[55] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969.
[56] S Garton, 'Asylum histories: reconsidering Australia's lunatic past', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia, histories heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003, p. 13.
[57] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969.
[58] M Finnane, *Wolston Park Hospital 1865-2001 – a retrospect,* publisher not stated, place of publication not stated, date not stated.

thesis, by depicting the social political and economic influences on the asylum, and the interplay between them, situates Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum in its colonial Queensland context and the complexity of influences on and within the colony. This thesis therefore clearly encapsulates an understanding of the colonial asylum within all facets of the colonial context, a perspective not available in other Australian studies

This review of the literature suggests that a significant gap exists in the body of knowledge that situates the Australian asylum in the broader social, political and economic context. This thesis will contribute to the understanding of the colonial asylum through this perspective. Further, a significant gap also exists in the body of knowledge on the history of mental health services in Queensland and on the roots of Australian mental health nursing. This thesis will also contribute to the body of knowledge in these areas of health care history.

1.6 Research questions

Overall two fundamental questions have been pursued for this research: What was life like for those patients and staff at Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum between 1865 and 1869? What was the Asylum trajectory between 1865 and 1869? More specific questions arose from these broad overarching queries. These specific questions include:

1. What political and social factors precipitated the construction of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum?
2. What was the political context impacting upon the development and attention to the Asylum between 1865 and 1869?
3. What were the conditions for the Asylum inmates and staff?
4. What factors prompted the Inquiries?
5. How were the Inquiries framed?
6. What were the consequences of the Inquiries for the Asylum, the people who lived and worked in the Asylum, and for the Government?

These questions ensure focus on the major area of this thesis, patient and staff experiences and the Asylum trajectory. However, the questions also provide a frame, within which to explore and at the same time limit exploration of primary sources. Importantly, these questions also prompt an examination of the interaction between social, political and economic influences on the Asylum.

1.7 Methodology

The study employed a traditional historical method to answer the research questions. This method as described by G. R. Elton is 'a recognised and tested way of extracting from what the past has left of true facts and events and so far as possible their true meaning and interrelation'.[59] As explained by Gaddis, it allows the historian to represent the landscape of the past.[60] Elton claimed a sound historical method answered two fundamental questions: what evidence is there? What does it mean?[61] This section begins with the first question, 'what evidence is there?'

1.7.1 *What evidence is there?*

Evidence for this thesis is derived from primary sources, or what Gaddis referred to as those surviving structures of the landscape.[62] These primary sources are textual ones and include: government correspondence and records housed in the Queensland Government State Archives, contemporary newspapers available in digitalised form from Trove[63] and Queensland Government Votes and Proceedings. These primary sources offer a view of the historical landscape from two different positions; Gaddis described these as macroscopic and microscopic views.[64] This section describes how

[59] GR Elton, *The practice of history*, 2nd edn, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2002, p. 59.
[60] JL Gaddis, *The landscape of history: how historians map the past*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p. 5.
[61] GR Elton, *The practice of history*, 2nd edn, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2002.
[62] JL Gaddis, *The landscape of history: how historians map the past*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p. 42.
[63] 'Trove', National Library of Australia, http://trove.nla.gov.au.
[64] JL Gaddis, *The landscape of history: how historians map the past*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p. 22.

these primary sources offer macroscopic and microscopic views of the historical landscape of this thesis.

Primary evidence from the Queensland Government State Archives provides examples of evidence offering macroscopic and microscopic views. A macroscopic view may be gained from what Arthur Marwick termed intentional evidence. This is what the person who created or compiled the source wished to convey.[65] For example, the content of the official correspondence between the various Colonial Secretaries and Dr. Kearsey Cannan, Surgeon Superintendent, consisting of official reports, requests and clarifications, depicts a picture of Asylum governance processes. A microscopic view is obtained from the unintentional evidence in this correspondence; this what the writer unconsciously includes, or omits, and Marwick argues is of great significance to the historian.[66] For instance, unintentional evidence is apparent in the repeated requests from Dr. Cannan to the Colonial Secretary for equipment. Multiple requests suggest frustration by Cannan and lack of acknowledgement by the Government. Other examples from archival textual evidence are found in official papers and warrants that accompanied inmates to the Asylum. Intentional evidence in these documents demonstrates how nineteenth century lunacy legislation was enacted and offers a macroscopic view. However, the small personal details apparent in these documents provide unintentional evidence and offer a microscopic picture.

A microscopic view can bring a sense of 'humanness' to the primary sources. The official Casebook, written by Dr. Cannan is an important primary source for this thesis. The Casebook described: inmates' demographic details; their diagnoses; the treatment prescribed; outcomes from the treatment; and their progress, or lack of progress. These details were obviously salient in understanding the type of inmate admitted to the Asylum and their treatment. However, individual stories, evident in personal details, bring a sense of 'humanness' to the record and offer microscopic detail. For example, while Dr. Cannan gave John McInery a diagnosis of 'dementia', his added note, 'he appears to be an excitable Irishman', provides a sense of McInery

[65] A Marwick, *The new nature of history: knowledge, evidence, language*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, p. 172.
[66] Ibid.

as a person.[67] Microscopic views may evoke empathy for those long-gone players and foster images of:

> … their hopes and fears, their beliefs and dreams, their sense of right and wrong, their perceptions of the world and where they fit within it.[68]

Evidence from the four Inquiries was found in the Queensland Government Votes and Proceedings. This evidence is expansive and detailed and similar to the other primary evidence, provides macroscopic and microscopic views. For example a macroscopic view is evident in the portrayal of the Asylum management processes and chain of command. However when such processes were described in the Inquiries, the examples used to illustrate how they occurred, provide the microscopic view; rich detail of staff and patient experiences, institutional structures and the minutiae of everyday asylum life.

The Inquiries also provide a macroscopic view from unintentional data. For instance, the questions asked by the various Commissions at the Inquiries often reflected community attitudes. The 1867 Parliamentary Commission Inquiry had a strong focus on alcohol use in male staff. However, alcohol use by the female staff was not questioned. This then suggests that the community perceived male alcohol use as problematic, providing a macroscopic view. This type of unintentional evidence helps provide an understanding of the influence of community attitudes on the Asylum.

Parliamentary debates similarly provide macroscopic and microscopic views. As John Tosh stated, 'parliamentary speeches are composed mostly with a view to their impact on public opinion'.[69] Thus, this type of unintentional evidence brought community attitudes and colonial expectations in relation to the Asylums and the lunatic population into focus. Government decision-making in relation to the Asylum, found in the debates, offered a macroscopic view.

The use of the press as a primary source was particularly important in this thesis. John Tosh argued that the press has a three-fold function for historians. First, newspapers

---

[67] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 77, 12 January 1865, Microfilm no. 4922.
[68] JL Gaddis, *The landscape of history: how historians map the past*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p. 124.
[69] J Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, 5th edn, Pearson Education, United Kingdom, 2010, p. 98.

reflect the dominant social and political views of the time. Second, they present a record of events and third, editorials and articles depict information and/or opinions outside of daily reporting.[70] Denis Cryle's comments on the back-jacket from his book, *The Press in Colonial Queensland*, demonstrate the impact of the Queensland press: 'Outspoken and influential, the newspapers of colonial Queensland write history as well as make it'.[71] Queensland newspapers' record of events, and their depiction of dominant social and political views, offers an understanding of the Queensland colonial political and social context, a macroscopic view. What is indeed significant for this thesis is the representation of the Asylum by the press. The way the Asylum was presented, generally, reflected dominant social and political views in relation to lunacy and vulnerable groups.

1.7.2 *What does it mean?*

Elton's second fundamental question implicit in traditional history method is 'what does it mean?'[72] Brigid Lusk describes this stage as when the historian reconstructs an era from the events and players evident in primary sources and then 'interprets the story from this perspective'.[73] There is no 'recipe book' approach to this stage. Indeed, the inductive nature of combining data, pulling it apart and putting it back together with other data while measuring it up against other understandings of history, seems to be a 'maze of trial and error processes'.[74] John Tosh claims that significance is only determined when each item of evidence is related to other items of evidence in a logical way. Interpretation is then based on understanding how events are connected with what happened before, with what contemporary developments are present, and with what comes after.[75] In this thesis, analysis and interpretation occurred simultaneously. Evidence from primary sources associated with each Inquiry, and around the context of the Inquiry was organised, compared and prepared into a

[70] Ibid. pp. 97-98.
[71] D Cryle, *The press in colonial Queensland: a social and political history, 1845-1875*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1989, (back-jacket).
[72] GR Elton, *The practice of history*, 2nd edn, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2002. p. 59.
[73] B Lusk, 'Historical methodology for nursing research', *Image Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1997, pp. 355-359.
[74] C Angela, 'Method and theory in the practice of nursing history', *International History of Nursing Journal*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1996, p. 16.
[75] J Tosh, *The pursuit of history*, 5th edn, Pearson Education, United Kingdom, 2010, p. 110.

narrative. The narrative took shape as I 'shift[ed] the scale from the macroscopic to the microscopic, and back again.'[76] Secondary sources, materials that 'provide a contextual backdrop to the topic under study'[77] were used to provide another aspect to the macroscopic view and validity to the emerging narrative.

1.8 Theoretical frameworks

Theoretical frameworks assist in analysing and interpreting data in historical studies.[78] A number of theoretical frameworks have been drawn upon in this thesis and were of significance in analysing and interpreting the evidence, yet were not used systematically throughout the thesis. For instance, Erving Goffman's influential work, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*,[79] was invaluable in assisting to understand the Asylum culture and the experiences of inmates and staff. While Goffman wrote from twentieth century observations of an asylum, his conclusions were generalised to total institutions, and were very pertinent to help interpret the evidence in this thesis. At other times, such as in Chapter 5, it was necessary to draw on feminist theoretical frameworks, such as found in Elizabeth Windschuttle's essay collection, *Women, class and history. Feminist perspectives on Australia 1788-1978,*[80] in order to comprehend gendered community expectations. Specific theoretical frameworks related only to a chapter will be presented and explained in that particular chapter.

Anthony Giddens structuration theory was consistently employed to frame the analysis and interpretation of the inter-relationship between the Asylum, the community and Government. Giddens perceived that 'structures' are the fundamental

[76] JL Gaddis, *The landscape of history: how historians map the past*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, p. 25.
[77] SB Lewenson & A McAllister, 'Learning the historical method: step by step', in M De Chesnay (ed), *Nursing research using historical methods,* Springer Publishing, New York, 2015, p. 10.
[78] MT Sarnecky, 'Historiography: a legitimate research methodology for nursing', *Advances in Nursing Science,* July 1990, p. 3.
[79] E Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961.
[80] E Windschuttle (ed), *Women, class and history. Feminist perspectives on Australia 1788-1978*, Fontana, Melbourne, 1980.

elements that bind time and space in social systems.[81] They form the rules and resources that are reproduced in social practices across time[82] and structure social action.[83] Structures are important for human agency as they enable by providing the impetus and framework for agency or constrain through their permanency.[84] Structuration becomes the process creating the nexus between social systems and social practice and is defined by Giddens as 'the conditions governing the continuity or transformation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of systems.'[85]

Social practices, as defined by Giddens, are broad; those actions that make a difference in some way, either small or large.[86] Social practices occur within and at the same time constitute a social system, and are defined as 'reproduced relations between actors or collectives, organised as regular social practices.'[87] Social practices are not produced by individuals, but are continually recreated by them through the fundamental way that they express themselves as actors.[88] Inherent in this expression is reflexive action, a necessary component of human agency. Giddens clarifies 'reflexivity' as not just self-consciousness, but as 'the monitored character of the ongoing flow of social life.'[89]

Within this theory, social practice is enacted through communication, power or morality.[90] Communication is practiced largely through language. Language is learnt and mastered as a social practice and its medium of communicating is though shared understandings of various interpretive schemes. It thus can be conceived of as a structure as well as a social practice; 'an abstract set of rules which are not mechanically employed, but are employed in a generative mode by speakers who are

---

[81] A Giddens, *Central problems in social theory: action, structure, and contradiction in social analysis*, vol. 241, University of California Press, California, 1979, p. 64.
[82] Ibid.
[83] P Cassell, 'Introduction', in P Cassell (ed), *The Giddens reader*, Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Hampshire, 1993, p. 11.
[84] M Waters, *Modern sociological theory*, Sage, London, 1994. pp. 47-48.
[85] A Giddens, *Central problems in social theory: action, structure, and contradiction in social analysis*, vol. 241, University of California Press, 1979. p. 65.
[86] P Cassell, 'Introduction', in P Cassell (ed), *The Giddens reader*, Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Hampshire, 1993. p. 11.
[87] A Giddens, *Central problems in social theory: action, structure, and contradiction in social analysis*, vol. 241, University of California Press, California, 1979. p. 65.
[88] A Giddens, *The constitution of society*, Polity, Cambridge, 1984, p. 2.
[89] Ibid., p. 3.
[90] P Cassell, 'Introduction', in P Cassell (ed), *The Giddens reader*, Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Hampshire, 1993, pp. 9-10.

members of the language community.'[91] This does not relate solely to the words within language, but also to the ambiguities and gaps within communication with the awareness of their meanings drawn from shared knowledge.[92]

The concept of power is also fundamental to social practices. Giddens explained that action can only be achieved when participants apply a set of means to achieve an outcome, and therefore power is seen as the transformative capacity of human action. Power then becomes the driver behind the potential to intervene in a series of events so as to alter the predicted outcome either positively or negatively.[93] Moral actions also determine social practices. Giddens explained this concept as an obligation to respond in a particular way in a social practice and visa versa. He further elaborates that such social practices are a series of claims; the realisation that a normative action is dependent upon the successful enactment of obligations is demonstrated by the responses of the participants. If moral claims are transgressed, a sanction normally ensues. Thus moral claims direct actions, not for the participant to necessarily meet their obligations, but to avoid the sanctions.[94]

Inherent in Gidden's theory of structuration is an association between social practices and temporality, and consequently 'history'.[95] This resonates well with the context of this thesis. Importantly, it acknowledges the place of history. The notion of 'structures' as a temporal concept speaks to the value of undertaking historical research and suggests that history offers a useful tool to understand contemporary concerns. To conceive of the meanings associated with lunacy as structures, a set of social behaviours that have existed over time, provides a framework to understand its social meaning. Additionally, colonialism meant transplanting British 'structures' onto the colonial landscape. Understanding that these structures motivate social actions provided a basis in this thesis for explaining the public representation of asylum life and reactions of the community and government. Gidden's conceptualisation of power as a motivating force for social action also offered an

[91] A Giddens, *New rules of sociological method: a positive critique of interpretative sociologies*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1976, p. 103.
[92] P Cassell, 'Introduction', in P Cassell (ed), *The Giddens reader*, Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Hampshire, 1993, p. 10.
[93] A Giddens, *New rules of sociological method: a positive critique of interpretative sociologies*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1976, pp. 109-112.
[94] Ibid., pp. 107-108.
[95] A Giddens, *The constitution of society*, Polity, Cambridge, 1984, p. 3.

explanation to understand the instigation of the four Inquiries and Government decision-making generally in relation to the Asylum. The sense of duality in the process of structuration in Giddens' theory seemed to make sense of the colonial experience. Giddens has been criticised for his 'voluntarism-determinism dyad';[96] a concern that he oscillates between individual agency and sociological determinism without ever resolving his position.[97] However, this oscillation fits with the broader colonial experience of bringing a set of structures, expectations and behaviours into a foreign and alien landscape where they either have to be reproduced or changed. Additionally, it encapsulates the dialectical relationship the Asylum had with the community and the government as is evident through this thesis; a relationship that oscillated as it both enabled and restrained.

An understanding of moral actions is fundamental to this thesis; each Inquiry was based on perceptions of moral wrong. As John Gaddis explains: '[y]ou can't escape thinking about history in moral terms. Nor I believe should you try to do so.'[98] In order to understand the moral dimensions of this thesis, a moral theory was drawn on using the philosophical concepts of moral responsibility, moral agent and moral patient.

Aristotle was acclaimed as the first philosopher to define moral agent and propose a theory of moral responsibility. Aristotle defined moral agents as those who have the capacity to make decisions founded on their conception of what is good. Aristotle presented moral responsibility as the response to a moral agent with blame or praise depending on their actions or character traits. Praise or blame should only be given when the act is voluntary, and the moral agent is aware of what the act is and the likely results.[99]

A moral patient is defined simply as an entity, person or group of persons who are the objects of moral obligations from moral agents.[100] In the strictest sense, moral actions

[96] A King, 'The odd couple: Margaret Archer, Anthony Giddens and British social theory', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 61, 2010, p. 254.
[97] See: N Pleasants, *Wittgenstein and the idea of a critical social theory: A critique of Giddens, Habermas and Bhaskar*, Routledge, 2002; A King, 'The odd couple: Margaret Archer, Anthony Giddens and British social theory', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 61, 2010, pp. 253-260.
[98] JL Gaddis, *The landscape of history: how historians map the past*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002.
[99] AWH Adkins, *Merit and responsibility: a study in Greek values,* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1960.
[100] M Winston, "Moral patients', an ethics of global responsibility', http://ethicsofglobalresponsibility.blogspot.com.au/2008/02/moral-patients.html

can only occur when there is both a moral agent and a moral patient.[101] Moral actions on moral patients are accordingly evaluated as praiseworthy or deserving of blame.[102] In order for a moral evaluation to occur, the moral patient must be seen as having a set of rights and thus can be harmed or helped by an action.[103]

In this thesis the moral concepts described above are used to frame the analysis of the actions of the Queensland Government and the community responses to Government actions. From these moral concepts it is understood that the Queensland Government, as a moral agent, had a moral obligation towards the moral patient, the Asylum inmates. As a consequence of their actions as a moral agent, the Government received condemnation or praise from the community and other members of Parliament. This condemnation or praise was a result of a moral evaluation of the Government's actions. It is also understood that the responsibility of moral agency can be delegated to others by the Government by virtue of their position, such as the Surgeon Superintendent of the Asylum.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview to understand the historical landscape of this thesis. It has presented where the thesis is situated historically, how the primary sources present different aspects of the landscape, the methods used to create the final picture and why this particular landscape is significant. The following chapters each case study a different aspect of this historical landscape.

[101] K Gray & DM Wegner, 'Moral typecasting: divergent perceptions of moral agents and moral patients', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 96, no. 3, 2009, p. 505.
[102] Ibid., p. 506.
[103] Ibid., p. 508.

Chapter 2

'Coming of age'

> I have the honor to inform you that the lunatics arrived all safely and are comfortably housed.[1]

On 6 January 1865, Dr. Kearsey Cannan[2] informed the Colonial Secretary that Queensland's first asylum was operational. This heralded the beginning of asylum care for the insane in Queensland. Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum symbolised a 'coming of age' to colonial Queensland. In providing a building that exemplified civic munificence, it seemed that Queensland was equal to the rest of the Western world. The young colonial Government was now able to demonstrate tangible evidence that they were capable of protecting the colony's vulnerable lunatic population from harm.

This chapter traces the journey that led to the opening of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. It is argued that this journey was shaped by the layered and, at times, contrasting features of the early Queensland colonial environment. Queensland's recent convict past featured prominently in this journey. The young colony's need to succeed and be distant from its punitive roots meant that its lunatic population and the building of an asylum was not a priority. Yet, this chapter also suggests that the Government's treatment of lunatics and their reluctance to build an Asylum was strongly redolent of its punitive past. However, contrasting with its convict history, and with the government's strive for economic success, were humanitarian concerns for Queensland's lunatic population. Emanating from the community and Britain, it is argued that these influences eventually forced the Government to construct an Asylum.

This chapter therefore establishes the context surrounding government decision-making prior to 1865 in relation to Queensland's lunatic population. In order to

[1] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no 72 of 1865, 6 January 1865, Microfilm no. 6403.
[2] Dr. Kearsey Cannan was the inaugural Surgeon Superintendent of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum.

acknowledge the influence of this context on the treatment of lunatics and the eventual building of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, it is pertinent to trace the early history of Queensland prior to separation, and in particular its convict heritage.

2.1 Queensland's convict heritage

When Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum opened in January 1865, Queensland's beginnings were still very apparent. Queensland had ceased to be a penal settlement in 1842,[3] and had only recently become a colony in its own right, officially separating from New South Wales on 10 December 1859.[4] While Moreton Bay convict settlement was important as the first white community in Queensland, its influence was felt in many ways in colonial Queensland. Ross Fitzgerald contended that its penal past was omnipresent throughout Queensland's growth as a colony.[5] Indeed, Government and community reaction to its convict past became parameters in shaping the colony's future and the treatment of Queensland's lunatics.

Transportation of convicts to Australia arose from the need for a strong system of punishment in eighteenth century Britain. A potent fear of a burgeoning 'criminal class' threatening and menacing the ruling classes and their property became the impetus for an industry based around crime.[6] Informers, police narks, thief takers and private prisons flourished in the need to remove this 'criminal class'.[7] This 'crime industry' was certainly successful and British prisons soon overflowed with their victims. Overcrowded prisons, however, soon came to be viewed as distasteful and evil as the criminals who occupied them, and seen as instrumental in perpetuating a culture of criminality. As Robert Hughes observed, '[t]he prison pickled the felon in evil, hardened him [and] perfused him with the hard salt of sin.'[8] Transportation appeared to offer a solution to the problems associated with criminality. It would

[3] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 19.
[4] Ibid., p. 39.
[5] R Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1982, p. 71.
[6] R Hughes, *The fatal shore*, Pan, London, 1987, pp. 24-27.
[7] Ibid., p. 27.
[8] Ibid., p. 39.

remove the feared 'criminal class' from Britain, reduce the need for prisons, and at the same time, provide a labour force to help grow the British Empire.[9]

British settlement of Australia was founded on the need for transportation. However, the impetus for transportation seemed to be constructed on exaggerated fears and a false premise. Robert Hughes and W. Ross Johnson both agreed that the notion of a dreaded criminal class was certainly overstated.[10] Indeed, research by Brian Fletcher confirmed that convicts transported to New South Wales did not demonstrate particularly high levels of criminality.[11] Instead, Johnson argued, criminals sentenced to transportation were simply victims of the industrial revolution. These convicted felons did not, or could not, fit in and were reacting to 'underlying social or political strains of stress, displacement or disorientation' in a rapidly changing society.[12] Robert Hughes also explained that as a rapid population growth accompanied industrialisation, the labour market suddenly became saturated with young men. Mass unemployment ensued and as Britain had no effective means to deal with so many unemployed, 'English youth, rootless and urban, took to [crime] with a will'.[13] The crime industry benefitted; fostering the notion of an organised crime world and criminal gangs generated from within the lower classes fuelled a deep-seated territorialism in the upper classes. However, as Robert Hughes argued, such assumptions were largely incorrect; crime existed mostly as a 'cottage industry', people mostly working by themselves and committing criminal acts out of desperation.[14]

Transportation served another function, to instill fear into would-be criminals. As New South Wales began to attract increasing numbers of free settlers and enjoy a level of prosperity, Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State of the Colonies, became increasingly concerned. He feared that transportation to New South Wales would no longer engender a sense of dread to deter potential criminals. Commissioner Bigge was appointed in 1819 to inquire into the situation in New South Wales and

[9] Ibid., p. 40.
[10] Ibid., pp. 19-42; WR Johnson, *The call of the land. A history of Queensland to the present day*, Jacaranda Press, Milton, 1982, p. 20.
[11] B Fletcher, 'Australia's convict origins', *History Today*, vol. 42, no. 10, 1992, pp. 39-43.
[12] WR Johnson, *The call of the land. A history of Queensland to the present day*, Jacaranda Press, Milton, 1982, p. 20.
[13] R Hughes, *The fatal shore*, Pan, London, 1987, p. 26.
[14] Ibid., p. 27.

recommend ways to ensure transportation remained 'an object of considerable terror'.[15] Bigge recommended Moreton Bay as one of three remote locations, exiled from civilisation, where the worst convicts could be transported and incur severe punishment and discipline:

> The settlements at Port Bowen, Moreton Bay, and Port Curtis are to be considered as receptacles for the convicts that have been transported to New South Wales for heavy offences, and for long terms, as well as those who have in the settled districts of the colony, shown, by their bad conduct, that they required a more severe and rigid system of discipline than those districts were capable of affording.[16]

Moreton Bay was accordingly chosen and the first shipload of convicts arrived at this new penal settlement on 11 September 1824.[17] With its purpose to provide a place of punishment and discipline, exile from a deserving society, and removal from temptations associated with proximity to free settlers, transportation to Moreton Bay would have promoted no sense of future, other than one of fear.

Moreton Bay was certainly brutal and harsh. Personal accounts depicted cruelty and hardship.[18] As evident in Bigge's report, the level of criminality of the convicts sent to Moreton Bay was seen as deserving of such severe conditions. They were deemed the worst of the convicts; ones who had shown no signs of rehabilitation, were guilty of severe crimes, or were recidivists.[19] Enduring the punishment and hardship offered by Moreton Bay provided them with their final chance of reformation:

> The commanders of these settlements will therefore impress upon the minds of the convicts, on their arrival, that the change that has taken place in their condition, and the removal to which it has led,

---

[15] JH Tyrer, *History of the Brisbane Hospital and its affiliates: a pilgrim's progress*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1993, p. 1.
[16] JT Bigge, Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales, London, 1822, pp. 180-182, in WR Johnson, *A documentary history of Queensland from reminiscences, diaries, parliamentary papers, newspapers, letters and photographs*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1988, p. 31.
[17] R Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1982, p. 71.
[18] See: W Ross, *The fell tyrant or the suffering convict*, J. Ward, London, 1836, pp. 19-21.
[19] R Fitzgerald, L Megarrity & D Symons, *Made in Queensland: a new history*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2009, p. 13.

> from the settled districts of the colony, has been the consequences of their crimes; and that nothing but a patient endurance of the hardships which they now have to encounter, and a manifestation of corrected habits, will lead to a termination of them.[20]

Moreton Bay ceased functioning as a penal settlement in 1839 and became open to free settlers in 1842.[21] Its closure followed the Molesworth Committee on Transportation Report of 1838. This Report denounced transportation, claiming that it was too costly and defeated its purpose as it degraded convicts rather than reformed them.[22] Indeed, it generally demonised the convict system:

> … every kind and gentle feeling of human nature is constantly outranged by the perpetual spectacle of punishment and misery – by the frequent infliction of the lash – by the gangs of slaves in irons - by the horrid details of the penal settlements ….[23]

Coming in the wake of a growing anti-slavery sentiment, the Report established the similarities between the abuses of slavery and that of convictism.[24] The Australian colonies were described in derogatory terms befitting their convict roots; 'composed of the very dregs of society' and suffering from the consequences of convictism, 'vice, immorality, frightful disease, hunger … [and] dreadful mortality.'[25] Robert Hughes argued that the Molesworth Report was exaggerated, heavily biased and instigated solely to justify the abolition of transportation; 'to dramatize the need for a decision already been taken.'[26] Indeed, the ease with which the public accepted this

---

[20] JT Bigge, Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales, London, 1822, pp. 180-182, in WR Johnson, *A documentary history of Queensland from reminiscences, diaries, parliamentary papers, newspapers, letters and photographs*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1988, p. 31.
[21] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 19.
[22] R Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1982, p. 13.
[23] Extract from Molesworth's notes on Report of Select Committee 1837-38 (ii), cited in R Hughes, *The fatal shore*, Pan, London, 1987, p. 494.
[24] R Hughes, *The fatal shore*, Pan, London, 1987, p. 162.
[25] Molesworth, Sir William. *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Transportation, Together With a Letter From the Archbishop of Dublin on the Same Subject, and Notes*. London: Henry Hooper, 1838, p. 8, cited in JM Barst, 'The Molesworth Report into the Dissolution of Convict Transportation to Australia, August 1838', *Britain Representation and Nineteenth Century History*, http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=julie-m-barst-the-molesworth-report-and-the-dissolution-of-convict-transportation-to-australia-august-1838
[26] R Hughes, *The fatal shore*, Pan, London, 1987, p. 493.

report, suggested that the premises that transportation were built on had already been gauged as questionable. The Report's objectives were met. On its release, the extent of outrage from the English press resulted in all transportation to New South Wales being stopped.[27] Further, in light of this damning report, New South Wales removed most Moreton Bay convicts by May 1839 leaving only a small military force in place until it became open to free settlement in May 1842.[28]

The Molesworth Report created a stigma around colonial Australia's recent convict past.[29] In post-convict colonial Australia, this led to a 'longing for amnesia', and 'Australians embarked on this quest for oblivion with go-getting energy.'[30] Certainly in Queensland the stain of convictism was felt. Moreton Bay was the last penal settlement on Australia's mainland to be closed.[31] It had housed the worst of the convicts and was reputed to have been, 'the floggiest place in the whole colony.'[32] In becoming the colony of Queensland, the change in status and nomenclature signified the demise of the Moreton Bay Settlement and its shameful past to the new Queenslanders. Indeed, Queensland's new Government would certainly have been eager to concentrate their efforts on promoting a prosperous future so as to be able to paint a picture of success to other British colonies with a less stigmatised past.

The need for Queensland to move away from a convict past was made stronger by an uneasy sense of contradiction created by this same past. Settled and built as a punishment for the worst of British criminals and to create a sense of dread for would-be criminals, it was then condemned for carrying out this very function. Queensland thus needed to deny its past, and present tangible evidence that it had moved on in order to escape from any association with the 'horrors' of convictism. However, at the same time, remnants of Queensland's convict past remained; convict buildings still served as public institutions, emancipists constituted part of the Queensland population, and attitudes associated with convictism, shaped colonial developments, including the treatment of lunatics.

---

[27] Ibid., p. 494.
[28] R Fitzgerald, *From the Dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1982, p. 13.
[29] R Hughes, *The fatal shore*, Pan, London, 1987, p. 597.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., p. 455.
[32] R Evans, *A history of Queensland*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 50.

2.2 Association between lunacy and criminality

An association between insanity and criminality was evident in the Moreton Bay convict settlement. Despite early records being sketchy, Raymond Evans speculated that mental aberrations were likely to have been met with punishment and/or gaol.[33] Any behaviour resembling drunkenness automatically earned seventy-five lashes.[34] Such severe punishment was apt for Moreton Bay convicts as alcohol was considered a source of evil fuelling criminality.[35] Presumably, this same punishment was given even if the behaviour resembling drunkenness was not related to alcohol, but instead, linked to mental or physical causes. Sexual activity amongst convicts was strictly condemned and as masturbation was believed to result in epilepsy, seizures were probably met with punishment.[36] Any inability to cooperate (whether or not it was related to insanity) was viewed as disobedience and, likewise, punished.[37]

The convict hospital was not an option for Moreton Bay convicts suffering from lunacy. Both hospital and gaol operated to house those who did not fulfil their role within the penal settlement. Which institution a person was assigned to depended on whether they were blameworthy and required punishment, or a victim and needed medical care. Those deemed lunatic were viewed as personally responsible for their condition, and therefore gaoled.[38] Punitive treatment of lunatics also occurred in other convict colonies. Steven Garton noted in New South Wales that disturbed convicts would have been flogged, sent to gaol or to a factory for refractory colonists.[39] Nonetheless, gaoling lunatic convicts was pragmatic. The convict hospital at Moreton Bay was primitive and poorly staffed.[40] It certainly would have been difficult to have lunatics and the physically ill share the same ward in such a facility. Despite its obvious deterrents, gaol would have provided some level of protection and safety for mentally ill convicts.

---

[33] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 4.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., p. 3.
[39] S Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales 1880-1949*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1988, p. 17.
[40] JH Tyrer, *History of the Brisbane Hospital and its affiliates: a pilgrim's progress*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1993, pp. 17-18.

After the Moreton Bay penal settlement closed, a link between insanity and criminality remained evident. This was not unique to Queensland. Catharine Coleborne suggested that the growth of asylums in colonial Australia was inextricably linked to an association between lunacy and criminality.[41] The most overt demonstration of this relationship was in the practice of accommodating lunatics and criminals together in gaol.

Housing lunatics in gaol occurred soon after Australia was established. On arriving in New South Wales, Governor Arthur Phillip was provided with the right to exercise the Crown's powers over lunatics and idiots. This meant having the authority to remove lunatics from the community and confine them for their own safety and that of the public.[42] With gaol being the only 'safe' facility in early New South Wales, lunatics were confined in the Parramatta Gaol until the first asylum was established in 1811.[43] Other Australian colonies similarly imprisoned lunatics.[44] Western Australia accommodated lunatics and prisoners together until 1865 when its asylum was opened.[45] While some Victorian lunatics were shipped to Sydney's Tarbin Creek Asylum, most were housed at the gaol until Yarra Bend Asylum was built in 1848.[46] Tasmania's first asylum opened in 1829, yet the most disturbed lunatics continued to be housed separately in a gaol-like building attached to the Port Arthur penal station.[47] Queensland was no different. Lunatics were housed in the prison until Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum opened in 1865. South Australia, the only colony to be established through free settlement, treated their lunatics more humanely. Criminals and lunatics were separated early in its history after the Colonial Surgeon complained of the inappropriateness of housing the two groups together. Although a permanent

[41] C Coleborne, 'Passage to the asylum; The role of the police in committals of the insane in Victoria, Australia, 1848-1900', in R Porter & D Wright (eds), *The confinement of the insane: international perspectives 1800-1965*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 170.
[42] S Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales 1880-1949*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1988, p. 18.
[43] Ibid., p. 18.
[44] Ibid.
[45] N Hudson-Rodd & G Farrell, 'The Round House Gaol: Western Australia's first lunatic asylum', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, vol. 7, no. 4, 1998, pp. 152-162.
[46] M Lewis, *Managing madness. Psychiatry and society in Australia 1788-1980*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988, p. 7.
[47] Ibid., p. 6

asylum was not established until 1852, lunatics were moved to a separate, albeit temporary, building.[48]

Accommodating lunatics in gaol, generally, was initially a pragmatic move in colonial Australia. As explained earlier, gaol was the only public building available to provide a safe environment. Early colonial hospitals were barely adequate in their capacity to house the physically ill and staffing was minimal. Nonetheless, the move by South Australia to separate its criminals and its lunatics suggests that a convict legacy was associated with this practice. Despite its probable pragmatic intent, housing lunatics in gaol would have grown and reinforced the association between criminality and insanity to the community. As Erving Goffman argued, when two disparate groups are placed together, the negative character traits of the dominant group (in this case the criminals) are seen to taint the other group (the lunatics). The other group is then perceived as possessing the same stigmatised attribute as the dominant group.[49] In this case, lunatics were seen as possessing the same criminality as criminals.

Lunacy legislation further validated the association between lunacy and criminality. The *1843 Dangerous Lunatics Act,* modelled on British precedents, was enacted in New South Wales and used in Queensland until 1869.[50] The language, intent and processes of the *1843 Dangerous Lunatics Act* clearly demonstrated the need for the public to be fearful of insanity. A requirement for community fear was blatantly obvious in the Act's title. Its preamble articulated a focus on community safety; '... to make provision for the safe custody of and prevention of crime being committed by persons insane.'[51] Under this Act, police could intervene if there were signs of criminal or suicidal intent. Thus insanity was not the focus of legal detention, but 'dangerousness', and as Catherine Coleborne argued, 'framed the lunatic as capable of committing offences' and requiring 'safe custody, care and management.'[52] While the link between criminality and lunacy was apparent from Queensland's conception

[48] Ibid., p. 8.
[49] E Goffman, *Stigma: notes on a spoiled identity*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963.
[50] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960,* University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, p. 47.
[51] J Bostock, 1968, cited in M Lewis, *Managing madness. Psychiatry and society in Australia 1788-1980*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, 1988, p. 20.
[52] C Coleborne, 'Legitimising lunacy and the female lunatic body in nineteenth-century Victoria', in D Kirby (ed), *Sex, power and justice: historical perspectives on law in Australia,* Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 88.

as a convict settlement, and continued to be evident after free settlement, the *1843 Dangerous Lunatics Act* affirmed this association.

2.3 'Dangerous lunatics … be in future sent to gaol'

Accommodating lunatics was to prove difficult for Queensland after free settlement and following separation from New South Wales, with the default option always being the gaol. After Moreton Bay convict settlement closed, it became obvious that long-term facilities were not available to accommodate lunatics, as the only public buildings were those left over from the convict days. A paucity of hospital space meant that long-term placement of lunatics and the physically ill became the responsibility of New South Wales. In 1850 Governor Sydney instructed that all hospital patients and lunatics who required care for longer than two months be transported to the Invalid and Lunatic Establishment at Parramatta or Tarban Creek Asylum.[53]

Despite Tarbin Creek Asylum offering a solution for long term accommodation of Moreton Bay's lunatics, organising a transfer to Sydney was arduous and time consuming. It required an application from J.C. Wickham, the Government Resident of Moreton Bay, to the Colonial Secretary supported by two medical certificates. A warrant forwarded by return ship then allowed the lunatic to be sent to Sydney on the next available vessel.[54] Accommodation, therefore, still remained a problem. The lunatic required somewhere safe to stay while waiting for appropriate authorisation.

There is some disagreement among historians regarding the interim arrangements for the lunatic while waiting to be transferred to Tarbin Creek. Raymond Evans argued that most were sent to the gaol[55] and Ross Patrick claimed they stayed in the hospital unless violent.[56] Other evidence suggested that initially the decision where to send

[53] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, pp. 18-19.
[54] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 32
[55] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 2.
[56] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 32.

lunatics was quite arbitrary. Some, such as Ellen McConnemy in June 1857, were admitted to the hospital and later transferred to the gaol when their behaviour became unmanageable.[57] For others, such as John Wood, the hospital was used as a place of safety. After admitting himself to hospital in December 1849, Wood was certified a 'dangerous lunatic' and remained in hospital under police surveillance until further enquiries were made.[58] Some were transferred from gaol to the hospital. David Coakley, initially gaoled, was sentenced as a 'dangerous lunatic' in September 1859 and removed to the hospital.[59] Those, such as John Steadman, on April 1851[60] remained in Gaol after being certified while awaiting instructions from the Governor regarding their 'disposal', presumably transfer to Tarbin Creek. Other types of evidence confirmed lunatics were admitted to the hospital. The 1851 Brisbane Hospital report claimed that an 'incurable' patient had been suffering from insanity and of the fifteen deaths, three of these had been related to delirium tremens,[61] a condition commonly classified under insanity.

The decision where to house lunatics was forced in 1857 when the Hospital Committee passed a motion that 'Dangerous lunatics … be in future sent to gaol or elsewhere.'[62] This ruling was tested. In March 1859 the Police Magistrate certified Isabella Woodgate as insane and sent her to the hospital. After being refused entry, Dr. Hobbs, her certifying doctor, cared for her overnight in his home and the Magistrate advised her husband that he needed to manage her until authorisation arrived from Sydney.[63] Raymond Evans argued that the hospital's blatant refusal to admit Isabella Woodgate reflected Queensland's penal roots.[64] However, it is likely that the situation was much more complex given that Isabella was not sent to the gaol.

A number of reasons underpinned the Hospital Committee's decision not to admit lunatics. Certainly, as discussed earlier, there were practical impediments to managing lunatics in a hospital environment in the mid-nineteenth century. When the

[57] 'Lunacy', *The Moreton Bay Courier*, 6 June 1857, p. 2.
[58] 'A Mystery', *The Moreton Bay Courier*, 29 December 1849, p. 3.
[59] 'Lunacy', *The Moreton Bay Courier*, 8 September 1849, p. 2.
[60] 'Lunacy', *The Moreton Bay Courier*, 19 April 1851, p. 2.
[61] 'Brisbane Hospital. Fifth Annual Report', *The Moreton Bay Courier*, 21 January 1852, p. 3.
[62] Hospital Committee Book (1856-8), 14 May 1857, cited in R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 22.
[63] 'Police Court', *The Moreton Bay Courier*, 31 March 1858, p. 2.
[64] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, pp. 22-23.

old Moreton Bay convict hospital was transferred to a Board of Trustees in 1848, it was then very dilapidated with limited space. Money required for necessary repairs did not extend to providing much-needed extra accommodation.[65] With inadequate space, insane and acutely physically ill patients would be required to occupy the same ward, creating difficulties for both types of patients and the staff caring for them. Further, the hospital's services were already severely stretched. Not only was the hospital required to care for the acutely ill, it also needed to accommodate the chronically disabled and provide outdoor relief.[66] Staffing was minimal. In 1849 it consisted of a Matron and Wardsman (a married couple),[67] and by 1865 it had only increased to a Chief Wardsman and nurse (wife of the Chief Wardsman), Under Wardsman, Night Wardsman and Cook.[68] Newspaper reports attest to the problems associated with managing lunatics in the hospital; insubordination towards medical staff,[69] extreme violence towards staff,[70] and escaping.[71]

The decision not to admit lunatics also provided a means for the Hospital Committee to better define the hospital's role. The hospital had a combined function of hospital and Benevolent Society. This had meant a change in direction for an institution that began its life as a convict infirmary under military guard built around punishment and discipline, to one of care and compassion.[72] A fundamental tension is apparent between these ideals and the task of accommodating 'dangerous lunatics'.

Deservedness was also a concern to the impoverished hospital. The Hospital Committee was generally suspicious and condemning of the 'undeserving'. In their Third Annual Report in 1852, the Committee lamented:

> ... the thoughtless conduct, moreover, of a large number of the labouring population amounts to a degree which does not fall short of

[65] JH Tyrer, *History of the Brisbane Hospital and its affiliates: a pilgrim's progress*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1993, p. 57.
[66] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 21
[67] JH Tyrer, *History of the Brisbane Hospital and its affiliates: a pilgrim's progress*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1993, p. 68.
[68] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 277.
[69] 'Central Police Court', *The Courier*, 13 February 1864, p. 3.
[70] 'Brisbane Police', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 30 November 1858, p. 2.
[71] 'Local Intelligence', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 20 March 1860, p. 2.
[72] JH Tyrer, *History of the Brisbane Hospital and its affiliates: a pilgrim's progress*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1993, pp. 49-50.

> criminality. Many of them, while labouring under painful and dangerous disorders, squander their money in dissipation, until they are unfit for work and utterly destitute; and then – perhaps too late – they come to seek from public charity the aid which might have been effective at an earlier period, and towards the support of which they might have contributed without difficulty.[73]

Given the association between lunacy and criminality suggests that the lunatic was held personally responsible for their condition. Thus, those charged with lunacy may have been perceived as not 'deserving' of hospital care. Further, the hospital's directive that lunatics be sent to gaol instead of the hospital, affirms the likelihood of this perception.

The Government made a token effort to challenge the Committee's ruling that lunatics not be admitted. In July 1860 it demanded that the Hospital Committee reverse their decision and that they were bound by law to do so. When the Committee replied, 'it was not able to answer for the safe keeping of a lunatic prisoner unless necessary policemen were provided,' the government did not insist any further.[74]

2.4 'Lunatic Asylum' to be officially situated in the gaol'

On becoming a colony in December 1859, Tarbin Creek Asylum became unavailable to Queensland's lunatics,[75] placing pressure on the new colonial government to find an alternative solution. Queensland's previous dependence on Tarbin Creek was evident from the account presented by New South Wales to the new colony:

[73] 'Third annual report of the Committee of the Brisbane Hospital', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 17 January 1852, p. 3.
[74] Correspondence between S. Wilkinson and Colonial Secretary, 6-12 July 1860, cited in R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969. p. 25.
[75] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 46.

> … 4,017 days support to lunatics received from the Moreton Bay District into the Asylum at Tarban Creek from the 10th February 1842 to the 31st December 1854 at 1s 4d per diem.[76]

With the Brisbane Hospital also not available, the gaol became the only alternative to accommodate the colony's lunatics both in the short and long term.

The Government was criticised for housing lunatics in the gaol. In December 1859, the press pleaded compassion and humanity for the lunatics of the new colony, and declared that one of the Government's first duties should be to construct an asylum built upon 'humane … principles'.[77] Sheriff Brown, from the gaol, questioned the new Governor on the appropriateness of using the gaol. Sir George Ferguson Bowen replied: '[they] should remain where they are.'[78] Sherriff Brown continued the push to remove lunatics from his prison. In January 1860 he highlighted the intolerable position at the gaol and requested a sum of money 'not exceeding £3,000' be placed on the 1861 estimates towards establishing a lunatic asylum.[79] The only reply was that 'due consideration' would be given.[80] The Colonial Secretary reflected the same lack of regard as Bowen. In June 1860 he declared that that the small number of lunatics in the gaol did not warrant any changes: 'it was not an urgent concern and the gaol had 'been hitherto sufficient [for the lunatics].'[81] Numbers of lunatics escalated and the *Moreton Bay Courier* Editor denounced the Government for their lack of humanity:

> … they [the lunatics] are thrust into the overcrowded wards with common felons … we thought that humanity had long ago arrived at the conviction that insanity could only be dealt with by the most careful treatment and by the most unremitting kindness … we must tell the honourable the Secretary, that the public voice will never consent to this barbarity being much longer perpetrated, nor permit this community to lie under the stigma of taking a retrograde step of

[76] 'Separation of Moreton Bay (Proceedings and Despatches relative to)', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 28 April 1858, p. 4.
[77] *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 3 December 1859, p. 2.
[78] A.J. Brown to Colonial Secretary, 31 December 1859, cited in R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 1.
[79] Brown to Undersecretary, 14 January 1860, cited in Ibid., p. 24.
[80] Brown to Undersecretary and reply, 10 August 1860, cited in Ibid., p. 24.
[81] *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 9 August 1860, p. 2.

> a hundred years, in the care and treatment of those with mental disease.[82]

The fate of Queensland's lunatics became clearer in November 1860. While they would remain in the Gaol, the Government had appointed staff to manage those deemed insane:

> It is officially notified that until further notice the Lunatic Asylum will be a portion of the Department of the Sheriff of the colony, and be under the supervision of that office. Mr and Mrs William Harris have been appointed principal warder and matron of the Asylum.[83]

It seemed that the Government had partially acquiesced to the voices advocating humanity for the lunatics. The 'Lunatic Asylum', containing eight males and two females,[84] became officially situated within the gaol. This was a strategic move by the Government; a 'lunatic asylum' had been officially established with minimal Government expenditure and the critics would be quietened. However, little would change; the mentally ill remained in a prison environment, despite having specific gaolers allocated to them. It would be no surprise that as Queensland's population grew, the gaol would become increasingly crowded and conditions would continue to deteriorate for the lunatics housed in the so-called 'Lunatic Asylum'.

2.5 Lunacy - a low priority for the Government

Lunacy appeared to be a low priority for the early Queensland Government who were eager to present a positive picture of Queensland to the Western world. Sir George Ferguson Bowen, in February 1860, after only a short time as Queensland's inaugural Governor, boasted to the Duke of Newcastle: 'Distress and pauperism, those comprehensive terms so frequently used in European politics, are unknown in Queensland.' [85] However, only one week later, Reverend Ramsay contradicted

---

[82] Ibid.
[83] 'Local Intelligence', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 6 November 1860, p. 2.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Governor, G. Bowen to Secretary of State for the Colonies Newcastle, 6 February 1860, in S Lane-Poole (ed), Thirty Years of Colonial Government, vol. 2, 1889, cited in WR Johnson, *A documentary*

Bowen's claims, expressing concern about pauper numbers: 'demands for charity are beyond what anyone not acquainted with the situation would credit.'[86] Bowen's bragging appeared to deny the true state of Queensland. Indeed, the need to present perceptions of prosperity and ignore signs that hinted at a penal past, such as hardship and poverty, became a recurrent theme in early colonial Queensland and Government decision-making.

Achievement in colonial Queensland was measured through taming and utilising the colony's vast expanse of land. Success became associated with a flourishing pastoral industry. W. Ross Johnson argued that Queensland, similar to other Australian colonies, presented life on the land as a noble occupation and one to be revered.[87] Those who could not contribute towards such future prosperity, Johnson argued, were reviled with the negative attributes associated with industrialised Britain; '[t]he poor, the wretched, the vagabonds and the criminals [and the insane] were seen as the creations of the evil environment of urbanized, industrialised Britain.'[88] While Johnson argued that this was a reaction to the industrialisation of British society,[89] realistically, land was the major resource that the colony possessed and obviously would be a key to its progress and future success. The Government's focus on land and its development was assured when Queensland's first Government, elected in 1860, was dominated by pastoralists[90] and reinforced by its voters, as suffrage required a property qualification.[91] It would seem obvious that Government foci would necessarily exclude or discount the needs of the lunatic population. However, on the other hand, as Helen Gregory observed, while the colonial Government appeared to ignore the needs of vulnerable populations, they simply did not possess either the financial resources or administrative infrastructure to take an active role in social welfare.[92] Nonetheless, the situation at the gaol certainly reflected the

---

history of Queensland from reminiscences, diaries, parliamentary papers, newspapers, letters and photographs, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1988, p. 307.

[86] C. Grey to Colonial Secretary, 9 February 1860, cited in R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 1.

[87] WR Johnson, *The call of the land. A history of Queensland to the present day*, Jacaranda Press, Milton, 1982, p. 49.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid., p. 95.

[91] Ibid.

[92] H Gregory, *A tradition of care. A history of nursing at the Royal Brisbane Hospital*, Boolarong Publications, Bowen Hills, 1988, p. 4.

Government's lack of focus on issues that did not symbolise success and future colonial prosperity, and were a reminder of a penal past.

Conditions for lunatics certainly worsened after the Asylum became officially situated in the gaol. Between 1861 and 1862, prisoner numbers had more than doubled and lunatic numbers tripled. In October 1863, the prison contained 114 males and thirty-six of these were lunatics. Three of the seventeen female prisoners were also lunatics.[93] Although lunatics were accommodated in a separate building, this was shared with female prisoners and when male prisoners exceeded seventy-two, they were also expected to mix with the mentally ill.[94] These inappropriate arrangements prompted the Visiting Justice to observe: 'the impropriety of confining lunatics and criminals in the same yard is too obvious to require comment.'[95] The quality of the lunatics' supervision was also questionable. The warders, who were appointed in November 1860 to specifically supervise the lunatics, were dismissed in April 1861 for neglect of duty and Mr and Mrs Sneyd, the gaolers, were given compete control. [96] It is doubtful whether these warders were replaced, as in September 1863 three prisoners were being provided with extra rations for supervising the lunatics.[97]

The inhumane conditions suffered by the lunatics gained considerable public attention through the case of Dr. Jonathan Labatt. Labatt, a Warwick doctor was arrested as a 'dangerous lunatic' following an altercation with a local solicitor. At the 1864 Inquiry into his incarceration, it was revealed that he was detained in the Warwick lockup for four days, transported handcuffed to Brisbane and then placed in irons in the gaol. Labatt described the conditions the lunatics were required to endure:

> [During the day lunatics and prisoners were enclosed together in a] yard without any shelter from the sun with raving and blasphemous lunatics … There was an open shed with no sides to it, and which afforded very slight shelter … Some who had been confined for

[93] *The Courier,* 13 October 1863, p. 2.
[94] 'The Brisbane Gaol', *The Courier*, 18 September 1863, p. 6.
[95] H. Darvell Report, 31 December 1861, cited in R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 27.
[96] Brown to Undersecretary, 15.4.61, cited in R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 26.
[97] 'The Brisbane Gaol', *The Courier,* 18 September 1863, p. 6.

> some time were absolutely black, you would hardly know them from the natives of the colony.[98]

Labatt's description of the conditions suffered by lunatics was indeed concerning and certainly their life would have been grim; housed in an 'Asylum' within an overcrowded prison and being required to mix with and be supervised by prisoners.

While the welfare of the lunatics appeared to be of little importance to the Government, it did not completely disregard the problems associated with housing prisoners and lunatics together and made some attempts to relieve the situation. A search for temporary accommodation was not successful. In December 1861, a property on the German Station was inspected and another in May 1862. Both proved unsuitable.[99] In 1863, Parliament passed a vote for the purchase of a hulk to be used as a prison to decrease the burden on the gaol. The *Margaret Eliza* was purchased and ready to be used by May 1864.[100] However, by this time the Asylum was almost complete. Planning for a permanent asylum did begin in 1861, however the Government was tardy in actually building the Asylum, which was not occupied for almost another four years.

2.6 Planning and constructing a permanent lunatic asylum

In June 1861, the Colonial Treasurer proposed that £300 be part of the 1862 estimates to construct a Lunatic Asylum. While some members disputed the necessity of an Asylum, Dr. Challinor and the Colonial Secretary were surprising in their defence of the proposal given the Government's previous reluctance to consider such a move. Silencing the dissenters, they argued that currently the lunatics were being treated like criminals and had little chance of recovery.[101] Despite this estimate being accepted, it seemed that the Colonial Treasurer greatly underestimated the cost of an asylum. Charles Tiffin, Colonial Architect, claimed that the usual budget to construct an

[98] 'Select Committee on Labatt', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1864, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 1288.
[99] Charles Tiffin, Memorandum on Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo, Appendix B, 'The Lunatic asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 934.
[100] 'The Margaret Eliza. Prison Hulk', *The Brisbane Courier,* 17 May 1864, p. 4.
[101] 'Queensland Legislative Assembly', *The Brisbane Courier*, June 14, 1861, pp. 7-8.

asylum in Britain was £200 per head.[102] While the initial £300 was significantly less than the eventual cost of £11,500[103] to establish Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, it was far below what would be considered necessary to reasonably construct an asylum.

Charles Tiffin played an important role in the construction of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. He found the location, researched asylum designs, and then designed what he considered would be an ideal asylum.[104] He then modified his plans considerably to fit the Government budget and oversaw the construction.[105] In September 1861, Tiffin wrote to the Surveyor General, to point out the potential of land at Woogaroo Reserve for quarrying and as a possible site for the proposed asylum. Its potential dual purpose was explained:

> … the majority of lunatics being paupers and belonging to the laboring classes, the work of farming and quarrying would be a means of giving active and healthy enjoyment to them, and they would thus assist in erecting their own asylum, and in maintaining themselves. Other advantages of the site being that it is nearly half-way between the two most populous towns in the colony, and at the same time sufficiently removed from either to ensure the quiet custody of the patients.[106]

Although this site was rejected, one nearby was approved in July 1862 as an appropriate property to construct an asylum.[107]

After much research on the best asylum design, Tiffin concluded that the proposed building should promote a therapeutic environment, allow classification (including that between paupers and others), promote sanitation and be able to be expanded as numbers increased. Tiffin submitted plans to the Government in August 1862 according to these specifications.[108] His original plan was judged too costly and he was asked to forward a design costing less than £10,000.[109] The plan eventually accepted was only a small part of the original design, consisting of one main building

[102] 'The Lunatic asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 930.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., p.934.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid., pp. 934-935.
[109] Ibid., p. 935.

that would need to house forty-eight males and thirty-two females. Two temporary wooden buildings at the rear of the building would serve as kitchen, stores and male staff quarters. The boundaries were to be fenced with the stockade fences that had previously surrounded the old gaol.[110] The original estimate of £80,000 (£200 per patient for a 400 bed asylum) was substantially pared down to £11,500, which included the Surgeon Superintendent's cottage, an expense not included on the approved plan or estimates.[111] In submitting a revised plan in 1863, Tiffin warned the Government: '… in no instance can I ascertain, has a permanent lunatic asylum been erected in England, or the Colonies, at a sum less than £200 to £250 per patient.'[112]

Tenders for the construction of the Asylum were called in January 1863.[113] Construction was slow as many delays were experienced: contractors were not able to complete their work in time and the foreman was required to be replaced;[114] rain and floods in March 1864 caused problems;[115] and objections by Tiffin on the quality of construction necessitated work having to be re-done.[116] Public announcements claimed the Asylum was almost complete in April 1864,[117] however Charles Tiffin received a further order on May 19 to erect a residence for the Surgeon Superintendent, further postponing its opening.[118] The press noted the interminable delays; completion had been imminent in April,[119] Dr. Kearsey Cannan had been appointed as Surgeon Superintendent,[120] and in June work was being carried out at the gaol in anticipation of the lunatics moving to the new Asylum.[121] However, the Asylum was still unoccupied in December. This prompted the *Brisbane Courier* Editor to comment: 'It is time, we think, that the new Asylum at Woogaroo was

[110] Ibid., p. 934.
[111] Ibid., p. 930.
[112] Charles Tiffin to Under Secretary for Public Works, 8 December 1862, Appendix B, Ibid., p. 936.
[113] 'Government Advertisements', *The Courier,* 1 January 1863, p. 1.
[114] 'The Lunatic asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 936.
[115] Johnson to Charles Tiffin, 1 April 1865, Ibid., p. 936.
[116] Charles Tiffin to Colonial Secretary, 22 March 1864, Letterbook of the Colonial Architect, cited in R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 37.
[117] The Brisbane Courier announced: 'The Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo, is fast approaching completion, and will be ready for the reception of patients in the course of a month', 'Public Works', *Brisbane Courier,* 16 April 1864, p. 2.
[118] Colonial Secretary to Charles Tiffin, 19 May 1864, 'The Lunatic asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 936.
[119] 'Public Works', *The Brisbane Courier,* 16 April 1864, p. 2.
[120] *Queensland Government Gazette, Vol. V*., 20 February, 1864, p. 127.
[121] 'Public Works', *The Brisbane Courier,* 17 June 1864, p.2.

prepared for the reception of these unfortunate people.'[122] Staff and patients moved into the new Asylum a few weeks later.

2.7 Woogaroo Asylum – a symbol of colonial progress

The construction of a lunatic asylum by a young Australian colony would seem to signal prosperity and success to the Western world. It also signified the act of a Government intent on demonstrating they could effect moral 'good' as a moral agent; providing for their vulnerable lunatic population and protecting them from harm. However, the reality was very different. The local Queensland community, in voicing humanitarian concern, had put pressure on the Government to remove the lunatics from the gaol into a purpose built asylum. However, imperial pressure was likely to have been have been the strongest motivator. In January 1863, a despatch was forwarded from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to all British Colony Governors inquiring on the conditions of 'Colonial Hospitals and Asylums'.[123] This despatch had been prompted by an 1860 scandal uncovered by *The Lancet*, exposing abuses occurring in the public hospital and asylum at Kingston, Jamaica.[124] Queensland did not respond to the despatch. To respond would have represented failure, as there was no asylum to report on. However, it is noteworthy that tenders were called the same month that the despatch would have been received.

In August 1864 results from the British Government's inquiry were published and made freely available.[125] The sixteen colonies that had not replied were named. Queensland was one of those colonies.[126] Being publically 'named' provoked Government action. The Colonial Secretary expressed surprise to Parliament that

---

[122] 'Weekly Epitome', *Brisbane Courier,* 3 December 1864, p. 5.
[123] Right Honorable Secretary of State, *Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums. Copy despatch from the Right Honorable Secretary of State, with Enclosures relative to Public Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums, Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.* Victoria, John Ferres Government Printer, Melbourne, 1864, p. 3.
[124] 'Colonial Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums', *The Brisbane Courier,* 1 October 1864, p. 5.
[125] Right Honorable Secretary of State, *Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums. Copy despatch from the Right Honorable Secretary of State, with Enclosures relative to Public Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums, Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.* Victoria, John Ferres Government Printer, Melbourne, 1864.
[126] Ibid., p. 31.

construction had not been completed.[127] His surprise was somewhat misplaced, given that he had ordered a house for the Surgeon Superintendent only three months earlier. Arthur Wilcox Manning, Under-Secretary, saw fit to report to the British Secretary of State on Queensland's lunatic asylum. He claimed that the new lunatic asylum is complete and built on 'the best procurable model here' and surrounded by '200 acres of garden for the use and amusement of inmates.'[128]

Manning's response to the Secretary of State implied that Queensland was successful and demonstrating humanitarian concerns in providing an ideal environment for its lunatic population. However, there is no doubt that Manning's response was inaccurate. The Asylum at this stage was incomplete. The Asylum's single inadequate building did not fit his description of the 'best procurable model.' The 'garden' was uncleared bush and certainly would not be available for the 'amusement of inmates' when they moved into the asylum. Further, with the paltry amount spent by the Government, less than one fifth of the original estimate by Tiffin, it was never going to meet criteria for the 'best procurable model'.

On January 6 1865, fifty-seven males and twelve females were conveyed by cabs from the gaol to the steamer *Settler* and transported to their new asylum accompanied by ten constables, five male warders and two female warders. John Phillips, the chief warder, supervised the move.[129] Matron Symes joined them a few days later.[130] The building constructed for only eighty patients was almost full to capacity from the beginning.[131] The environment was gaol-like: the windows were heavily barred;[132] the dormitories small and cramped;[133] and the yards that inmates were expected to occupy through the day were unsheltered and small.[134] Raymond Evans aptly described Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum as a façade:

---

[127] 'Legislative Assembly', *The Brisbane Courier,* 20 August 1864, p. 5.
[128] Manning to Newcastle, 10 August 1864, cited in R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969. p. 39.
[129] *The Brisbane Courier,* 14 January 1865, p. 4.
[130] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869', *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 930.
[131] By the end of April there were 81 patients; Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 1026 of 1865, 2 May 1865, Microfilm no. 6534.
[132] As the building was designed for administration, the windows were ordinary sash windows and not suitable for asylum accommodation, and therefore needed to be heavily barred: 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869', *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 931.
[133] Ibid., p. 968.
[134] Ibid., p. 930.

> … the new institution was a curative asylum in name only, principally for the sake of appearance while its internal identity would continue to link it intimately with its penal origins.[135]

2.8 Conclusion

The building of an asylum did signal a 'coming of age' for colonial Queensland. Similar to other British colonies, they now possessed the capacity to care for those who were rendered lunatic in a purpose built building. However, by rejecting plans for a set of buildings that reflected an ideal asylum design, the Government consigned its future inmates to a 'sentence' in a building that would prove little different to a goal. Indeed, the stockade fences from the old gaol were certainly appropriate given the gaol-like environment that Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum would become.

In tracing the journey to the opening of the Asylum, there is a strong sense that those early Queenslanders sentenced as 'dangerous lunatics' would have suffered. These people would have spent time in the prison environment, with this time possibly extending to years. It is likely that they would have incurred brutal treatment from the prison warders, as there is no evidence, despite being housed in a separate building, that they were treated any differently to ordinary prisoners. Like the lunatic convicts, symptoms of lunacy would have been associated with signs of criminality. Their 'difference' and vulnerability were likely to have earned them ridicule and mistreatment from other prisoners. However, it seemed that the Government largely appeared comfortable with this arrangement. The association between lunacy and criminality justified such treatment and the Government's efforts and expenditure were concentrated elsewhere. Taming and developing Queensland's vast expanse of land and growing the population to support economic growth was a means of demonstrating accomplishment to the Western world and a disconnection from its convict roots. However, voices of humanity, evident in the Queensland press and via edicts from the British Government, challenged the Government's comfort. While the Government did succumb to pressure and construct an asylum, the resultant asylum's

[135] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 49.

inadequacy reflected the same lack of regard from the Government as was evident in the journey to the Asylum.

However, the journey towards the building of the Asylum was a multi-layered one. Certainly the Government was tardy in building an asylum and saw the lunatics as a low priority. However, this was a young government with limited means. Pragmatically, they did not have the financial capacity to construct an asylum equal to its colonial and British counterparts. The new Government commenced with an empty treasury[136] and the colony's only public buildings were those left over from the convict days. In 1869, Charles Tiffin clearly articulated the difficulties that the Government faced in constructing a lunatic asylum:

> Other causes have also tended to deter the government from spending much money on buildings at Woogaroo, the chief of which was the limited means at their disposal, in so young a country, to carry out public institutions of every kind on anything like a scale which is now considered by authorities as absolutely essential for the moral and physical well being of the inmates. Queensland has even more to do than merely carry out: she had absolutely to begin at the very beginning with all her public institutions, under quite new and peculiar circumstances, compared with the parent colony from which she sprang-New South Wales. Much latitude must be allowed for this in all her undertakings of a like nature to the Asylum at Woogaroo.[137]

In analysing the journey to the opening of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, this chapter has provided a context in which to understand the first five years of the Asylum. It establishes that the impetus for government decision-making in relation to lunacy and the Asylum was a product of multiple factors: the various understandings of lunacy; community concerns; the colonial economy; Government priorities; a requirement for the Government to be seen as an effective moral agent; and the need for the new colony to present a picture of success despite its convict heritage.

[136] R Evans, *A history of Queensland*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 79.
[137] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 938.

Chapter 3

The 'rise' of Dr. Kearsey Cannan

> An active, charitable conscientious man, of good sense and mild manners, with perfect self-command, and a thorough knowledge of human nature … a well educated physician, of tact, firmness and experience, familiar with the improved medical and moral treatment of insanity … an energetic philanthropist, of calmness and decision, of moral and physical courage, who is never weary of *doing good,* whose benevolence can make the lunatic a companion and friend.[1]

The above requisite attributes of a nineteenth century asylum superintendent were noted in a letter from the trustees of the newly established Utica Asylum to the New York State Government in 1834.[2] Finding a doctor that would meet such ideals and be able to continue to fulfill the role according to such high standards would indeed have been difficult. In colonial Queensland, with only a small pool of doctors to choose from, and a Government with limited funding available to attract suitable applicants, the task would have certainly been onerous. Dr. Kearsey Cannan, a local Brisbane doctor, was chosen as the first surgeon superintendent of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. It was not likely that the choice was made because he met the ideal attributes of an asylum superintendent. Rather, his appointment was based on his own assessment of his suitability for the position and because he was well known to the Government.

This chapter traces Dr. Cannan's rise to assume the position of Surgeon Superintendent, and the early part of his superintendence. It argues that a history of arrogance demonstrated in earlier public positions was also apparent in his early years as Woogaroo Asylum. These character traits had a negative impact on his relationship with an official Government visitor and contributed to a need to publically present the

[1] 1834 New York State Documents, no. 12, cited in E Dwyer, *Homes for the mad. Life inside two nineteenth-century asylums*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1987, p. 55.
[2] E Dwyer, *Homes for the mad. Life inside two nineteenth-century asylums*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1987, p. 55.

Asylum as successful, despite obvious deficits. It is also argued that these personality characteristics were an important factor in determining the future directions of the Asylum.

3.1 Role of asylum superintendent

The nineteenth century asylum superintendent's role was a significant one in the care and treatment of the mentally ill and possessed considerable status and power. This role was a nineteenth century phenomena and evolved through the emergence of medicine as a profession and lunacy as a medical specialty. The industrial revolution resulted in science and knowledge being valued and social barriers relaxed, facilitating the evolution of knowledge based professions. This allowed doctors to: assume a professional status; claim ownership of a body of science and set of knowledge and skills; and a social status commensurate with scientific ownership.[3]

Medical specialties evolved with the growth of the medical profession, including the specialty of lunacy.[4] Andrew Scull argued that the evolution of lunacy as a medical specialty problematised a seemingly unimportant social experience; the notion of lunacy had evolved from a 'vague, culturally defined phenomenon afflicting an unknown, but probably small proportion of the total population',[5] to an illness requiring a medical expert.

The medical specialty of lunacy gained considerable status during the nineteenth century and lunacy doctors, similarly, gained status and power. Doctors became caretakers of its science and from this they came to assume legal control over all aspects of lunacy. Lunacy doctors sought legitimacy by establishing their own professional organisation, journal and monographs.[6] Their monopoly on lunacy was

[3] A Scull, C MacKenzie & N Hervey, *Masters of Bedlam: the transformation of the mad-doctoring trade*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1996, p. 5.
[4] Ibid., pp. 4-5.
[5] A Scull, *Social disorder/mental disorder: Anglo-American psychiatry in historical perspective*, University of Californian Press, Berkely, 1989, p. 120.
[6] A Scull, C MacKenzie & N Hervey, *Masters of Bedlam: the transformation of the mad-doctoring trade*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1996, p. 7.

firmly established when their role became enshrined in law.[7] Early in the nineteenth century British doctors successfully campaigned to have their medical role mandated in the Madhouse Act of 1828. This legislation dictated that each patient detained in an asylum be visited weekly by a doctor, and if the asylum housed more than one hundred inmates, a medical superintendent was to be appointed.[8] Further agitation by doctors succeeded in having the subsequent 1845 Asylums Act stipulate that all public English and Welsh asylums be required to have a medical superintendent.[9] Mandatory medical certification to determine insanity and testify the necessity for asylum admission[10] further legitimated medical control of lunacy. Lunacy doctors' monopoly on lunacy knowledge and expertise became guaranteed. Doctors owned the knowledge and skills associated with lunacy and its treatment and controlled institutions where lunatics were required to be housed and treated.

Asylums created opportunities for lunacy doctors to consolidate their dominance of lunacy. Moral treatment was an essential component of nineteenth century asylums and allowed superintendents to practice moral regulation. Moral treatment encouraged patients to participate in activities demonstrating of Victorian societal gendered expectations. The superintendent directed and regulated these activities and a decision on when to discharge was dependent upon his perceptions that the inmate was meeting gendered expectations.[11] It is not surprising that descriptions of the asylum superintendent role centered on control: 'one man must be placed at the head of the establishment ... and that his mind must pervade the whole establishment'.[12] Further,

> [the superintendent] must be before all things be a man of strong character, a man of dominist will, who can impose his will on others

[7] A Scull, *Social order/mental disorder: Anglo-American psychiatry in historical perspective*, University of California Press, Berkely, 1989, pp. 160-161.
[8] Ibid.
[9] A Shepherd & D Wright, 'Madness, suicide and the Victorian asylum: attempted self-murder in the age of non-restraint', *Medical History*, vol. 46, 2002, p. 187.
[10] S Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales 1880-1949*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1988, p. 16.
[11] See Chapter 5 for discussion of moral treatment. Also for discussion of moral treatment in relation to women see: E. Showalter, *The female malady: women, madness and English culture 1830-1980*, Penguin, New York, 1985.
[12] JT Arlidge, *On the state of lunacy and the legal provision for the insane*, Churchill Press, London, 1859, p. 122.

> and compel obedience by the sheer force of his own strong character.[13]

Indeed, the tenor of these descriptions offers an understanding as to why the role was also depicted in patriarchal terms; the asylum staff and inmates were the superintendent's family and the superintendent the loving, but firm father figure who would reign with absolute power.[14]

Appointing a suitable superintendent to Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum was important to the Queensland Government. Establishing a lunatic asylum had symbolised achievement and a 'coming of age', and reflected the Government's capacity to act as an effective moral agent. An appropriate asylum superintendent, who signified importance and power, and possessed exclusive scientific knowledge and skills, was required to complete this accomplishment and to enact the Government's moral agency. However, it would seem that Dr. Kearsey Cannan's appointment was by default. While the Government largely judged him as qualified, and Cannan, himself, claimed his suitability, this would become questionable.

3.2 Dr. Kearsey Cannan: manipulating his 'rise'

Dr. Kearsey Cannan's appointment as inaugural Surgeon Superintendent of Woogaroo Lunatic asylum was not unexpected, given his career rise and social standing. Cannan's early medical experience was not extraordinary. Kearsey Cannan, born 1815, was the son of surgeon David Cannan. He was apprenticed to Dr. Wildash from Kent, and became qualified as a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1837.[15] After arriving in Sydney in 1840, he visited New Zealand and returned to Sydney in 1842 where he married Mary Elizabeth Siddins. The newly married couple moved to Brisbane in 1843[16] and Cannan opened a private practice soon after.[17]

[13] CA Mercier, *Lunatic asylums, their organisation and management*, C. Griffin, London, 1894, p. 197.
[14] E Dwyer, *Homes for the mad. Life inside two nineteenth-century asylums*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1987, p. 57.
[15] G Douglas, 'Cannan, Kearsey (1815–1894)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cannan-kearsey-3160/text4723.
[16] Ibid.

Arriving in Brisbane at the age of twenty-eight, he was relatively inexperienced, as his medical career had only spanned a few years. Despite his inexperience, he quickly became renowned being one of Brisbane's only two doctors.[18] Frequently in the press, reports included: who he attended and results of his medical interventions;[19] his actions as Chair of 'The District Association';[20] and reports of his regular appearance at social activities.[21] Reports describing his attendance at social events suggest an esteemed standing in Brisbane upper class social circles.

On the opening of the new Brisbane Hospital in 1849, Cannan's appointment as the first Visiting Surgeon to the hospital[22] was predictable. Known for actively campaigning for a free Brisbane hospital,[23] for being a founding Committee member of the Benevolent Society,[24] and having attained a high social status, his appointment to the position had seemed assured. In addition to a growing private practice, Cannan's appointment to part-time official posts grew. At the time of accepting the Surgeon Superintendent position, he was employed as Public Vaccinator, Coroner and Police Surgeon to the gaol.[25]

Dr. Cannan's career rise had not been without its critics: an anonymous 'subscriber' wrote in a Letter to the Editor in January 1857: '… it is not lately Dr. Cannan gained

---

[17] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 21.
[18] Dr. David Ballow, the other Brisbane doctor, was a salaried surgeon for the Brisbane Hospital: K O'Donoghue, 'Ballow, David Keith (1804–1850)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ballow-david-keith-1735/text1913.
[19] Results of inquests conducted by Cannan were reported in the press. See for example: 'Domestic Intelligence', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 29 April 1848, p. 2. Reports of Cannan attending accidents were reported in the press. See for example: 'Domestic Intelligence', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 25 November 1848, p. 2.
[20] 'Local Intelligence. The District Association', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 20 March 1847, p. 2.
[21] Cannan was well known socially in Brisbane for owning a racehorse. See: 'Moreton Bay Races', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 29 May 1847, p. 2. Cannan was also well known for being active in social committees; Cannan was treasurer of the Committee organizing the Brisbane Regatta to commemorate the foundation of the Colony: 'Brisbane Regatta, in commemoration of the Foundation of the Colony', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 29 January 1848, p. 2.
[22] G Douglas, 'Cannan Kearsey (1815-1894)'. Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, National Centre of Biography, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cannan-kearsey-3160/text4723.
[23] Ibid.
[24] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 21.
[25] G Douglas, 'Cannan Kearsay (1815-1894)'. Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, National Centre of Biography, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cannan-kearsey-3160/text4723.

his fame. I am told he was better liked when he was less known'.[26] As Cannan became increasingly renowned through his private medical practice, his public positions, and by mixing in upper class social circles, it seemed his expectations rose accordingly. A series of events demonstrated Cannan employing various manipulative tactics to ensure he received the status in accord with his heightened expectations.

Cannan had actively campaigned for the position of Visiting Surgeon to the new Brisbane hospital. When offered the post in 1849, he initially declined it, seemingly because the salary was not commensurate with his professional standing. Two months later, when the Board offered almost double the annual remuneration, Cannan accepted.[27] Cannan seemed unforgiving when challenged by medical colleagues. Fellow Visiting Surgeon, Dr. Hobbs, publically questioned Cannan's treatment methods in 1851. Cannan, slighted, collected proxy votes from 'country gentlemen at McAdam's Hotel in Brisbane' and was successful in having Hobbs voted from his post.[28] Cannan used the same ploy to gain a Trusteeship. When the Brisbane Hospital Committee were planning to offer it elsewhere, Cannan collected enough proxy votes to secure the position.[29] In February 1857, the Brisbane Hospital Committee was required to vote when three doctors submitted applications for the two Visiting Surgeon positions. Although Cannan, one of the existing Visiting Surgeons, was voted in, he received two less votes than Dr. Milford, 'a young and untried man, a stranger in the district.'[30] Applying for the Visiting Surgeon position had been a bold move by Dr. Milford. He was a junior doctor applying for a position currently held by more senior medical practitioners; he hadn't followed the traditional 'courtesy of his profession'.[31] Dr. Cannan, insulted by Dr. Milford's professional slight and at being the less favoured, sent in his resignation.[32] Hospital Committee member, Ambrose Eldridge, commented:

[26] 'The Brisbane Hospital Elections', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 31 January 1857, p. 3.
[27] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 24.
[28] 'The Brisbane Hospital Election', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 24 January 1857, p. 2.
[29] *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 21 February 1857, p. 2.
[30] 'The Brisbane Hospital Election', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 24 January 1857, p. 2.
[31] 'Brisbane Hospital', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 10 January 1857, p. 2.
[32] 'The Brisbane Hospital Election', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 24 January 1857, p. 2.

> Dr. Cannan had been our spoilt child, and we have for some years allowed him to play strange antics. But we are getting tired of these antics.[33]

Implying that Cannan's status and rise to fame were a result of his Visiting Surgeon position, rather than his medical expertise, Eldridge wryly commented: the role had 'helped him become an 'important personage''. When he first took the role, his 'patients were neither very numerous nor respectable'.[34] If Eldridge was correct, Cannan's private practice may not have been successful. Seeking out other positions may have been necessary to help supplement his income and grow his status.

Dr. Cannan's career certainly did 'rise' between his arrival in Queensland and when he accepted the position of Woogaroo Asylum Surgeon Superintendent in February 1864. However, this 'rise' was seen to be related to his ability to manipulate his way into positions that increased his status and to remove impediments challenging this status. Given his success in acquiring and maintaining public positions, it is likely that similar manipulation occurred in acquiring the position of Surgeon Superintendent of the new asylum.

3.3 Appointment as inaugural Surgeon Superintendent, Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum

Dr. Kearsey Cannan's appointment as Surgeon Superintendent, Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum was gazetted on February 20, 1864.[35] His suitability for the position was questionable. Asylum superintendents were not required to have specialist training and needed only a general medical qualification.[36] Cannan, similarly, had no specialist training. Yet, given the complexity and responsibility of the position, it would seem necessary for an asylum superintendent appointee to have had experience in an asylum either in Britain or in other Australian colonies. There is no evidence to suggest Cannan had such experience, nor that he had visited other Australian asylums

[33] 'The Brisbane Hospital. To the Editor of the Moreton Bay Courier', *The Moreton Bay Courier*, 21 February 1857, p. 3.
[34] Ibid.
[35] *Queensland Government Gazette, Vol. V.,* 20 February 1864, p. 127.
[36] S Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales 1880-1949*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1988, p. 38.

to gain knowledge about the superintendent's role. Cannan's former position as Surgeon to the gaol had included treating committed lunatics, and indeed, Cannan pronounced that he had been acting as an asylum superintendent for the past thirteen years.[37] Certainly once the Government deemed that part of the gaol was a 'lunatic asylum', Cannan could lay claim to having managed an 'asylum'. Nonetheless, this 'asylum' bore little resemblance to a fully functioning lunatic asylum, and it is also unlikely that Cannan devoted much time to this duty given the number of public posts he held in addition to maintaining a private medical practice.

Cannan's lack of lunacy and asylum management expertise was noted in Parliament. Mr. Taylor, in August 1864, commented on his deficiencies:

> … the government should have sent home for a skilled gentleman to superintend the Lunatic Asylum. The gentleman chosen was no doubt an efficient doctor in a good local practice; but a man might have been procured at home who had more especially devoted his skill to mental diseases.[38]

The Colonial Secretary disagreed:

> … the officer appointed had had great experience in the management of lunatics, and was considered to be in every way efficient. It was better to avail ourselves of his services than to trust to our chance of getting a good man from home.[39]

Cannan's appointment was most probably a consequence of cronyism. Brisbane was small and Cannan's frequent attendance at upper class social events would have allowed him to mix with Members of Parliament. Further, as Cannan was Brisbane's first private medical practitioner, Government officials may have known him as their doctor. Given Cannan's success at campaigning and manipulating for positions, it is very probably that he actively encouraged his Government 'friends' to advovate for his appointment. The press, critical of the selection process for the Surgeon Superintendent position, also insinuated the possibility of cronyism. The *Courier*

[37] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, cited in R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 37.
[38] 'Legislative Assembly', *The Brisbane Courier,* 19 August 1864, p. 2.
[39] Ibid.

Editor sarcastically likened the calling for tenders to construct Queensland's railway line to the 'farce' of Cannan's appointment:

> At present we have reason to believe that the invitation for tenders for forming the railway was as great a farce as asking for applications from medical men of other colonies, to take the superintendence of the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, when it was predetermined that the appointment should be given to Dr. Kearsey Cannan.[40]

The role of Surgeon Superintendent was an attractive one for the ambitious Dr. Kearsey Cannan with its potential to provide increased status and power. These attributes were appealing to Cannan as indicated by his history of striving to attain public positions and an important social standing within the Brisbane community. Indeed part of Cannan's status and fame was due to the inaugural positions he had attained; Brisbane's first private medical practitioner and first Visiting Surgeon to the Brisbane Hospital. The Surgeon Superintendent of the Asylum was another inaugural position and likely to earn him even more accolades given the importance of the position. However, the attraction of the position to the aspiring Cannan would also have been in the inherent power subscribed to the nineteenth century asylum superintendent role; power which had not been available in his previous public positions.

In appointing Cannan, it appeared the Government took a default position; Cannan had declared his suitability, he was known to the Government and perhaps well acquainted with some Members of Parliament. Further, the Government did not need to expend energy and money in seeking an alternative from Britain. In taking this default position, the Government's action demonstrated the same stand they took when constructing the Asylum and one they would continue to take in relation to the Asylum over the next few years; parsimony and ranking the asylum low in their priorities.

3.4 Accolades for Cannan as superintendent

[40] *The Courier,* 2 February 1864, p. 2.

Dr. Cannan earned praise for his management of the Asylum in 1865 and 1866. He was painted in exemplary terms by the press. The *Courier* Editor bestowed an altruistic intent on Cannan in accepting the position. Suggesting that other asylum superintendents, 'more often than not', used such a role to advance their career, he claimed Dr. Cannan was altruistic and acting out of 'interest [for] … the general public'. He praised Cannan's capability:

> … the gentleman selected by this Government to hold the important position of Surgeon-Superintendent is competent in every respect. The patients are well treated; every consideration is shown to them as regards their various requirements. The surgeon is liked by all.[41]

When the Queensland Government ordered a Select Committee in 1866 to 'enquire into the working of the hospitals of the colony', the resultant 'The Hospitals of the Colony Report' commended Dr. Cannan on his management skills:

> [Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum is] one of the best conducted in any of the Colonies ... Dr. Cannan ... appears eminently qualified for the duties of his office, and, doubtless much of the success of the Institution and its high state of efficiency are due to his skill and energy.[42]

In particular, the report applauded Cannan on his prudent cost saving:

> … probably the most satisfactory, as well as astonishing, information elicited, was to the effect that the average cost of each patient is only £45 per annum.[43]

Such prudence would indeed have been pleasing to the Government given that this Report demonstrated other charitable institutions experiencing economic distress.[44] The Chairman of the Select Committee, W.H. Groom warned that if more funding was not available, every one of these institutions would need to close.[45] The

[41] *The Brisbane Courier,* 24 November 1865, p. 2.
[42] 'Hospitals of the Colony Report', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 1613.
[43] *The Brisbane Courier,* 13 July 1866, p. 2.
[44] JH Tyrer, *History of the Brisbane Hospital and its affiliates: a pilgrim's progress*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1993, p. 90.
[45] Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, pp. 664-665.

knowledge that the cash-strapped Government did not need to outlay extra funds for the Asylum because of Cannan's management, reinforced Cannan's suitability for the position.

The picture of success depicted by Dr. Cannan to the 1866 Select Committee inquiring into 'the working of the hospitals of the colony' belied the obvious inadequacies existing at Woogaroo Asylum. In November 1865 the *Courier* Editor had reported on the shortcomings of the Asylum accommodation and the difficulties Cannan was beginning to experience from Government penny-pinching:

> [Cannan's] suggestions in reference to the nature of the accommodation provided are too often disregarded … we wish the Government would devote a little more attention to the representations made to them by him, and carry out the improvements which are required.[46]

Cannan had made 'valuable suggestions' for improvements to the Select Committee to 'enquire into the working of the hospitals of the colony', particularly on the need for increased accommodation. However, these 'suggestions' contradicted his other evidence as he also boasted to the Select Committee that 'the [Asylum] building is constructed in almost every respect in accordance with the instructions laid down in a 'Circular Minute on Colonial Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums.''[47] As discussed in the previous chapter, this was by no means an accurate observation. In claiming that the Asylum met these ideals, Cannan was certainly painting a false picture of the Asylum and his management. His reluctance to present an accurate presentation of the Asylum could be attributed to an unwillingness to blame the Government because of his close relationships with some Government officials. It may also be that Cannan's characteristic arrogance influenced his response. He was inexperienced as an asylum superintendent and if he pointed out the deficits of the Asylum, this may confirm his lack of experience. On the other hand, in painting a picture of success, his success as a superintendent was then defined and also that of his role generally as an important Brisbane doctor.

---

[46] *The Brisbane Courier,* 24 November 1865, p. 2.
[47] 'The Hospitals of the Colony', *The Brisbane Courier,* 19 July 1866, p. 2.

3.5 Challenges from the Visiting Justice

The Surgeon Superintendent role allowed Dr. Kearsey Cannan power and autonomy. Further, the Asylum's isolation allowed Cannan's rule to be largely unchallenged. The Asylum was certainly remote from Brisbane, and in its early years was only accessible by steamer. Indeed, the Report from the 1869 Joint Parliamentary Committee Inquiry noted that the Asylum's geographical position limited opportunities for 'public inspection'.[48] However, from the Asylum's inception, as mandated by British Government directives, a Visiting Justice was appointed to regularly visit the Asylum.

The appointment of official visitors to lunatic asylums was one of the gains of the British Lunacy Reform Movement and the consequent Lunacy Reform Bills.[49] The requirement to appoint official visitors was outlined in The Hospital and Lunatic Asylums Circular 1864 directive from the British Government:

> … in all cases there should be general Inspectors not otherwise connected with the institutions whose duty it should be to make regular and irregular inspections, especially of the sanitary arrangements, to receive the reports made by inferior officials and by unofficial visitors, and to report at stated times to the Governors, suggesting measures which may appear necessary.[50]

Henry Buttenshaw, appointed Visiting Justice to the gaol in 1864,[51] also became Visiting Justice to the Lunatic Asylum in 1865.[52]

---

[48] 'Report from the Joint Select Committee on the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, Votes and Proceedings, 1869, p. 917.
[49] A Scull, *The most solitary of afflictions: madness and society in Britain, 1700-1900*, Yale University Press, London, 2005.
[50] Right Honorable Secretary of State, *Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums. Copy despatch from the Right Honorable Secretary of State, with Enclosures relative to Public Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums, Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.* Victoria, John Ferres Government Printer, Melbourne, 1864, p.17.
[51] *Pughs Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calender for 1864,* Brisbane, Theophilus P. Pugh General Printing Press, Brisbane, 1864, p. 48.

Buttenshaw commenced his visits in January 1865 and from the outset Kearsey Cannan perceived the Visiting Justice as a challenge to his autonomy. On his initial visit Buttenshaw requested weekly reports be provided. Cannan refused: 'I beg to inform you that all my reports are sent direct to the Colonial Secretary.'[53] Buttenshaw complained to the Colonial Secretary that Cannan's reply was 'most disconcerting' and it would be time consuming 'going through the books of the establishment' to locate the necessary information. The Colonial Secretary requested Cannan provide the necessary documentation to Buttenshaw.[54] There is no evidence that Cannan complied. In February 1865 a more serious altercation occurred. After Buttenshaw requested the Admittance and Discharge Book, Cannan threw a 'book on the table' and walked away. The book was a doctor's journal, 'unintelligible to a lay person'. Urged by the placating Asylum Clerk Alfred Patrick to make amends, he followed Cannan: 'Dr. Cannan there is no reason why we should quarrel in making the suggestion that I did I had little intention to affront you in any way.' Cannan replied, 'quarrel with you indeed as if I would quarrel with you … I consider the idea of your making suggestions to me as most presumptuous and absurd.' Affronted, Buttenshaw challenged him to a dual, but later admitted to the Colonial Secretary the 'absurdity of the offer.'[55]

Henry Buttenshaw and Dr. Cannan continued to disagree. In March 1865 Buttenshaw commented in the Visitor's Book that the rooms were 'not so clean' with a 'close musty smell.'[56] Cannan retorted: on 'that day and all other days the asylum was in a clean and comfortable state as when you last visited it.'[57] In June 1865 Buttenshaw complained that Dr. Cannan had erased his remarks from the Visitor's Book.[58]

---

[52] *Pughs Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calender for 1865,* Brisbane, Theophilus P. Pugh General Printing Press, Brisbane, 1865, pp. 55-56.
[53] Buttenshaw to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 256 of 1865, 26 January 1865, Microfilm no. 6403.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Buttenshaw to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no 3497 of 1865, 4 February1865, Microfilm no. 6403.
[56] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 670 of 1865, 20 March 1865, Microfilm no. 6423.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Buttenshaw to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 1509 of 1865, 22 June 1865, Microfilm no. 6536.

Cannan explained to the Colonial Secretary that he had removed Buttenshaw's comments as they obscured the Governor's remarks.[59]

By late 1865, Buttenshaw's reports to the Colonial Secretary included concerns about the Asylum staff. Nonetheless, Cannan continued to refute any claims made by Buttenshaw. When, in December, Buttenshaw reported complaints of drunkenness against Warder Phillips, [60] Cannan denied the claims. [61] The Colonial Secretary stopped Buttenshaw's visits in 1866; however, Buttenshaw requested his visits be reinstated after receiving an anonymous letter accusing Warder Phillips (the same warder who had been accused of drunkenness) of 'cowardly' beating an inmate.[62] Again Cannan denied the accusations stating that his own investigations into the allegations had instigated the rumor, and further the inmate who had allegedly been beaten had laughed at his inquiries.[63]

It seemed that while Buttenshaw's requests and accusations were continually rebutted by Cannan, the Colonial Secretary supported Cannan's position against Buttenshaw. It even appeared that Buttenshaw's visits were stopped in deference to Cannan. Support for Cannan from the Colonial Secretary against the Visiting Justice is further indicative of probable cronyism between Government members and Cannan. Indeed, it was the Colonial Secretary who had downplayed Cannan's lack of experience to Parliament and claimed his suitability for the position of Surgeon Superintendent. Nonetheless, despite continued rebuttals by Cannan, Henry Buttenshaw persisted and by September 1866 had gathered enough ammunition to be able to engineer a public exposé of the asylum. Indeed, he was successful in precipitating the first inquiry into the asylum.

---

[59] Cannan to colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 1515 of 1865, 26 June 1865, Microfilm no. 6536.
[60] Buttenshaw to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 3281 of 1865, 7 Dec 1865, Microfilm no. 6560.
[61] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 3292 of 1865, 11 Dec 1865, Microfilm no. 6560.
[62] Buttenshaw to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, letter no. 1937 of 1866, 25 July 1866, Microfilm no. 6546.
[63] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 2053, 30 July 1866, Microfilm no. 6546.

3.6 Conclusion

In analysing Dr. Kearsey Cannan's 'rise', it has been possible to develop an understanding of his character; an ambitious man whose arrogance led him to manipulate others to achieve his ambitions and one who seemed to have difficulty with failure. While later, it would be obvious that he also possessed a strong sense of humanity towards the mentally ill, it was these other character traits that were significant in affecting the trajectory of events early in the Asylum's history. Whether or not cronyism was the impetus behind Cannan's appointment, the Government did largely seem comfortable in appointing an inexperienced asylum superintendent. The Government also appeared comfortable in accepting Cannan's claims of success, while ignoring his 'suggestions' for improvements and concerns expressed by the Visiting Justice. Indeed, being comfortable justified the Government's position in maintaining their parsimonious approach to the Asylum and treating the Asylum as a low priority while portraying a position of an effective moral agent. It also seemed that Kearsey Cannan's arrogance and need to present his actions as successful, stopped him using the opportunities presented to him to highlight the concerning deficiencies at the Asylum. While the Inquiry into the Working of the Hospitals of the Colony provided evidence of Queensland's other charitable institutions suffering because of lack of Government funding, Cannan chose to downplay the impact of this same issue on the Asylum. Instead, he depicted a picture that would be perceived by the Government as one of accomplishment; frugal management and the Asylum conforming to British Government expectations. It would also seem logical that a Visiting Justice reporting directly to the Government would have been useful to Cannan as a conduit to relay the deficits of the Asylum and support Cannan's 'suggestions' for improvement. Instead, Cannan continually challenged Buttenshaw and his reports and undermined his role as Visiting Justice. However, Buttenshaw eventually avenged Cannan's continued rebuttals by providing evidence to precipitate the first Inquiry into the Asylum.

This chapter has provided the context to enable an understanding of Dr. Kearsey Cannan, a significant person in this thesis. It also established the background to comprehend the impetus for the Select Inquiry occurring later in 1866, the focus of the next chapter. Demonstrating that the Government continued to find justification

for their parsimonious and lax treatment of lunacy, this chapter provided further evidence of the manner in which the Government maintained a façade of success in relation to Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum.

Chapter 4

'Not really a patient'

1866 was a dismal year for colonial Queensland and its Government. While a burgeoning population and increasing pastoral occupation had indicated promises of future success at the end of 1865, in mid-1866, optimism was shattered. A serious financial crisis was followed by political turmoil when the Government attempted to right their financial mistakes. The inaugural inquiry into Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum occurred in the context of this political and economic crisis. Reports of a sexual liaison occurring at the Asylum provided the Government with an avenue to divert attention away from their dire political issues. Certainly, the results of the Inquiry would leave the Government blameless as well as their representative, Dr. Cannan.

This first Inquiry into Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum was instigated to investigate a sexual liaison between the Asylum's chief warder and a female inmate.[1] Various staff members, including the Chief Warder, were found guilty and punished. However, an analysis of the Inquiry revealed an Asylum culture that contributed towards an inappropriate relationship between the inmate at the centre of the Inquiry and the Chief Warder. It is argued in this chapter that a series of management issues contributed towards this Inquiry. The warder who reported the incident, and the Visiting Justice who subsequently notified the Government, were both likely to have acted to avenge the Asylum's senior management. The Asylum's lax management system permitted a vulnerable female patient to assume a privileged status, allowing boundaries to be relaxed that defined her inmate status. It also condoned a culture that permitted blurring of boundaries between this patient and staff. It is further argued that while the alleged incident was morally reprehensible, it was understandable in such a culture.

[1] This events surrounding this Inquiry and in particular the 'story' of Isabella Lewers has been previously published in: J Bradshaw & W Madsen, 'Gender and domesticity in Woogaroo Asylum 1865-1869, in B Knight, B Walker-Gibbs & J Delamoir (eds), *Research into 21st century communities,* Post Pressed, Teneriffe, 2007, pp. 33-46.

4.1 Political Context: Queensland Government 1866

At the beginning of 1866, the year of the first Inquiry into Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, Queensland appeared to be a colony full of promise. Queensland's Parliamentary Speaker, Gilbert Elliot, spoke proudly of Queensland's progress at the final parliamentary sitting of 1865; since separation its population had almost quadrupled, revenue and trade had trebled, and a 'pastoral occupation' had spread to an area greater than four times that of the United Kingdom.

> These facts … cannot fail to be interesting and instructive to our fellow-countrymen at home … a subject of honest pride, and of devout thankfulness.[2]

The Government's belief in a prosperous future was reflected in the construction of a new Asylum building for paying patients completed in July 1866; 'built of stone, [it] presents a rather imposing appearance.'[3] An investment of £2500[4] to provide accommodation for a more affluent population was very apt in a climate of economic optimism. However, this building would prove too costly to outfit,[5] and was never used for its original purpose. Buoyant with hope of a prosperous future, the Government had borrowed heavily to finance a vigorous assisted immigration scheme, a public works program and an ambitious railway project. When their major source of revenue, the London based Agra and Masterman's Bank collapsed in mid 1866, the Queensland Government was plunged into a financial crisis.[6]

Premier Arthur Macalister outlined the grim reality of Queensland's fiscal disaster: 'The Government account at the Bank is largely overdrawn; our credit is stopped, and the Government's cheques dishonored.'[7] The consequences were immediate with all public spending suspended.[8] Lack of funding for the mammoth rail project meant that approximately one thousand men lost their jobs, and many more losses were expected to

---

[2] Queensland Legislative Assembly 1865, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 309.
[3] 'Public Works', *The Brisbane Courier,* 19 July 1866, p. 2.
[4] Ibid.
[5] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 761.
[6] J Kellett, 'Bread or Blood, 1865', in R Evans & C Ferrier (eds), *Radical Brisbane. An unruly history*, The Vulger Press, Carlton North, 2004, pp. 41-42.
[7] Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings,* pp. 438-439.
[8] R Evans, *A history of Queensland*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 85-87.

follow.[9] Recently arrived immigrants were without any means of support: 'We have no desire to become a burden to the City of Brisbane, or disgrace its street by lounging about them as idlers. Employment of any description is our request.'[10] The newly unemployed expressed their anger in a mass food riot calling for 'Bread or blood'.[11]

Blaming the Government for the dire financial situation, the *Brisbane Courier* Editor was matter of fact: 'the present crisis seems to have arisen, in a great measure from your incurring expense before you had the money to cover your liability.'[12] Endeavouring to remedy the situation, Macalister's Government attempted to introduce unsecured Government notes.[13] Political turmoil ensued when Governor Bowen blocked this move and Macalister promptly resigned. However, soon afterwards, Bowen invited him to form a new government, which he did on August 7.[14]

In September 1866, at the peak of the Government's financial and political crisis, a report was received alleging that sexual misconduct had occurred at the Asylum.[15] The Government acted with alacrity to instigate an Inquiry to investigate the allegation. Certainly, the moral seriousness of the allegation should have led the Government to act quickly and decisively. However, the Government was also likely to have realised that the newsworthiness of a public inquiry into sexual misconduct within an asylum certainly had the potential to distract the community from reports of financial hardship and government mismanagement. Indeed, initiating an Inquiry also had the potential for Macalister's new Government to gain community confidence; being seen to safeguard and protect the colony's vulnerable lunatics and punish those who failed in their moral duty towards this population.

[9] Public Works', *The Brisbane Courier,* 19 July 1866, p. 2.
[10] 'The Passengers of the Netherby', *The Brisbane Courier,* 11 August 1866, p. 4.
[11] R Evans, *A history of Queensland*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 85-87.
[12] 'The Present Crisis', *The Brisbane Courier,* 20 August 1866, p. 5.
[13] P Wilson, 'Macalister, Arthur (1818–1883)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macalister-arthur-4055/text6455
[14] Ibid.
[15] 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 673.

4.2 Initiation of the first Inquiry into Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum

On August 15 1866 Visiting Justice Henry Buttanshaw received a letter from Warder Patrick Barry alleging that a sexual liaison had occurred between Chief Warder Haddon and inmate Isabella Lewers.[16] While Haddon had verbally reported the incident to Dr. Cannan, he intimated that Cannan's reaction had been threatening and not in keeping with the seriousness of the allegation:

> But he seems in place of taking steps to investigate the matter to threaten some of us with dismissal for interfering … however I with the other warders would not consciencely [sic] allow such a shameful proceeding to take place without reporting it.[17]

The Visiting Justice saw fit to immediately lay a formal charge against Chief Warder William John Haddon.[18]

Such a serious allegation obviously required investigation, yet Barry and Buttanshaw's actions may have been motivated by other factors. Buttenshaw did not consult with Dr. Cannan, nor notify him, about the allegation before charging Haddon as would have seemed reasonable. As outlined in the previous chapter, the fraught relationship between Buttanshaw and Dr. Cannan was characterised by sustained antagonism from Cannan and a dogged determination from Buttanshaw to continue fulfilling his obligations. Being able to circumvent Cannan by laying a charge against Haddon may have meant that Buttenshaw had finally found a means to avenge Cannan for his dismissive manner towards himself and his role. Barry implied that the decision to report the event to Buttenshaw was founded on moral integrity. Yet Barry's actions as a warder belie such moral commitment. He had a history of beating patients [19] and for being drunk on duty.[20] The Chief Warder presumably reported these misdemeanors to Cannan and while Cannan had 'cautioned' him for intemperance at least once,[21] it is probable that he had received other reprimands and cautions from Haddon and Cannan. Reporting the

[16] Visiting Justice to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 865 of 1866, 15 August 1866, Microfilm no. 6804.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 722.
[20] Ibid.
[21] 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 674.

allegation to Buttenshaw provided Barry an opportunity for retribution against Haddon and Cannan.

When notified of the charge, Cannan 'felt called upon' to conduct his own investigation.[22] In response to Cannan's questions, Chief Warder Haddon and Isabella Lewers denied the allegation and Matron Hill stated she had no knowledge of the event. Cannon therefore concluded that Patrick Barry's allegations were false as they could not be substantiated and Barry was accordingly punished with suspension.[23] Cannan further justified his conclusions. As Isabella Lewers was awaiting discharge her evidence was credible:

> … she had not for some months been treated as a patient; her relatives in Ireland having promised to send money to pay for her passage home; immediately on the receipt of which, her discharge will be applied for.[24]

However, the cursory nature of this investigation was very apparent. Given that William Haddon was present when staff and Isabella Lewers were questioned,[25] credibility was dubious. Moreover, given Cannan's history of refuting any accusations made by the Visiting Justice, it is not surprising that Cannan concluded that Barry's allegations were false. Indeed, it would seem that by conducting his own inquiry, Cannan had attempted to resume control and reverse the apparent challenge to his management. He was not successful.

On August 21 1866 the Colonial Secretary directed a Lunacy Commission to conduct an Inquiry:

> A charge of a very serious nature having been preferred against Chief Warder Haddon of the Lunatic Asylum, I am directed to summon the Commission for the purpose of investigating the charge.[26]

---

[22] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, 20 August 1866, in Ibid., p. 673.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] A.W. Manning, Under Colonial Secretary to Lieut. Colonel Gray P.M. Ipswich, 21 August 1866, in Ibid., p. 674.

Cannan's management generally appeared to be under scrutiny; the Commission was also directed to inquire into the authenticity of anonymous reports received by the government that reflected 'upon the general treatment of the lunatics under Dr. Cannan's charge.'[27]

Public inquiries form an important role in government decision-making,[28] but also serve other functions. Being triggered by 'some newsworthy incident, revelation, or a level of public disquiet that makes an issue politically sensitive',[29] the investigative aim of inquiries is obviously very important.[30] Certainly, an alleged sexual liaison between a lunatic asylum chief warder and a patient, albeit, one waiting to be discharged, was of great moral concern; it would prove 'newsworthy', create 'public disquiet' and hence require investigating. On the other hand, Weller argued that inquiries create 'the illusion of action, deflection of criticism, or co-option of critics.'[31] Given the Government's financial and political crisis in 1866, and their need to gain community credibility, this Inquiry would have indeed served to assist the Government. Inquiries also have a social function; with a 'dimension which passes … into the social sphere.'[32] The Inquiry into Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum originated in the 'social sphere', through the actions of Visiting Justice Henry Buttanshaw and Warder Patrick Barry. Both men were seemingly presented with an opportunity to challenge the leadership of Dr. Cannan, with each having their own personal reasons to do so. Thus, while this inquiry investigated a concerning immoral act alleged to have occurred at the Asylum, it also served to meet the needs of other players, including the Government and the two men who originally exposed the scandal.

---

[27] Ibid.
[28] W Brunton, 'The place of public inquiries in shaping New Zealand's national mental health policy 1858–1996', *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2005, p. 2.
[29] Ibid.
[30] P Weller, *Royal commissions and the making of public policy*, Macmillan Education, Melbourne, 1994, pp. 7-8.
[31] Ibid.
[32] GE Le Dain, 'The role of the public inquiry in our constitutional system', cited in W Brunton, 'The place of public inquiries in shaping New Zealand's national mental health policy 1858–1996', *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2005, p. 22.

4.3 Isabella Lewers: at the centre

It is difficult to discern much about Isabella's history prior to her Asylum admission. Only scant details are available from the official papers that accompanied her to the asylum. These indicated that she was charged with lunacy and in the act of committing 'grievous bodily harm' at the Magistrates' Court on April 12 1865. Prior to her appearance she was gaoled[33] and she and George Hodgson appeared on the same certificate.[34] These records do not state what grievous bodily harm she had committed, or was going to commit, nor why she was considered a lunatic. The Warrant to commit her to the Asylum declared that she did not 'have the means of paying for her maintenance', nor did she have 'friends or relatives who could be reasonably be expected to maintain her'.[35] These statements were ones that were regularly used on most Warrants for removal to the Asylum. Her Medical Certificates stated: she is of 'unsound mind and would be benefitted from treatment at the asylum'.[36] This is the same perfunctory statement used on most medical certificates in the 1860s to indicate insanity and the necessity of containment and treatment within a lunatic asylum.[37]

Isabella's Case Book entry by Dr. Cannan provides some understanding of her social circumstances. Admitted to the Asylum on April 14 1865, Isabella was nineteen years old, of Irish origin and a domestic servant.[38] Her occupation was not unexpected given that domestic servant was the most common female employment in the nineteenth century.[39] Immigration propaganda promoted Queensland as having abundant, well-remunerated domestic service positions[40] and Isabella may have migrated to Australia expecting to obtain a domestic servant role. In reality, these positions were not as

[33] Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 885 of 1865, 12 April 1865, Microfilm no. 6488.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] A review of warrants and medical certificates from 1865 associated with admission to Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum noted that the certifying medical practitioners almost invariably use these statements.
[38] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 93, 7 April 1865, Microfilm no. 4922.
[39] C Coleborne, 'Space, power and gender in the asylun in Victoria, 1850s-1870s', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia. Histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2003. p. 57.
[40] A Piper, 'Great expectations: efforts to entice women to Queensland from 1860 to 1900', *Queensland History Journal*, vol. 20, no. 8, 2008, pp. 373-377.

lucrative, or as plentiful, as promised[41] and some women may not have gained employment. Newly arrived immigrants were given accommodation at the Brisbane Immigration Depot. With limited Government funding and the imminent arrival of more ships, some women were required to leave the Depot soon after they arrived, with, or without employment.[42] This may have been the case with Isabella. While many Asylum Casebook notations provided an address and/or the name of the patient's employer, Isabella's record did not contain these details.[43] Thus, it is presumed that Isabella had not obtained employment or a permanent address at the time of her admission. She also did not appear to have family or social support. Dr. Cannan's note of 'no history'[44] suggested that there was no one of significance to supply a 'history' at the time of her admission or later. Other evidence also implied this. In August 1866, as noted earlier, Dr. Cannan was waiting on money from her Irish relatives[45] to finance her return passage to Ireland.[46] This was not a common practice at the Asylum.[47] Usually, relatives, friends or employers residing in Queensland applied for the female inmate's release;[48] in doing so implied that they would offer support on discharge.

Isabella was physically ill on admission, which may explain why she had not gained employment. Dr. Cannan noted the cause of her admission was 'fever', describing her condition as: 'very weak emaciated state as if suffering from the delirium of a low fever.' He further noted: 'to have port wine - beef tea and arrowroot, frequently refusing to be fed – dry tongue.'[49] A 'dry tongue' was indeed indicative of a physical illness. Further, a diet of 'beef tea and arrowroot' was one commonly administered to physically ill patients and 'port wine' favoured for 'medical comforts'.[50] Isabella quickly improved

[41] Ibid., p. 373
[42] Ibid., p. 378.
[43] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 93, 7 April 1865, Microfilm no. 4922.
[44] Ibid.
[45] It is not clear whether it was Isabella's Irish friends or relatives that Cannan had contacted as he used both terms throughout the Inquiry.
[46] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, 20 August 1866, 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 673.
[47] A review of the Casebook and 'Applications for release' from Cannan to the Colonial Secretary indicate only one other patient during this time period was waiting for discharge under similar circumstances.
[48] A review of the Casebook and 'Applications for release' from Cannan to the Colonial Secretary indicate that this was a common occurrence.
[49] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 93, 7 April 1865, Microfilm no. 4922.
[50] 'Hospitals of the Colony Report', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1655.

as indicated by her notes on May 10 and May 25: 'better'…'tongue moist - to have as much food as she can be got to swallow'; [51] and 'daily improvement in bodily health - weak in intellect still'.[52] The May 25 entry was the final one for 1865.

4.4 Relaxation and blurring of boundaries

By the time of the Inquiry, Isabella was occupying a privileged position within the Asylum social structure, her daily life being remarkably different to that of the other female patients. Her privileged position provided her with advantages; being able to move freely around the Asylum and not being required to adhere to strict patient routines. She also enjoyed a relationship with staff, which allowed her to be a part of their personal and professional lives.

The privileges afforded to Isabella allowed her freedom to access Asylum spaces not available to other female patients. Moving outside of strictly defined female gendered spaces,[53] she was only required to occupy a gendered space, the women's dormitory, at night.[54] This spatial freedom was unusual in nineteenth century asylums as gender separation was paramount,[55] in keeping with Victorian standards of sexual propriety.[56] Modeled on Victorian domestic and social spaces,[57] asylums were comprised of rigidly segregated indoor and outdoor spaces.[58] Female gendered spaces had another important objective; to provide an appropriate environment that would nurture a woman's capacity to assume suitable gendered attributes, signs of sanity.[59] However, segregation also

[51] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 93, 10 May 1865, Microfilm no. 4922.
[52] Ibid., 25 May 1865.
[53] 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 677
[54] Ibid.
[55] S Piddock, 'To each a space: class, classification, and gender in colonial South Australian institutions', *Historical Archaeology*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2011, p. 99.
[56] C Coleborne, *Reading 'madness': gender and difference in the Colonial Asylum in Victoria, Australia, 1848-1880*, Network Books, 2007, p. 8.
[57] C Coleborne, 'Space, power and gender in the asylum in Victoria, 1850s-1870s', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia. Histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2003, p. 49.
[58] S Piddock, 'To each a space: class, classification, and gender in colonial South Australian institutions', *Historical Archaeology*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2011, p. 100.
[59] C Coleborne, 'Space, power and gender in the asylum in Victoria, 1850s-1870s', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia. Histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2003, p. 53.

served another pragmatic function, to prevent sexual encounters between males and females.[60] Indeed, evidence of gendered spaces being transgressed indicated an asylum was in a 'disordered state'.[61]

Spatial and chronological parameters helped define the inmate status. The requirement to remain with others sharing the same status in specific gendered spaces, and undertake activities of daily living with these same people at prescribed times, defined the institutional day and reminded inmates of their position. Isabella was not subject to such reminders. In addition to having spatial freedom, Isabella was not required to adhere to the same rigid time schedule expected of other inmates. While staff still directed her movements, she was allowed to eat and retire to bed at different times to the other females. [62] Erving Goffman argued that while strict timetables were essential for organisational efficiency in total institutions, they also acted to dehumanise by removing choices.[63] Thus, despite being an inmate of Woogaroo Asylum, parameters that defined Isabella as a patient were relaxed.

Isabella's employment status further served to signify her privileged Asylum role, differentiating her from other women inmates and reinforcing her relaxed patient boundaries. Most able nineteenth century asylum patients were required to be 'employed'[64] and indeed employment was an integral part of asylum inmate life. Dr. Cannan explained work as valuable in promoting health in inmates,[65] as did Dr. Robertson at the Kew Asylum Inquiry in Victoria.[66] However, Catharine Coleborne suggested that such explanations served to rationalise the need for patients to work, as the asylum economy was dependent upon inmate employment.[67] Certainly the work undertaken by female patients at Woogaroo was essential. Similar to other nineteenth

---

[60] S Piddock, 'To each a space: class, classification, and gender in colonial South Australian institutions', *Historical Archaeology*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2011, p. 99.
[61] A Scull, *The asylum as utopia: W.A.F. Browne and the mid-nineteenth century consolidation of psychiatry,* Tavistock/Routledge, London, 1991, pp. xxxiv-xxxv.
[62] 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, pp. 678, 677.
[63] E Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates,* Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961, p. 17.
[64] While the patients did not receive a wage, the term 'employed' was commonly used to signify work that inmates undertook in nineteenth century asylums.
[65] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 1076.
[66] Kew Inquiry, *Report*, p. 71, cited in C Coleborne, 'Space, power and gender in the asylum in Victoria, 1850s-1870s', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia. Histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2003, p. 54.
[67] Ibid.

century asylums,[68] the females at Woogaroo were 'employed' in gendered work; undertaking the Asylum's laundry and making most of the inmates' clothing and bedding.[69] Isabella, however, was employed at much less menial work befitting her favoured status. She acted as Matron Hill's 'companion', did small chores for her,[70] helped out the Chief Warder's wife, and babysat the Haddon children.[71]

Blurring of patient-staff boundaries reinforced a lack of definition of Isabella's patient role. Role boundaries generally had the potential to be less marked at Woogaroo. Goffman explained the essential 'split' between staff and patients related to the staff's capacity to enjoy 'social mobility'. In contrast to staff who typically lived in the outside world, inmates in total institutions had 'social mobility … grossly restricted'.[72] However, Woogaroo Asylum staff did not have opportunities for 'social mobility' characteristic of staff in total institutions. Similar to the inmates they supervised, they were largely remote from the outside world. In 1866, warders and nurses were required to live at the Asylum,[73] and leave was infrequent and had to be applied for.[74] The Asylum was geographically isolated: it was surrounded by 116 acres of land[75] and could only be reached by steamer. The stockade fence surrounding the Asylum increased its sense of seclusion as staff and inmates could not see beyond it.[76] With staff and patients sharing the same perimeter, and staff having limited opportunities for outside social integration, role boundaries were certainly less likely to be rigid. Patricia D'Antonio explained another aspect of asylum life creating a less marked patient-staff divide; staff and inmates working together to support the asylum economy.[77] This was a common practice at Woogaroo. Male staff worked with patients on tasks such as cutting wood,

---

[68] JL Geller & M Harris, *Women of the asylum*, Anchor, New York, 1994, p. 119.
[69] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings* p. 1071.
[70] 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 673.
[71] Ibid., p. 678
[72] E Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961, p. 19.
[73] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 1068.
[74] Ibid.
[75] 'Hospitals of the Colony Report', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. p. 1653.
[76] Charles Tiffin, Colonial Architect to The Surveyor General, 27 September 1861, 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p.934.
[77] P D'Antonio, 'Staff needs and patient care: seclusion and restraint in a nineteenth-century insane asylum', *Transactions and Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1991, p. 415.

mending tracks and clearing bush.[78] On the female side, the laundress worked with patients doing the Asylum's laundry and nurses sewed with their charges making the institution's clothes and bedding.[79] It would seem logical that sharing of tasks would relax role demarcation. While role boundaries generally lacked rigidity at Woogaroo, Isabella Lewer's privileged position increased the potential for further relaxation of this divide.

Isabella's privileged role allowed her to share a number of facets of staff's personal and professional lives. Erving Goffman described that such sharing contributed to a particular form of role blurring. Staff necessarily keep parts of their lives separate from the institution and inmates. However, when inmates perform personal services for staff, this separation is threatened.[80] It is apparent that separation was not maintained with Isabella. In undertaking personal tasks for staff, and helping them in their professional role, she indeed became part of their everyday and professional lives.

Despite Isabella Lewer's favoured status being explained as due to her readiness for discharge,[81] it is probable that other factors were involved, as this was not a common practice. Similar privileges were not awarded to other Woogaroo patients waiting for discharge.[82] Susan Piddock explained that nineteenth century asylum classification was subjective and not always related to the patient's condition. Instead, it rewarded appropriate behaviour and conversely punished inappropriate behaviour.[83] It is likely that Isabella's privileged classification was a reward for appropriate behaviour. Certainly, Dr. Cannan and Matron Hill's descriptions suggest she demonstrated appropriate feminine attributes; 'never saw anything flighty about her'[84] and 'a very quiet good girl'.[85] Indeed such descriptions imply trustworthiness and gendered traits

[78] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 755.
[79] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1071.
[80] E Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961, p. 89.
[81] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, 20 August 1866, 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 673.
[82] Evidence for this statement includes a review of the Casebook and letters to the Colonial Secretary from Dr. Cannan requesting discharge and the four Inquiries between 1865 and 1869.
[83] S Piddock, 'To each a space: class, classification, and gender in colonial South Australian institutions', *Historical Archaeology*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2011, p. 103.
[84] 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 677.
[85] Ibid.

indicative of sanity.[86] However, the image of quiet female domesticity suggestive in the roles Isabella occupied and in the descriptions of her attributes were at odds with other aspects of her behaviour.

In early April 1866, Isabella managed to escape from the Matron's quarters and fled to Ipswich, approximately fifteen miles away. She did not return of her own accord, but was brought back five days later somewhat 'reduced in health.'[87] In reporting the escape to the Colonial Secretary, Cannan implied it was of little importance. His justification was the same one he later used to justify Isabella's credibility and her privileged status, that he was waiting for funds to arrange her return passage to Ireland.[88] Yet an escape normally incurred loss of privileges. Given her alleged sexual liaison with Chief Warder Haddon only three months later, it may be that Isabella was rebelling against, or attempting to escape from, her 'privileged' position. As discussed earlier, parameters defining her inmate status had largely been removed and this was likely to have encouraged individuality. Catharine Coleborne also cited examples of female patients rebelling against their patient status in nineteenth century Australian asylums.[89] Erving Goffman stated that privileges in an institution were not equivalent to perquisites, rather, they were the 'absence of deprivations.'[90] Thus, Isabella may not have perceived her privileges as such, and instead saw them as oppressive and fuelling a need to escape. The next chapter outlines Isabella's later escapes, suggesting that this may indeed be the reason. Isabella's escape demonstrated rebellious behaviour, not befitting the image of a docile female reflected in Dr. Cannan and Matron Hill's descriptions. However, it did not change her status nor curtail her freedom as would be expected. Thus while Isabella's gendered attributes may have contributed to her privileged status, it seemed that they were not pre-requisites.

---

[86] C Coleborne, 'Space, power and gender in the asylum in Victoria, 1850s-1870s', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia. Histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2003, p. 53.
[87] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 93, 25 April 1866, Microfilm no. 4922.
[88] Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 1153 of 1866, 27 April 1866, Microfilm no. 6807.
[89] For similar conclusions about 19th century female asylum patients, see: C Coleborne, *'Reading madness': gender and difference in the colonial asylum in Victoria, Australia, 1848-1880*, Network Books, 2007.
[90] E Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates,* Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961, p. 53.

The explanation that Isabella was 'not really a patient' was used to justify to the Government and the Lunacy Commission her privileged status. This same explanation might also partly clarify why Isabella's earlier escape, despite negating appropriate gendered behaviour, was not punished. After she was returned to the Asylum, Isabella continued to occupy her same privileged role. This suggests that the staff generally may well have viewed her as 'not really a patient', and thus did not require punishing. Isabella also appeared to be valuable to staff. She was very useful, amenable and able to perform small gendered domestic duties. It may have been that staff depended on Isabella to relieve them from some of their onerous duties. It is also proposed that Isabella may have been an engaging young woman and fitted in well with the Asylum staff community. She may have presented a respite from the drudgery of their lives. Therefore, it would seem that despite being an inmate, the Asylum community embraced Isabella's qualities. It is these qualities and her usefulness to staff that seem to explain her lack of punishment after escaping and why she occupied a privileged position. Matron Hill enjoyed her company,[91] staff referred to her by the pet name 'Bella',[92] the children of the asylum played with her, and the Chief Warder allegedly had a sexual liaison with her. Erving Goffman noted the consequences of this type of relationship in total institutions:

> When unusual intimacies and relationships do occur across the staff-inmate line, we know that involvement cycles may follow and all kinds of awkward reverberations are likely to occur with a subversion of authority and social distance.[93]

Thus, in such a culture, that rendered a vulnerable woman to an ambiguous position of 'patient' and 'not a patient', a 'servant' yet not a 'servant', and a 'companion' yet not a 'friend' to Asylum staff, it is not unexpected that an inappropriate sexual liaison would occur, or staff would produce a rumour suggesting such an occurrence.

---

[91] This is apparent through her employment as a 'companion'.
[92] Nurse Margaret Thompson referred to her as 'Bella' in her evidence to the Inquiry: 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 679.
[93] E Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates,* Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961, p. 89.

4.5 The Inquiry: evidence and the Commission's response

An investigation into the alleged sexual liaison between Haddon and Isabella Lewers elicited evidence that was somewhat contradictory, with most Asylum staff providing their own perceptions of the scandal. Isabella was not interviewed. Despite inconsistent evidence, a trajectory of the events of Sunday July 8 1866, when the alleged incident occurred between Chief Warder William Haddon and Isabella Lewers, can be established.

William Haddon spent most of July 8 in Brisbane with his wife and returned to the Asylum in the late afternoon without Mrs. Haddon, who had remained in Brisbane.[94] Although leave was not common for most Asylum staff, it was rare for the Chief Warder as he was expected to be on duty at all times.[95] It appeared that he had taken advantage of this break arriving back at the Asylum somewhat inebriated. Mrs. Hill's description, 'he had had a little drink. But I did not consider him tipsy',[96] was confirmed by Warder Barry. While acknowledging that Haddon had appeared to be under the influence of alcohol, Barry admitted that 'he could do his work as usual.'[97] Isabella's routine on that day was no different to other days and reflected her privileged role; being a companion to the Matron[98] and playing with the Haddon children who had remained at the asylum.[99]

That night Isabella ate supper separately to the other female patients and shortly afterwards was witnessed by Mrs. Hill 'larking' with Haddon: 'He was trying to catch hold of her. She was laughing.'[100] Her description of the interaction as 'harmless'[101] would later cause Mrs. Hill much condemnation. Haddon's account of his contact with Isabella was that it was simply a friendly encounter; he was informing Isabella that he had met a shipmate of hers in Brisbane who had asked after her. Haddon recounted that soon afterwards Isabella came to his house to inform him that his tea was ready. After

[94] 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 677.
[95] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 701.
[96] 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 678.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., p. 677.
[99] Ibid., p. 678.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

offering to share it with her, she declined, stating that she had to go back.[102] Jane Pitt, the laundress, observed differently. She had witnessed Isabella and Haddon sitting together on the verandah with his children when she went to inform him that his tea was ready.[103] It appeared that Isabella and Haddon both disappeared soon afterwards.[104]

Various accounts of Haddon and Isabella's supposed sexual liaison were offered to the Lunacy Commission. Haddon stated he had lain on his children's bed alone after tea and slept until morning.[105] However, Warder Barry and Nurse Margaret Thompson stated he was not alone after tea as both had witnessed Isabella and Haddon together on his bed.[106] Margaret Thompson had elaborated: '… he was rolling her about on the bed. Her dress was not up … Bella was laughing; she did appear to be trying to get away from him.'[107] Nurse Thompson, implying responsible behaviour, stated she called for Isabella to come away. When Isabella failed to acknowledge her, Margaret Thompson left to seek help from Jane Pitt, the laundress. On their return, the house was empty.[108] Conversely, Jane Pitt denied that Nurse Thompson sought her help.[109] Further challenging the veracity of the evidence was Mrs. Hill's account; when Isabella was missing she went looking for her at Haddon's house and found it empty.[110] After Isabella had been missing for about an hour, Mrs. Hill saw her emerge alone from an area near the creek and accepted her story of being lost in the scrub. She did not consider that anything untoward had occurred between Haddon and Isabella as she had seen Haddon in the refractory yard twenty minutes before discovering Isabella.[111] Isabella Lewer's disappearance was not reported to Dr. Cannan who was informed by Warder Cronan that night that everything was satisfactory.[112]

The Lunacy Commission reached a number of conclusions from the conflicting evidence. The Commission concluded that Chief Warder William Haddon was not sober when he returned from Brisbane and the 'undue familiarity and impropriety' exhibited

[102] Ibid., p. 680.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., p. 678.
[105] Ibid., p. 679
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., p. 680.
[110] Ibid., p. 678.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., p. 677.

towards Isabella prior to the alleged incident was not befitting his position.[113] As both Haddon and Isabella had disappeared at the same time, with Haddon seen again only shortly before Isabella's return, led the Committee to presume that they were in company together for immoral purposes.[114] Supporting their supposition of Haddon's guilt was the evidence provided by Mrs. Hill and Margaret Thompson, which contradicted that made by Haddon.[115] The Commission was condemning of Warder Patrick Barry. They concluded that Barry's evidence of having witnessed Haddon and Isabella together was not credible and implied that this was invented in order to support his report to the Visiting Justice. The Commission therefore concluded that Barry's motives in reporting the incident to the Visiting Justice stemmed entirely from self-interest and not from altruism. Justifying their conclusions, the Commission argued that if Barry had indeed witnessed Haddon and Isabella together as he stated, it meant that he had failed to report his observation to Mrs. Hill when he knew Isabella was missing. The Committee concluded:

> In neither case can he be considered a fit and proper person to hold the situation of warder in an institution of so peculiar a nature as a lunatic asylum.[116]

The Commission was also highly critical of Matron Hills' attitude in not seeing the impropriety in allowing 'larking' between warders and female inmates, denouncing her stance as 'regrettable'.[117] As a result of the Lunacy Commission's findings, the government saw fit to follow their recommendations and dismiss Haddon and Barry and to censure Mrs. Hill.[118]

It appeared that the Lunacy Commission based their conclusions on a number of assumptions. Haddon having imbibed alcohol during his leave made him culpable. The familiarity between Haddon and Isabella evident earlier in the night meant that when both were unable to be found for a period of approximately forty minutes, that a sexual liaison had occurred. Mrs. Hill not suspecting ulterior motives when she noticed Haddon and Isabella laughing together, and when both had disappeared at the same time,

[113] Ibid., p. 675.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., p. 676.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Colonial Secretary to Lieutenant-Colonel Gray, 5 September 1866, Ibid., p. 682.

signified that she was not a suitable matriarch. These assumptions may be challenged. The strong association in mid-nineteenth century between alcohol and immorality, strengthened by the dominance of the temperance movement[119] was likely to have led the Commission to assume such an association with Haddon. Matron Hill's matriarchal role, perceived as what Cheryl Day termed, a 'guardian of morality',[120] was an idealistic one. In accepting 'larking' between Haddon and Isabella, the Committee assumed that Matron Hill had failed absolutely in this role. The assumption that because Isabella and Haddon were missing at the same time, a sexual liaison had occurred, fits with the Victorian belief that men were animalistic in their sexual desires and easily tempted.[121] However, what the Committee did not take into account in reaching their conclusions, was that 'larking', the alleged incident, and staff perceptions that an alleged incident had occurred, took place in a climate of blurred role boundaries and relaxed asylum structures.

Considerations associated with Dr. Cannan's management were not apparent in the Commission's Report, implying Cannan was blameless. Had a sexual liaison occurred between Haddon, in a position of power, and Isabella Lewers, a vulnerable Asylum patient, the Commission indeed should have been very condemning of Haddon. However, ultimately, Cannan's lax management in facilitating and/or condoning an Asylum culture that created relaxed patient definitions and blurred role boundaries between patients and staff should have been investigated and included in the Committee's conclusions.

4.6 Press and Government response to the Commission's report and recommendations

Inquiry reports and recommendations are usually a balancing act; aimed somewhere between what would be seen as politically appealing and what would be damning to the

[119] S Garton, "Once a drunkard always a drunkard': social reform and the problem of 'habitual drunkenness' in Australia, 1880-1914', *Labour History*, vol. 53, 1987, p. 38.
[120] C Day, Magnificence, misery and madness: A history of the Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1995, p. 341.
[121] JA Allen, *Sex and secrets: crimes involving Australian women since 1880*, Oxford University Press Melbourne, 1990.

government.[122] This Inquiry's report was not at all damning for the Government. The Government, and Dr. Cannan, enacted to carry out the Government's moral agency, were not portrayed as culpable. The Government were likely to have been pleased with such conclusions given the crises they were experiencing and their need to gain community confidence. It would also seem that the Commission's recommendations would align with the community's moral expectations; while there was a disturbing conclusion of immorality, the guilty had been identified and punished. However, the Commission's conclusions evoked a different reaction.

The *Brisbane Courier* Editor was scathing of the Commission's Report and Recommendations. Indicating that the pride the colony had in its Asylum was now 'shattered' by the events exposed by the Inquiry, he implied that the Government had been remiss in their supervision of asylum staff: 'The officials of these institutions, in fact, as a rule, need looking after almost as much as the patients in their charge.'[123] Dr. Kearsey Cannan also attracted criticism:

> … the staff at the center of the Inquiry show a want of discipline, which certainly reflects no credit on the Surgeon Superintendent, Dr. Cannan.[124]

The Editor was equally disparaging of the Government's response. Despite the Government following the Commission's recommendations and dismissing Haddon and Barry, the Editor claimed that other staff were also guilty and this should have been acknowledged. Staff who had not reported Isabella's disappearance and known of the alleged sexual liaison also required censuring. These staff 'whose services are still retained, evinced a disposition to hush this serious and disgusting matter over.'[125] Mrs. Hills, in particular, was judged harshly by the Editor:

> [She is] unfit to hold her very responsible situation … [as] she not only failed to report the affair to her superior, but, both at the time it occurred, and in her evidence, she appears to have treated it a

[122] AR Prest, 'Royal commission reporting', in M Bulmer (ed), *Social Research and Royal Commissions*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1980, p. 181.
[123] 'The Courier', *The Brisbane Courier,* 16 October 1866, p. 2.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.

> great deal too lightly, considering not only her position but her sex.'[126]

The editorial ended with a grim warning to the government:

> A lunatic asylum, with such persons as these over the patients, may very probably, unless the head official exercises the utmost vigilance, degenerate into a terrestrial pandemonium, and become a disgrace to the country where it is situated, and a foul stain upon humanity.[127]

Parliamentary reponse to the *Brisbane Courier* Editor's accusations was championed by the Honorary Western Wood who downplayed Cannan's involvment. Suggestive of cronyism between Cannan and Members of Parliament,[128] Woods expressed that he did not wish 'to censure the Surgeon-Superintendent', however:

> … he did not think sufficient care was afforded, or restraint placed upon, persons in the half-witted state in which the girl, Isabella Lewers had shewn to be.

Similar to the *Brisbane Courier* Editor, Woods was indignant at the actions of the Asylum staff who had known of Isabella's disappearance and failed to report the matter to Dr. Cannan. Woods called for action to be taken:

> … a clean sweep … to be made of all the subordinate officials who were aware of the matter and did not report it for upwards of five weeks to the Surgeon Superintendant'[129]

The Government expressed gratitude to Woods for bringing the resolution forward and promised to take further steps.[130] However, the only additional action taken by the Government at this time was the dismissal of Mrs Hill.[131]

---

[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] See Chapter 2 for further discussion of cronyism.
[129] 'Legislative Council', *The Brisbane Courier,* 16 October 1866, p. 2.
[130] Ibid.
[131] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 699.

4.7 Conclusion

An anaysis of the inaugural Inquiry into Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum highlighted lax management by Dr. Cannan, resulting in an Asylum environment where a female patient was able to assume a non-patient status, boundaries between staff and patients were burred and staff responding accordingly. In such an environment it may have not been unexpected for staff and a privileged inmate to cross further moral and staff-patient boundaries. It did seem that these barriers were crossed. This ultimately had negative consequences. Isabella Lewers, the patient at the centre of the Inquiry, would continue to attract attention and indeed her story continues in the next chapter and details how her privileged position was removed. By 1869, instead of the expected discharge back to Ireland, she was spending most of her days restrained. Sadly, in January 1882, Isabella died 'from excitement' while still an inmate in the Asylum.[132] Staff lost their positions. While it would be difficult to express empathy for Haddon's likely immoral behaviour, and it would seem that he deserved to lose his position, his behaviour towards Isabella can be understood in the context of an asylum environment with relaxed moral structures. Mrs. Hills' acceptance of the seemingly flirtatious behaviour between Haddon and Isabella, can similarly be understood, and yet her actions received the same punishment as Haddon, loss of employment.

Despite criticism from the *Brisbane Courier* Editor and Hon. Western Wood, Dr. Kearsey Cannan and the Government would remain blamleless. Additional Goverment action in dismissing Matron Hills seemed to placate these critics and forstall further criticism. It would have been idealistic for the Government to expect that this Inquiry would divert community attention away from their fiscal mismanagment, given the enormity of their financial and political crisis. However, lack of sustained criticism from the press and Parliament, suggests that, in part, they had succeeded in regaining community approval as an effective moral agent. The Government was seen to investigate a transgression against morality at the Asylum and punish those who were guilty. Further, Dr. Cannan, the Government's representative to enact moral agency was not portayed as guilty. While the Lunacy Commission had been directed to inquire into the authenticity of some anonymous reports received by the government that reflected

[132] *The Brisbane Courier,* 18 January 1882, p. 2.

'upon the general treatment of the lunatics under Dr. Cannan's charge,'[133] this had not occurred and thus there was no evidence that Dr. Cannan was not successfully fulfilling his role. Dr. Cannan and the Government were able to maintain a façade of success.

An Inquiry has the potential to shape Government policy making and continues to be a useful and versatile tool for governments as it is independent and considers many facets of the evidence before making conclusions.[134] However, it seemed that this inaugural Inquiry into the Asylum was largely instigated to provide the Government with some much needed community approval. While the Government did follow the Commission's recommendations, and then partially acquiesced to the recommendations from the press and the Hon. Mr. Woods, they did not heed the warnings implicit in the Inquiry. The *Brisbane Courier* Editor, while overly dramatic in alerting the Government to take heed of the events of the Inquiry and consider what was happening at the Asylum, did offer sound advice. Sadly, despite the Inquiry, the Government did not perceive a need to change their position of parsimony and inattentiveness in relation to the Asylum. It would not be surprising that another Inquiry was instigated within twelve months.

[133] A.W. Manning, Under Colonial Secretary to Lieut. Colonel Gray P.M. Ipswich, 21 August 1866, 'Papers in reference to an Inquiry with regards to a charge of improper conduct against the Chief Warder, Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 674.
[134] W Brunton, 'The place of public inquiries in shaping New Zealand's national mental health policy 1858–1996', *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2005, p. 2

Chapter 5

Ordinariness as a measure of success

Colonial Australians were dislocated in a foreign land far distant from what was known and familiar. To decrease feelings of heterogeneity and foreignness and create a sense of 'home', traditional British social structures were imported and transplanted into the colonial context. These structures, behaviours and values fostered a sense of comfort that nothing was out of the ordinary and that the British way of life could continue unaffected by its surroundings. Perceiving this as ordinariness brought a sense of stability and continuity in an alien social and physical landscape, and a reminder of belongingness to the mother country. It also came to indicate a measure of success.

Measuring success through the presence of ordinariness was evident across colonial life. It was apparent in meeting gendered expectations within traditional family structures; such traditional structures meant a stable social fabric for colonial Australia. The colonial Queensland Government sought ordinariness in rigid class structures to affirm their membership of the upper class, a status commensurate with successful leaders. Within asylums, Victorian domestic ordinariness was perceived as a measure of successful moral therapy. It is therefore not surprising that ordinariness was used as a measure in the 1867 Parliamentary Commission Inquiry into Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum.

The 1867 Parliamentary Commission Inquiry was instigated when concerns were expressed in Parliament about the moral welfare of an asylum patient. Isabella Lewers, the focus of the previous 1866 Commission of Lunacy Inquiry, had been found in Brisbane after escaping from the Asylum. An Inquiry was initiated to investigate her escape and the management of the Asylum. Using ordinariness as a measure, the Parliamentary Commission concluded that management of the Asylum was satisfactory and by association the Government was successful in enacting effective moral agency.

This chapter explores the use of ordinariness in this 1867 Inquiry as a tool to measure successful Asylum management and effective moral agency by the Government. It is argued that ordinariness was an inappropriate measure, as British traditional social structures representing ordinariness required adapting to fit the colonial landscape. Further, as it was not an appropriate measure, its use meant that conclusions were doubtful.

5.1 Importance of ordinariness to colonial Australians

Ordinariness assisted colonists to deal with the uncertainty of colonial life. Australia's alien landscape was not neatly organised into established local populations with known class and occupational distinctions. Instead, as described by David Fitzpatrick, it was 'a restless swarm of beings with diverse and exotic origins, having little in common.'[1] Enacting known structures decreased a sense of differentness. Empire, state and colonial leaders lending impetus to this need, ensured continued allegiance to Britain by constantly reminding colonists that the colonies were only 'outgrowths of home' and their true 'home' was that of their 'home' country.[2] Thus, for the individual, reproducing ordinariness created links with one's heritage and demonstrated continued commitment to the imperial context. Ultimately, however, colonial Australian society never was a perfect copy of Britain: '… at its best [it] was only partially transplanted.'[3]

Relocating British middle class family structures to the Australian colonial context suggested potential social and economic stability for Australia. However, a fundamental difficulty was encountered; Australia had a predominantly male society. A raft of social and moral issues was blamed on Australia's male bias: general moral laxity; female promiscuity; prostitution; illegitimate children; male homosexuality; and unsanctioned unions.[4] Marriage and family seemed to offer the only solution to

[1] D Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of consolation: personal accounts of Irish migration to Australia*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1994, p. 609.
[2] Ibid., p. 620.
[3] C Moore, 'Colonial manhood and masculinities', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 22, no. 56, 1998, p. 36.
[4] K Alford, *Production or reproduction? An economic history of women in Australia, 1788-1850*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1984, pp. 20, 31.

remedy these ills,[5] as it provided a strong moral structure to instill the values of virtue and industry, which would then lead to broad decorum and foster social stability.[6] This was difficult to achieve with a preponderance of males.

Marriage and family did eventually become prevalent socio-economic institutions by the 1840s.[7] However, the traditional patriarchal family structure, with its requisite prescriptive gendered roles, was not always achieved. Rigid expectations associated with masculinity and femininity did not always fit easily into the colonial experience.

Successful masculinity was traditionally measured by a man's capacity to fulfill the roles of husband, father, provider and to be an economically viable and productive community member,[8] while demonstrating the concomitant values of self-control, thrift, continence, sobriety and industry.[9] These qualities were certainly apt for colonial Australia. Toil by sober and morally upright males who provided for their wives and families while contributing to their communities would certainly lead to the survival and progress of a self-supporting colony.

Colonial Australia's masculinist culture, however, contrasted with traditional measures of masculinity. Queensland, in particular, was noted for a highly masculinist culture emanating from its penal origins and extreme gender-imbalance.[10] As Raymond Evans described, 'the pioneering of the harsh terrain [of Queensland]: rambunctious, brash, violent and larrikin' fostered this culture.[11] Further, it was the iconic bushman image that came to embody the nineteenth century masculine character,[12] far removed from the characteristics associated with the British bourgeois middle class family man. In fact, as Marilyn Lake noted, Australian nineteenth

[5] A Bashford, *Purity and pollution: gender, embodiment, and Victorian medicine*, Macmillan, London, 1998, p. 9.
[6] K Alford, *Production or reproduction? An economic history of women in Australia, 1788-1850*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1984, p. 9.
[7] Ibid., p. 31.
[8] C Coleborne, 'Regulating 'mobility' and masculinity through institutions in colonial Victoria, 1870s-1890s', *Law Text Culture*, vol. 15, 2011, p. 50.
[9] R Evans, 'The hidden colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland ', in J Roe (ed), *Social policy in Australia. Some perspectives 1901-1976*, Cassell, Sydney, 1976, p. 76.
[10] Ibid.
[11] R Evans, *A history of Queensland*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 78.
[12] M Lake, 'Historical reconsiderations lV: the politics of respectability: identifying the masculinist context', *Historical Studies*, vol. 22, no. 86, 1986, pp. 116-131.

century masculinity discourse opposed traditional male gendered prescriptions and instead, denounced marriage and proclaimed the attractions of bachelorhood.[13]

The apogee of the middle class female archetype, reflected in traditional British society, was characterised by marriage and motherhood and fitted neatly with the traditional patriarch role. With the man being the provider, the woman was necessarily distant from the world of work, 'especially that which was manual, physically taxing and paid'.[14] This allowed her to remain in the home and demonstrate feminine qualities of 'daintiness, refinement and taste in matters of dress and pursuit.'[15] Traditionally, relatives and social networks reinforced these gendered attributes. However, colonial Australia's geographical isolation meant that these salient influences were often not present.[16] Further, the reality of many colonial women's lives conflicted with these ideals.

The colonial context for some women meant they could not demonstrate the traditional gendered role. Women needed to reverse roles when their circumstances required them to provide for themself and their family. Marilyn Lake suggested that overt 'masculinism' in colonial society led to subordination of women with some having to seek other income when their own and their family's welfare were threatened from inadequate economic support or violence.[17] Howard Le Couteur's account of Julia Cross living with an alcoholic abusive husband in mid-nineteenth century Queensland, provided evidence of colonial women's capacity to find other sources of income.[18] Patricia Grimshaw observed another aspect of role change associated with the Australian landscape. She described a blurring of the patriarchal marriage divide occurring, when, out of necessity, wives and husbands assumed equal partnership in pioneering enterprises.[19] Further, the unmarried woman working for her living, antithetical to gendered expectations, found her working role valued in

[13] Ibid.
[14] K Alford, *Production or reproduction? An economic history of women in Australia, 1788-1850*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1984, p. 8.
[15] Ibid.
[16] P Grimshaw, 'Women and the family in Australian history', in E Windschuttle (ed), *Women, class and history. Feminist perspectives on Australia 1788-1978*, Fontana, Melbourne, 1980, p. 41.
[17] M Lake, 'Historical reconsiderations lV: the politics of respectability: identifying the masculinist context', *Historical Studies*, vol. 22, no. 86, 1986, pp. 116-131.
[18] LC Howard, 'Of intemperance, class and gender in colonial Queensland. A working-class woman's account of alcohol abuse', *History Australia*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2011, pp. 139-157.
[19] P Grimshaw, 'Women and the family in Australian history', in E Windschuttle (ed), *Women, class and history. Feminist perspectives on Australia 1788-1978*, Fontana, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 42-44.

Australia. While held with little regard in British society, in Australia her skills were sought after to fill much-wanted domestic service positions.[20] As expectations associated with traditional gendered roles were modified and adapted to fit the colonial Australian experience, their suitability as a measure of ordinariness, as defined by traditional social structures, became questionable.

Toil was a measure of ordinariness in colonial Australia. Being part of a suite of attributes expected from middle-class citizens, 'relatively sober, hard working, law abiding and pious,'[21] its close alignment with morality was evident. Indeed, idleness, the antithesis of toil, was associated with moral abandonment.[22] Pragmatically, toil was essential for survival and future prosperity in a new colony and would obviously be of utmost importance. Raymond Evans argued that toil had particular value in Queensland because of its convict legacy combined with the Government's overwhelming pursuit of material and social success.[23] Propaganda enticing immigrants to Queensland ensured 'would be settlers' understood the significance of toil; the 'inseparable companions' of colonial success are 'industry, hard work, a good constitution and a stout arm.'[24] Toil had another function. It acted to bond men together in Queensland's masculinist culture. While toil was the common factor, this culture became characterised by behaviours antithetical to middle class values: drinking practices;[25] gambling; irreligion; profanity; and a promotion of bachelorhood.[26]

The ordinariness associated with toil reflected bipolar values. At one end, toil was bestowed with a moral status through its association with traditional British middle class values. At the other extreme, as a consequence of the colonial experience, toil was enmeshed with a culture of masculinity typified by practices at odds with masculine middle class values.

---

[20] Ibid., p. 43
[21] MJ Huggins, 'More sinful pleasures? Leisure, respectability and the male middle classes in Victorian England', *Journal of Social History*, no. 3, 2000, p. 586.
[22] R Evans, 'The hidden colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland ', in J Roe (ed), *Social policy in Australia. Some perspectives 1901-1976*, Cassell, Sydney, 1976, p. 75.
[23] Ibid.
[24] EB Kennedy, *Four years in Queensland*, Edward Stanford, London, 1870, p. 87.
[25] M Lewis, *A rum state: alcohol and state policy in Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992.
[26] K Spearrit, 'The market for marriage in colonial Queensland', *Hecate*, vol. 16, no. 1/2, 1990, p. 34.

5.2 Importance of ordinariness to the Queensland government

The presence of traditional social structures represented success to the Queensland government. Their presence meant that the colony was 'coming of age' by being able to mirror the ordinariness of British society. Evidence of ordinariness associated with traditional class structures was also significant; it validated class divisions reinforcing government members' affiliation with the Queensland upper class. A number of early Queensland Government members were newly arrived at their higher social standing. They had not been born into an upper class background. Instead, they were, as Robert Fitzgerald stated, those who had 'conquered the struggle for existence'.[27] Queensland's first governments were dominated by such men; wealthy squatters who had successfully demonstrated their capacity to tame Queensland's vast resource of land and provide towards a prosperous colonial future.[28] These men had certainly adapted to, and taken advantage of, the colonial landscape. They may not have possessed characteristics of the established upper class to signify their suitability for their role and, notably, did not have the political expertise. In fact, they were 'woefully barren of statesmanship', lacking knowledge and ability.[29] Instead, they presented as a non-traditional form of upper class and thus needed to demonstrate and validate their newly found status.

Class divisions were very apparent in colonial Queensland and reflected Government members' upper class standing.[30] Brisbane's built environment clearly demonstrated class segregation. Government members and those with wealth and status resided in extravagant houses clustered around the Brisbane River. These upper class residences contrasted starkly with the barely habitable inner city lower class dwellings.[31] The upper class also sought other means to demonstrate their status. Governor Bowen conducted twice-weekly vice-regal parades accompanied by various Government members and other prominent social figures.[32] Newspapers recounted the numerous

[27] R Fitzgerald, L Megarrity & D Symons, *Made in Queensland: a new history*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2009, p. 19.
[28] Ibid.
[29] R Evans, *A history of Queensland*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 79.
[30] C Moore, 'Colonial manhood and masculinities', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 22, no. 56, 1998, p. 37.
[31] R Evans, *A history of Queensland*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 82.
[32] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

social events attended by the more affluent members of Brisbane society.[33] Evidence indicating class divisions, and, in particular, an upper class that included Government members, endorsed politicians' social standing and leadership positions.

Criteria for traditional class structures were adapted to the colonial situation; membership of the upper class was inconsistent with traditional measures. Therefore, while the ordinariness of class structures would validate Government members' capacity for leadership, the non-traditional nature of their status would increase the imperative to continually seek ways to demonstrate successful leadership and by association, their right to be members of the upper-class.

5.3 Importance of ordinariness to nineteenth century asylum care

Ordinariness was an integral component of nineteenth century asylums. Reintegrating the lunatic into the ordinariness of life was a core component of moral therapy.[34] Phillipe Pinel introduced the concept of *traitement moral* after his unprecedented 1792 act of unchaining the lunatics at the Bicetre and Salpetriere asylums. The impact of this legendary act has been likened to the 'freeing of the prisoners from the Bastille'.[35] Samuel Tuke, heralded with putting Pinel's reforms into practice, evoked similar prestige. Superintendent of the Quaker Retreat for Persons Afflicted with Disorders of the Mind, Tuke's moral treatment was proclaimed to reawaken the lunatic's innate facility for self-control. This was achieved through gentle discipline, daily work and leisure regimes in a healthy, home-like environment.[36] Asylum buildings and grounds were vital to moral treatment's success and Tuke had moulded

[33] Newspapers searches revealed numerous reports of social events. See for example: 'Dinner to Mr. Thomas H. Jones, *The North Australian, Ipswich and General Advertiser,* 28 February 1860, p. 3. Mr. Jones was a well-known businessman from Ipswich and other businessmen and the Member for Ipswich attended the dinner.

[34] E Showalter, *The female malady: women, madness and English culture 1830-1980*, Penguin, New York, 1985, p. 28. Moral treatment and moral therapy are used interchangeably in the literature.

[35] Ibid., p. 2. While Pinel is popularised as instigating this action, it was his Head Attendant Jean-Baptiste Pussin who was likely to have encouraged Pinel. Pussin and his wife had already begun humanitarian reforms before Pinel's arrival at the Bicetre Hospital. Pussin supported Pinel in the implantation of further humanitarian actions: P Nolan, *A history of mental health nursing*, Stanley Thornes, Cheltenham, 1993, pp. 28-29.

[36] POB D'Antonio, Negotiated care: a case study of the Friends Asylum, 1800-1850, PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1992, pp. 10-11; N Tomes, *The art of asylum-keeping: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the origins of American psychiatry*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1994, p. 5.

the Retreat into the ideal setting for this contemporary treatment; home-like buildings, lush gardens and a focus on ordinariness reflected in domesticity and family values.[37] The Retreat was painted in illustrious terms:

> … in the midst of a fertile and smiling countryside; it is not at all the idea of a prison … but rather that of a large farm; it is surrounded by a great, walled garden. No bars, no grills on the windows.[38]

Inmates were described humanely and in paternalistic terms befitting their home-like environment; they are like children who have a superfluity of strength and who would make dangerous use of it.'[39]

Moral treatment became the ideal for nineteenth century asylum care. Optimism for Tuke's utopian vision was fuelled by libertarian philosophies valuing humane treatment and a growing scientific knowledge fostering the possibility of alternative treatment regimes and possible cures.[40] Asylum design principles and treatment practices associated with moral therapy were exemplified in John Conolly's 1847 treatise based around his experiences in the Hanwell County Asylum: *The construction and government of lunatic asylums and hospitals for the insane*.[41] Architects, governments and doctors embraced Conolly's work as an exemplar for asylum design and moral treatment.[42]

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the earlier enthusiasm for moral therapy and belief in its success had faded.[43] Its fundamental tenets of non-restraint and kindness continued to be reiterated by governing bodies as essential components of asylum treatment. Yet these, and other aspects of moral treatment, had become

---

[37] S Tuke, *Description of The Retreat, an institution near York, For Insane Persons of the Society of Friends*, Google Books, 1813, https://books.google.com.au/books?id=SwEIAAAAQAAJ&dq=Tuke+Description+of+the+retreat&lr=&source=gbs_navlinks_s

[38] Description from a contemporary commentator quoted in M Foucault, *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the age of reason*, Random House, New York, 1965, p. 242.

[39] Description from Dr. De la Rive of Geneva who visited the Retreat two years after its opening: A Walk, 'Some aspects of the "Moral Treatment" of the insane up to 1854', *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 100, no. 421, 1954, p. 817.

[40] K Jones, *A history of the mental health services,* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1972.

[41] J Conolly, *The construction and government of lunatic asylums and hospitals for the insane*, Dawsons of Pall Mall, London, 1968.

[42] S Piddock, 'The 'Ideal Asylum'', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003.

[43] DJ Rothman, *The discovery of the asylum: social order and disorder in the new republic*, Little Brown, Boston, 1971; A Scull, 'The domestication of madness', *Medical History*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1983, pp. 233-248.

idealistic and increasingly difficult to enact in crowded institutions filled with incurable, chronically mentally and physically ill patients.[44] Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum demonstrated these same issues. Being frugally funded, overcrowded, staffed by inexperienced workers unfamiliar with any aspects of moral treatment, and situated in a harsh undeveloped physical landscape, the asylum reflected few of the therapeutic tenets prescribed by Conolly. Ordinariness perceived in domesticity and patriarchal family structures, as a measure of successful moral treatment, would certainly be an ineffective measure of success.

Despite ordinariness unlikely to be an effective measure, its use was apparent at the 1867 Parliamentary Commission. Demonstrating a measure of ordinariness meant that the Asylum was meeting colonial expectations. The presence of traditional gendered social structures assured an alignment with colonial and British values. Ordinariness in the Asylum's domestic arrangements and patriarchal family structure signified successful moral treatment. Measurements of ordinariness also validated the Government's success as a leader and an effective moral agent.

Using ordinariness as a measure meant, by definition, that evidence of the extraordinary demonstrated lack of success, harm had potentially occurred and explanations were required. It was the extraordinary that invoked an Inquiry in 1867 and required the asylum's ordinariness to be investigated.

5.4 The 1867 Parliamentary Commission Inquiry

The 1867 Inquiry into Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum was founded on public concerns about the moral welfare of Isabella Lewers. On May 14, the *Brisbane Courier* published details of Isabella Lewers' recent escape from the Asylum, having been found at the Brisbane wharf a few days earlier.[45] The *Brisbane Courier* Editor, described her as an 'unfortunate woman' and reminded readers of the moral harm she had previously suffered and the subsequent Inquiry to prove the allegations.[46] It

[44] DJ Rothman, *The discovery of the asylum: social order and disorder in the new republic*, Little Brown, Boston, 1971.
[45] 'Telegraphic', *Brisbane Courier,* 14 May 1867, p. 2.
[46] Ibid.

seemed that ordinariness was not apparent. Isabella a single woman, made more vulnerable by her lunatic state, had been exposed to immoral dangers that threatened her supposedly virtuous state.

On 15 May 1867, Honorary Weston Wood informed parliament that a 'half-witted girl' who had previously escaped from the Lunatic Asylum and suffered cruel mistreatment, had again been 'found in the streets of Brisbane destitute of clothing and in a most miserable state … in a wretched and unprotected condition'. Expressing astonishment that 'the authorities in the asylum never seemed to have missed her or made enquiries about her', he questioned the vigilance of staff in preventing escapes 'when a girl of weak mind could leave the place without her absence being discovered'.[47] Premier Mr. Macalister downplayed Wood's implications of harm. He informed parliament that preliminary investigations had revealed that the woman was 'to an extent sane' and been allowed to freely move around the asylum.[48] Despite these assurances, a public inquiry was instigated.

A Parliamentary Commission was established on May 21 1867 and charged with the comprehensive task of ascertaining:

> … the efficiency of the several officers connected with the institution and the means adopted by the Surgeon-Superintendent for the security and proper treatment of the patients under his charge.[49]

This was to be achieved by a 'diligent, full and minute inquiry into the general management and working of the Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo.' [50] The comprehensiveness was not to be realised. After only four days of examination, the Inquiry was aborted. Dr. Henry Challinor, Parliamentary Commission Chair, resigned when his claim for clerical duties associated with the Inquiry was questioned.[51]

Despite the abrupt halt to the Inquiry, the Parliamentary Commission assured the Government that the Asylum management was satisfactory. Commission members

---

[47] Queensland, Legislative Council 1867, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 126.
[48] Ibid.
[49] A. W. Manning to Henry Challinor, 21 May 1867, 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1063.
[50] G. F. Bowen, 'Commission' 21 May 1867, 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1063.
[51] H. Challinor to Under Colonial Secretary, 9 July 1867, 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p.1085.

Charles Coxen and H. H. Masie, wrote that from the evidence collected and through personal observations 'we see no reason to believe that the present management of the Asylum is otherwise than of a satisfactory nature.'[52] Dr. Henry Challinor, in a separate 'Progress Report', offered similar assertions:

> … a considerable amount of evidence had been taken and much valuable information obtained [and] nothing had been elicited prejudicially affecting the present state of that establishment.[53]

Despite its brevity, it is apparent that the Parliamentary Commission attempted to validate the ordinary and sought explanations for the extraordinary through measures of ordinariness. However, as will be seen, a potential for harm was missed.

5.5 Explaining the 'extraordinary'

Isabella Lewers' escape to Brisbane was evidence of the extraordinary. Isabella was rendered vulnerable by her gender, her single status and her classification as a lunatic. Her vulnerability meant that she required protecting. As a single female, she was protected within a gendered environment under the watch of a matriarch. As a lunatic, a locked environment provided further protection. This protection was indicative of the ordinary; reflecting expectations in relation to gender and lunacy. Escaping, by association, demonstrated the extraordinary and the consequences of escaping from protection meant Isabella was exposed to potential moral harm. This extraordinary required explanation.

Isabella Lewer's status demonstrated an association between gendered attributes and a measure of ordinariness within the Asylum. The 1866 Inquiry demonstrated Isabella's privileged status; moving freely around the Asylum across gendered spaces, not being required to adhere to rigid Asylum routines and employed as servant and companion to staff. Her status was justified by her readiness for discharge. However, this thesis argues another reason was that she possessed appropriate gendered working class

[52] C. Coxen & H.H. Massie to Colonial Secretary, 20 July 1867, 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1064.
[53] H. Challinor to Colonial Secretary, 6 June 1867, 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1064.

attributes. The 1866 Lunacy Commission's conclusion that she was guilty of a sexual liaison with the previous Chief Warder, changed this status. Matron Symes explained that when she arrived in November 1866,[54] Isabella was treated similarly to other female patients: 'inside … not under more restraint than others'.[55] When she was seen to improve, she was again rewarded with a favoured status; she was 'let … out to work as a servant for me [Matron Symes], and I kept a strict watch over her.'[56] Her privileged role was short lived as soon after she demonstrated behaviour suggestive of sexual impropriety: 'she was dissatisfied with her clothes and would go without some of them'.[57] Thus when Isabella demonstrated appropriate gendered working class traits she was rewarded with a role commensurate with these attributes. When she displayed sexual impropriety through her sexual liaison with the Chief Warder and by being 'dissatisfied with her clothes', this was at odds with such expectations and her privileged role was removed.

The account of Isabella Lewer's escape in May 1867 further demonstrated attributes being ascribed to her that were antithetical to gendered expectations and indicated her lowered status. The description of Isabella's escape implied sly and calculating behaviour. It seemed that Isabella 'chose' 'the darkness of the evening and rain' for her escape.[58] While ostensibly waiting with a bucket to collect water from a tank,[59] Isabella took advantage of a visitor leaving to sneak into the refractory yard. After climbing over the refractory fence, she escaped through the unlocked front entrance door.[60] Matron Symes noted her lack of decorum: 'she left her boots and walked barefoot to Brisbane'.[61] Dr. Cannan justified staff's inability to prevent the escape: '[t]he cunning of the patient, so common in insane persons, was more than a match for their [staff] watchfulness.'[62]

[54] Matron Symes replaced Matron Hill in November 1866 when Matron Hill lost her position as a consequence of Government and media reactions to the 1866 Inquiry.
[55] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1071.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., p. 1075.
[60] Ibid., p. 1071.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., p. 1064.

The 1867 Parliamentary Commission's conclusions that Asylum management was satisfactory,[63] implied approval of actions taken in relation to Isabella's escape. While she had been exposed to potential moral harm, there were no signs to indicate that she had suffered 'molestation';[64] Matron Symes stated she was brought back 'exactly as she had left'.[65] It appeared that the nature of Isabella's traits, inconsistent with gender and class expectations, reflected in her escape, influenced the Commission's judgment. Yet, a major reason for Isabella's escape, broken locks, was not raised. While this was apparent in the evidence,[66] the Commission's report did not conclude that Isabella's escape would have been prevented if locks were intact. Further, the Government had failed to supply new locks, despite two requisition letters being sent.[67] Accepting that Isabella's escape was a consequence of inappropriate gendered behaviour, explaining the extraordinary against a measure of ordinariness, meant that the Government's negligence in failing to supply locks was overlooked.

James Flannigan's suicide was another example of the extraordinary investigated by the 1867 Parliamentary Commission. James Flannigan, admitted on 13 March 1866, drowned soon afterwards on 24 April by jumping into the river while with the working party.[68] Warder Cornelius Cronan explained that he and Warder Philips were supervising the working party of nineteen men who were weeding near the river. When the men were being 'mustered' for lunch, Flannigan broke from the rear of the group, ran to the wharf and jumped far into the river. While Cronan threw Flannigan a bucket with a rope attached to it, so he could save himself, Flannigan did not take it and disappeared soon after.[69]

The Parliamentary Commission's overall conclusions suggest that actions taken in relation to Flannigan were judged appropriate. An inability to prevent Flannigan's suicide was justified by his attributes. As evoked in the descriptions Isabella's escape, it was implied that Flannigan similarly possessed animal-like characteristics; having

[63] C. Coxen & H.H. Massie to Colonial Secretary, 20 July 1867, 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1064.
[64] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* pp. 1064, 1071.
[65] Ibid., p. 1071.
[66] Ibid., p. 1068.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 163, 24 April 1867, Microfilm no. 4922.
[69] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1078.

the cunning to ensure that he was at the end of the line and the strength to outrun the attendant and jump far into the river.[70] As Flannigan did not meet measures of ordinariness, explanations of the extraordinary were accepted. Further, Flannigan's behaviours were not in keeping with his gendered working class status. He had been given the opportunity of 'toil', an attribute of masculinity, and the work he was 'toiling' at allowed him to be rehabilitated in order to return to a working class role within the community. Moreover, Flanagan's attributes, in overpowering and outwitting Cronan were not in keeping with the compliance expected from the working class. What the Commission had failed to note was that Dr. Cannan had provided a warning in Flannigan's case notes the previous day: 'now much excited and expresses dread of something – to be kept close to the asylum and carefully watched.'[71] It is not known whether this concern was communicated to staff. The brevity of the Inquiry may not have allowed time for all documentation to be examined, and it is likely, as in the case with Isabella Lewers, that the Commission was satisfied with explanations of the extraordinary measured against ordinariness.

Explanations of the extraordinary had been viewed through the lens of gendered and class expectations. Preconceptions created by these lenses, meant that a gaze of ordinariness determined that effective moral agency had occurred and that management and staff actions were appropriate in preventing or attempting to prevent harm. However, such a gaze allowed other harm to be missed.

5.6 Measuring ordinariness – Asylum men

Ordinariness in male staff was measured through bourgeois middle-class attributes, in particular, temperance. Sobriety in male staff, and alcohol use generally in the Asylum, was a major thrust of the Inquiry. Focus on temperance was not surprising given that significant issues relating to alcohol had previously surfaced at the Asylum. An anonymous letter received by the Visiting Justice in July 1866 had alleged wild scale drunkenness occurring amongst male staff and consequent harm to inmates:

[70] Ibid.
[71] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 163, 24 April 1867, Microfilm no. 4922.

> Every man connected with the institution with the exception of one or two, are mostly every day drunk. Their duty is not done properly … on the contrary it is neglected, and the patients, instead of being treated humanely, are often beaten cruelly …[72]

Despite Dr. Cannan denying these allegations,[73] three staff dismissals occurred only four months later for drunkenness and allowing a woman, 'notoriously of ill fame', into the male staff quarters.[74] Cannan consequently banned all alcohol in the asylum until March 1867.[75]

Dr. Kearsey Cannan and John Gee, Chief Warder, strongly denied intemperance in their male staff, with one exception. Both shared John Philips' history of intemperance.[76] Philips had been demoted from Chief Warder to ordinary warder in January 1866 for allowing alcohol to be brought into the asylum and not reporting a warder's absence from duty.[77] Cannan justified keeping Philips in light of his other attributes:

> He has been temperate for the last three months. He is a good man. I have not a better man in the place when sober. I was disposed to keep him from the fact of his wife being a good warder and having a family.[78]

Demonstrating the capacity to fulfill bourgeois middle-class roles of fit husband and father, and showing evidence of reform in achieving temperance, rendered him an appropriate staff member.

A culture around regular alcohol use was firmly established throughout the Asylum. Alcohol was provided to physically ill and dying patients.[79] Prescribing alcohol,

---

[72] Visiting Justice to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 2305 of 1866, 29 July 1866, Microfilm no. 6814.
[73] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 2264 of 1866, 4 August 1866, Microfilm no. 6813.
[74] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 3129 of 1866, 9 November 1866, Microfilm no. 6823.
[75] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1070.
[76] Ibid., pp. 1065, 1072.
[77] Ibid., p. 1075.
[78] Ibid., p. 1065.
[79] See for example: Casebook entry of Thomas Larcomb who was physically ill and then died. To be given 'plenty of beef tea and gin and stimulants' when he was failing fast: Queensland State Archives,

'medical comforts', to physically ill and dying patients was a common practice in mid-nineteenth century medicine.[80] Alcohol was also used as a reward for toil. Male inmates who worked outside, in the kitchen or cleaned, were provided with a daily glass of beer as were females who did laundry work.[81] Dr. Cannan stated that staff, similarly, had received a daily glass of beer until this practice was ceased in September 1866.[82] Despite Cannan and Gee's assurances that current male staff were sober, this seems unlikely given this culture.

Discrepancies in the Inquiry evidence suggested that male staff used alcohol more often than implied by Dr. Cannan and John Gee. Prior to September 1866, more beer was issued than what was accounted for in the daily allotment to staff and patients,[83] and Matron Symes denied that female warders received a daily glass of beer.[84] Given that male staff had being suspended in relation to alcohol use, it is likely that male warders consumed the extra alcohol. It cannot be established from the available evidence whether stopping all alcohol use after the warders' suspensions in September 1866[85] was related to a Government directive, or a ploy by Cannan to circumvent accusations of poor management. After March 1867, alcohol was reintroduced for 'medical comforts' and working inmates, but denied to staff.[86] Strict controls ensured staff could not access any alcohol stored at the Asylum.[87] However, a shortage of staff accommodation in 1867 necessitated all male warders to reside in the local village.[88] Given their previous regular alcohol use, the masculinist culture within Queensland linking alcohol, toil and camaraderie, and as staff would have

---

Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860- 04/09/1869, Entry no. 177, 4 May 1866, Microfilm no. 4922. Also see Casebook entry of John Arthur who was described on admission as 'want of means and proper nourishment' and was ordered 'good nourishment, tonic and beer daily': Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 210, 2 January 1867, Microfilm no. 4922.

[80] HW Paul, *Bacchic medicine: wine and alcohol therapies from Napoleon to the French paradox*, vol. 64, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2001.

[81] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1066. Giving alcohol to inmates had stopped between September 1866 and March 1867.

[82] Cannan's evidence asserted that male and female warders had been issued daily with a half pint of beer and the matron and chief warder a full pint, 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1070.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., p. 1072.

[85] Ibid., p. 1069.

[86] Ibid., p. 1066.

[87] Ibid., pp. 1066, 1069, 1072.

[88] Ibid., p. 1069.

ready access to alcohol within the village, it is probable that Cannan and Gee's claims of temperate male staff were idealistic, and unlikely to be true.

Contradictions relating to alcohol, apparent in the Parliamentary Commission's questions, omissions and acceptances, reflected the same dichotomy evident in colonial attitudes. As discussed earlier in this chapter, an association between the working class man, labour and alcohol use was iconic in the Australian legend. While certainly a cultural norm of heavy alcohol use was exported from Britain,[89] drinking behaviours had evolved to fit the colonial experience. From early settlement, alcohol offered solace; it provided escapism,[90] it helped alleviate a harsh penal life and sense of isolation, and served as a lubricant in a hot dry and alien environment.[91] Michael Sturma suggested that favourable economic conditions and a frontier environment encouraged high levels of alcohol use in New South Wales,[92] and the latter was a certainly a strong influence in early Queensland. The omnipresent Australian 'pub', a nucleus of colonial settlements, providing accommodation, food and social interaction,[93] reinforced the salient role alcohol played in connecting working men. Yet, at the same time, contradictory messages were apparent from Queensland's strong temperance movement preaching the association between social evils and alcohol.

The temperance movement claimed to represent 'respectability' and 'moral worth'[94] and was led by vocal middle and upper class philanthropists, clergy and social reformers.[95] Reverend J.D. Lang gave impetus to this movement in Queensland. Troubled by the level of immorality in Brisbane, Lang invited a large group of Christians to settle in Queensland to instil moral reforms. The 'Langites' 1849 arrival in Brisbane did have an impact; liquor laws were introduced and a Temperance lodge

[89] M Sturma, *Vice in a vicious society: crime and convicts in mid-nineteenth-century New South Wales*, University of Queensland Press, 1983, p. 148.
[90] Ibid.
[91] M Lewis, *A rum state: alcohol and state policy in Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992, p. 6.
[92] M Sturma, *Vice in a vicious society: crime and convicts in mid-nineteenth-century New South Wales*, University of Queensland Press, 1983, p. 141.
[93] D Kirkby, *Barmaids: a history of women's work in pubs*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p. 19.
[94] M Sturma, *Vice in a vicious society: crime and convicts in mid-nineteenth-century New South Wales*, University of Queensland Press, 1983, p. 155.
[95] S Garton, "Once a drunkard always a drunkard': social reform and the problem of 'habitual drunkeness' in Australia, 1880-1914', *Labour History*, vol. 53, 1987, p. 38.

established.[96] Temperance and its antithesis, intemperance, became a visible presence. Newspaper articles and public lectures denounced alcohol proclaiming it as the root of almost every social issue. Temperance, imbued with a religious and moral status, was a necessary attribute required to qualify as an upright, moral and successful middle class male. Intemperance in the working class was condemned and seen to contribute to moral downfall.[97] Indeed, the temperance movement was a key example of a moral regulation project[98] and Mike Huggins suggested that ultimately this movement targeted the working class to promote respectability and ensure their toil.[99] However, at the same time, the use of alcohol by the working man was an expected and accepted part of Queensland's masculinist culture.

The 1867 Parliamentary Commission Inquiry evidence reflected the same contradictions in relation to alcohol. Warders were expected to portray temperance. This is understandable; the temperance movement aimed for individuals to set examples to others, rather than rehabilitate victims of alcohol.[100] However, there was not the same expectation for inmates, indicating a class divide. While both staff and inmates were from working class origins,[101] the inherent power in the staff position brought with it a higher status. The resultant Asylum class structure meant warders were required to model temperance to inmates by being sober. However, using alcohol to reward inmates' toil was acceptable and in accord with the value placed on male labour within the colony.

Others did not have their alcohol use questioned by the Parliamentary Commission. Cannan's temperance was not scrutinised. The superintendent's role was absolute within the paternalistic asylum regime, [102] and the superintendent himself

[96] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969. pp. 10-11.
[97] See for example: 'The Temperance Movement', *The Brisbane Courier*, 29 December 1868, p. 3; 'Popular entertainments', Letter to the Editor, *Brisbane Courier,* 27 November 1865, p. 3.
[98] A Hunt, *Governing morals: a social history of moral regulation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.
[99] MJ Huggins, 'More sinful pleasures? Leisure, respectability and the male middle classes in Victorian England', *Journal of Social History*, no. 3, 2000, pp. 585-600.
[100] M Sturma, *Vice in a vicious society: crime and convicts in mid-nineteenth-century New South Wales*, University of Queensland Press, 1983, p. 155.
[101] For example Warder Cornelius Cronan had previously been a farmer in England: 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p.1077; Nurse (Laundress) Mary Doonan was illiterate as she signed her name with a cross: 'Paper in reference to an Inquiry with regard to a charge of improper conduct preferred against the Chief Warder', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 680.
[102] P Nolan, *A history of mental health nursing*, Stanley Thornes, Cheltenham, 1993, p. 60.

unquestionably possessed the ideal attributes of a patriarch, including temperance. Further, Cannan's acclaimed status within Brisbane society, as discussed in Chapter 3, commensurate with the Parliamentary Commission's upper class standing, may have produced a reluctance by the Commission to blame, or even question, 'one of their own'. Women's use of alcohol was not questioned. This may reflect the Commission's focus on previous concerns relating to male staff and alcohol. While there is evidence that colonial women abused alcohol,[103] this also suggests that intemperance may have largely been seen as a male problem.

Temperance as a measure of ordinariness in the Asylum was dependent on male class divisions. The patriarch, as the absolute head, was believed without question to be temperate. Male warders, assuming a middle-class status within the asylum, were expected and assumed to be temperate. This was despite other evidence: the warders' working class backgrounds; a masculine camaraderie created by living and working together; and a recent Asylum culture of regular alcohol use. The working class, those inmates who toiled, were provided with a measured amount of alcohol to reward and encourage their labour.

5.7 Measuring ordinariness - asylum women

The 1867 Inquiry was founded on the visibility of a female patient and concerns for her moral welfare because of this visibility. Women generally had little visibility in the Asylum. Women would have been less noticeable generally in the Asylum as their numbers were fewer; at the time of this Inquiry male inmates outnumbered females, ninety-eight[104] to thirty eight.[105] The ratio of female to male staff was also proportionately less; four nurses to seven warders.[106] However, women's lack of

[103] M Lewis, *A rum state: alcohol and state policy in Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992.
[104] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1073.
[105] Ibid., p. 1067.
[106] Ibid., p. 1070. This was not unique to Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. In Victoria, the male asylum population increased more rapidly than the female population until the end of the nineteenth century: L-A Monk, *Attending madness: at work in the Australian colonial asylum*, vol. 84, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2008, p. 62. This was also consistent with the larger proportion of males in colonial Queensland and Australia generally: R Howe & S Swain, 'Fertile grounds for divorce: sexuality and

visibility is also explained by expectations associated with their gendered role within the Asylum's patriarchal environment. Lack of visibility was a measure of ordinariness.

Women's lack of visibility in the Asylum was in keeping with the ideal female role; abstention from the workplace[107] and, by definition, from the external world. Being absent from the external world meant women could meet the rubrics of the ideal woman, virtue and respectability,[108] and not be swayed by immorality present in the external world. Abstention from the workplace was not in accord with the background and roles of women within the Asylum; inmates were generally domestic servants or from working class origins,[109] and nurses were employed. Nevertheless, women's lack of visibility in the Asylum gave the outward appearance of 'ordinariness'. While male inmates' employment took them outdoors, female patients' employment consisted of domestic inside work, either laundering or sewing.[110] Male warders had a presence in the external world as they resided in the village, while nurses remained at all times with their patients, including sleeping alongside them. They could not be absent from the patients without leave from the Matron, and unless granted permission by Dr. Cannan, nurses did not leave the asylum.[111]

Tangible evidence of a strong male visibility, and conversely female invisibility, was apparent in an 1867 *Brisbane Courier* article, 'Our Charitable Institutions', featuring the Asylum. The author's first impression of the Asylum was of male patients supervised by male staff openly engaged in useful work in keeping with colonial gendered expectations of toil:

> All seemed busy, all were pursuing their distinctive work in a quiet and pleasant manner. I was astonished, and for a time could not

---

reproductive imperatives', in K Saunders & R Evans (eds), *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation,* Harcourt Brace Jovanich Group, Sydney, 1992, p. 161.
[107] K Alford, *Production or reproduction? An economic history of women in Australia, 1788-1850*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1984, p. 150.
[108] R Howe & S Swain, 'Fertile grounds for divorce: sexuality and reproductive imperatives', in K Saunders & R Evans (eds), *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation,* Harcourt Brace Jovanich Group, Sydney, 1992, pp. 158-159.
[109] This observation was made from a review of the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum Casebook details which often provided employment and if the woman was married, her husband's employment.
[110] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1071.
[111] Ibid.

> realise the fact that I was going through the passages and wards of a mad house.[112]

In keeping with their lack of visibility, the journalist viewed women inside the Asylum building and their lack of presence was apparent in minimal comments by the journalist.

The 1867 Parliamentary Commission sought to confirm the respectability of the Asylum nurses. Matron Symes assured the Commission that indeed her staff were 'thoroughly respectable. I can speak quite confidently about them. They are attentive to their duties, cleanly, and good moral characters.'[113] It was not unexpected that the the nurses' respectability was questioned. While women in colonial Australia, generally, were viewed as second-class citizens,[114] the status of working class women was even lower. In a patriarchal societal structure women were seen foremost as wives and mothers. To be a wife and mother was synonymous with being morally virtuous.[115] Females in paid employment, by definition, did not meet this ideal and consequently could not posses the moral attributes associated with the wife and mother roles. Thus, female workers' respectability was automatically circumspect. Australia's early history reinforced these perceptions. Australia's first white female workers were convicts and emancipists, synonymous with immorality and low social worth.[116] An influx of single female immigrants arriving to take up paid positions compounded these perceptions.[117] The 1837-40 Molesworth Committee's description of female servants was indicative of this view:

---

[112] 'Our charitable institutions, No. 1, Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum', *The Brisbane Courier,* 19 March 1867, p. 5.
[113] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1071.
[114] R Evans, *A history of Queensland*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 126.
[115] K Alford, *Production or reproduction? An economic history of women in Australia, 1788-1850*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1984, pp. 226-227.
[116] Ibid; A Cushing, 'Convicts and care giving in colonial Australia, 1788–1868', in AM Rafferty & R Elkan (eds), *Nursing history and the politics of welfare*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 111.
[117] K Alford, *Production or reproduction? An economic history of women in Australia, 1788-1850*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1984, pp. 226-227.

> I think to reform the unfortunate females themselves is impossible; I think they contaminated all around them; and that they were the most complete nuisance that we had in the colony.[118]

Female nurses were tainted with the same disregard as other female workers. Males were preferred as attendants in Australian hospitals during the first half of the nineteenth century because of the alleged immoral character of women workers.[119] Indeed, the Bigge Inquiry in 1823 found that female nurses at the Sydney Hospital were frequently drunk and stole from their patients.[120] The low regard of nurses gradually changed as nursing becoming a female dominated profession after the arrival of Lucy Osborne in 1868, and Australian nurses slowly acquired the same status attributed to Nightingale nurses.[121] However, it is probable that the nurses at Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum would have attracted the same stigma as these early female caregivers.

Despite a lack of value accorded to female workers, Matron Symes was able to assure the Parliamentary Commission that her nurses had 'good moral characters' because of their marital status. While Mrs. Phillips, wife of Warder Phillips, was the only married nurse, others possessed a marital status; Matron Symes, Mrs. Doonan and Mrs. O'Hara were widows. The presence of morally virtuous married women helped percolate feminine qualities across society, bettering the community overall and promoting the respectability and morality of single women, who did not yet possess these required qualities.[122] While Margaret Thompson was the only single staff member,[123] and thus circumspect morally, the presence of other female staff, virtuous and moral by their marital status, meant she was protected and influenced by their feminine qualities. Ordinariness was thus apparent in the female staff; the women possessed feminine qualities commensurate with their marital status and were in a position to supervise and influence single women and vulnerable inmates. Further,

---

[118] Molesworth Committee of 1837-40, cited in A Cushing, 'Convicts and care giving in colonial Australia, 1788–1868', in A.M. Rafferty & R. Elkan (eds), *Nursing history and the politics of welfare*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 115.
[119] A Cushing, 'Convicts and care giving in colonial Australia, 1788–1868', in AM Rafferty & R Elkan (eds), *Nursing history and the politics of welfare*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 114.
[120] Ibid., p. 123.
[121] Ibid., pp. 111, 127.
[122] K Alford, *Production or reproduction? An economic history of women in Australia, 1788-1850*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1984, p. 232.
[123] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1071.

while being made visible through their role within the workforce, this was balanced by their marital status and their capacity to maintain a level of invisibility in the gendered Asylum environment.

While Matron Symes affirmed the 'respectability' of current staff, by contrast, the 1867 Parliamentary Commission provided evidence of former nurses who were not perceived as 'respectable' and very visible within the Asylum. Jane Pitt's morality had been the focus of Asylum gossip as her marital status was questionable, thus rendering her moral status questionable. Matron Symes believed she was married,[124] Warder Brosnan claimed she was unmarried with two illegitimate children[125] and Warder Kennedy did not know whether her children were illegitimate.[126] Her immorality was confirmed when she formed an intimate relationship with John McKinlay, Acting Chief Warder[127] and thus became more visible in the Asylum. Matron Symes stated that Jane showed 'too great familiarity' with the Chief Warder[128] and John Brosnan asserted that he had witnessed her sneaking into John McKinlay's quarters at night. Jane Pitt was 'obliged to resign' in January 1867.[129]

Jane Pitt and John McKinlay subsequently married.[130] Nonetheless, this did not alter perceptions of Jane Pitt's immorality. Indeed, Jane's immorality had also corrupted John McKinlay. McKinlay was promoted to Acting Chief Warder after William Haddon's dismissal following the 1866 Inquiry. Dr. Cannan declared McKinlay initially worthy of the higher position; he had reported warders being intemperate and absent from the Asylum.[131] McKinlay's capability appeared short lived: '[he was] good for the first three months – he was a single man.'[132] McKinlay's single status rendered him susceptible to Jane Pitt's supposed immorality. Nineteenth century discourse around single men centered on their 'animal forces' and 'primal instincts', which could be overcome with little provocation. Without the settling influence of a

[124] Ibid.
[125] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 700.
[126] Ibid., p. 707.
[127] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1075.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 508 of 1867, 8 February 1867, Microfilm no. 6829.
[130] Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1070.
[131] Ibid., p.1076.
[132] Ibid., p.1075.

'good' woman',[133] men were vulnerable to feminine wiles and their own sexual appetites.[134] After McKinlay began a relationship with Jane Pitt, coming under her seemingly corrupt influence, he became 'negligent'. He 'took to late rising [and] … also gave way to intemperance.'[135] Cannan acted to warn him: 'I frequently spoke to him of his intimacy with Jane Pitt', nonetheless, his continued relationship with her meant that he had to resign.[136] McKinlay left soon after Jane Pitt on February 8 1867.[137]

Annie Rogers, a former nurse, similarly became visible in the Asylum through immorality. Annie Rogers was dismissed after only one month.[138] While reasons for her dismissal were not clear, Cannan stated that after she left he found she had been regularly meeting male warders at Warder Sheridan's house in the village.[139] Annie had also became a subject of Asylum gossip through her visibility: Warder Thomas Phillips alleged he had observed her entering Warder Maurice Kenny's accommodation late at night [140] and Warder John Brosnan accused her of prostitution.[141]

The moral status of Jane Pitt and Annie Rogers was questionable by virtue of their employment, and for Jane because of her vague marital status. While other female staff had proven their respectability through their lack of visibility at the Asylum, Jane and Annie had become very visible through Asylum gossip, their relationship with male staff and by entering male spaces. Indeed, these acts and their lack of visibility were measured against perceptions of ordinariness and affirmed their immoral status.

---

[133] A Bashford, *Purity and pollution: gender, embodiment, and Victorian medicine*, Macmillan London, 1998, p. 8.
[134] See: JA Allen, *Sex and Secrets: crimes involving Australian women since 1880*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990.
[135] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1075.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 508 of 1867, 8 February 1867, Microfilm no. 6829.
[138] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1076.
[139] Ibid.
[140] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 711.
[141] Ibid., p. 700.

5.8 Measuring ordinariness – asylum domesticity

The ideals of nineteenth century asylum care expounded by John Conolly, conceived the asylum environment as an integral component of moral treatment.[142] The asylum should be set in a picturesque setting with a variety of spaces to allow inmates diversity in their leisure and work routines and to permit staff to have a break from their patients. Indeed, an asylum should be 'light, cheerful and liberal'.[143] This ideal environment should also promote a culture of ordinariness by aiming to mirror Victorian domestic spaces and patriarchal family structures. These were difficult to realise at Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum.

The Woogaroo Asylum environment was not picturesque, being built on cleared bush land. While close to a river, scenic river views were hidden behind the old prison fence. Patient yards were quite barren, possessing few trees. Inside spaces were limited and similarly did not reflect the ideals of nineteenth century asylum care. Spaces catering for the everyday requirements of asylum life were inadequate; bathrooms and lavatories were non-existent[144] and dormitories were overcrowded.[145] Further, spaces did not meet the requirements of decorum. Cannan had described the lack of proper separation between male and female areas as 'subversive of common decency.'[146] Staff also experienced lack of space. As noted earlier, warders were expected to live in the local village because of the shortage of asylum accommodation and nurses slept in the same spaces as their patients. Matron Symes' one bedroom cottage was required to house herself and her four children with her respectablity compromised by the accommodation's close proximity to the male inmates' yard.[147]

Despite the limitations of the Asylum environment, expectations associated with Victorian domestic spaces were reflected in a highly regulated domestic regime. Tuke

[142] S Piddock, 'The 'Ideal Asylum'', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003, p. 39.
[143] C Coleborne, 'Space, power and gender in the asylum in Victoria, 1850s-1870s', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003, p. 49.
[144] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1067.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid., p. 1072.

instructed that 'daily work and leisure regimes' were integral to moral therapy.[148] Evidence to the Parliamentary Commission certainly depicted staff and inmates having strictly regimented days structured around meals and toil,[149] indicative of domestic ordinariness. Dr. Cannan proudly stated to the Parliamentary Commission: 'I have the whole place thoroughly cleaned by two o'clock daily.'[150]

Other aspects of the Asylum environment were not in keeping with the ideals of moral therapy. There was little evidence that leisure was factored into the patients' strict routine, an inherent component of moral treatment as recommended by Tuke.[151] This could be explained by the lack of leisure spaces generally at the Asylum. However, it may also be associated with the fact that the regime was reminiscent of a prison, rather than a home-like environment. Inmates were locked in dormitories for up to twelve hours at night[152] and the most refractory patients contained in cells, even during the day.[153] A punitive culture appeared to be expected and accepted by the Parliamentary Commission, who referred to the inmates as 'prisoners'[154] and asked questions in terms redolent of a prison regime: 'What time are they [inmates] secured for the night?'[155] Such similarities were not unexpected; parallels between nineteenth century asylums and prisons have been noted by a number of historians[156] and an association between criminality and lunacy in early colonial Queensland has previously been argued in this thesis.[157]

A Victorian patriarchal family structure was integral to the domestic ordinariness associated with moral therapy. Certainly Woogaroo Asylum structure reflected a paternalistic regime with Dr. Cannan, as Surgeon Superintendent, perceived as head of the Woogaroo Asylum family. Cannan's power appeared to be apparent across the

---

[148] E Dwyer, *Homes for the mad. Life inside two nineteenth-century asylums*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1987, p. 163.
[149] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1067.
[150] Ibid., p. 1066.
[151] E Dwyer, *Homes for the mad. Life inside two nineteenth-century asylums*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1987, p. 163.
[152] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1066.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., p. 1069.
[155] Ibid., p. 1071.
[156] See for example: D Wright, 'Getting out of the asylum: understanding the confinement of the insane in the nineteenth century', *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1997, pp. 137-155; M Foucault, *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the age of reason*, Random House, New York, 1965.
[157] See Chapter 2.

Asylum. Visiting the inmates daily, he provided orders to the staff on their treatment.[158] Nightly reports from the Chief Warder and Matron verified that his orders were carried out.[159] Being responsible for the domestic environment, Cannan inspected the wards and kitchen daily[160] and regularly tasted the food.[161] He was responsible for his staff's moral well-being, and staff were required to request permission to leave the Asylum.[162] As evident from earlier examples in this chapter, staff were dismissed if they failed to act in a morally appropriate manner. Cannan was presented as possessing attributes befitting a beneficent fatherly figure by the author of 'Our Charitable Institutions'. Describing an interaction with 'John', Cannan was portrayed as caring and attentive: '"Well, John, how are you getting on this morning?" "Very well, doctor; but feel my wrist; is it not cold?" The Doctor did so, and being requested, I followed his example; it was not cold but warm, and a strong wrist, too.'[163] He was similarly depicted in his interactions with female patients. The journalist witnessing a female inmate continually interrupting Dr. Cannan and Matron Symes, described Cannan's reaction: 'it was pleasing to watch the tenderness and care with which she was treated.'[164]

Dr. Cannan admitted deficiencies in relation to his patriarchal rule to the Parliamentary Commission. Indeed Ellen Dwyer had noted that a patriarchal structure was difficult to maintain as the complex asylum environment did not suit absolute authoritarian rule.[165] Cannan complained of the inadequate accommodation and implied that the Government had not responded to his concerns. He also acknowledged the difficulties of his role in managing with inappropriate accommodation and argued that better accommodation would provide increased opportunities to effect cures in the inmates.[166] He also shared his helplessness at his

[158] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1066.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid., p. 1073.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid., p. 1067.
[163] 'Our charitable institutions, No. 1, Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum', *The Brisbane Courier,* 19 March 1867, p. 5.
[164] 'Our charitable institutions, No. 11, Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum', *The Brisbane Courier,* 20 March 1867, p. 2.
[165] E Dwyer, *Homes for the mad. Life inside two nineteenth-century asylums*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1987, p. 83.
[166] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1066.

ineffectiveness in treating patients who had been transported a distance to the Asylum:

> This is a highly objectionable practice as the delay causes them to frequently to arrive here in such a state of exhaustion as to increase the severity of the disease; and, if possible, some means should be devised to diminish this evil.[167]

While, certainly travelling would have worsened a lunatic's mental state, a review of the Casebook also suggested that physically ill patients were similarly required to journey to the Asylum. Examples included those who were dying.[168] These cases limited Dr. Cannan's capacity to be a beneficent patriarch.

It seemed that domestic ordinariness demonstrated in the regimented Asylum routines and in the patriarchal asylum structure, meant a measure of ordinariness in relation to moral therapy. Indeed the domestic environment was presented as well ordered to the Parliamentary Commission and Cannan appeared to fulfil the role of patriarch. However, the anomalies and potential for harm within this structure were not noted. Certainly, the Parliamentary Commission did acknowledge the requirement for increased accommodation, a need for some other way of classifying patients and that the building, currently vacant, be used. However, the Parliamentary Commission did not see fit to flag these issues as urgent and the Government consequently did not see the need to act on the Commission's observations.

5.9 Conclusion

The Parliamentary Commission investigating the management of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum had concluded that management of the asylum was 'satisfactory', ordinariness was apparent. This meant that the Government was judged as a

[167] Ibid., p. 1068.
[168] Richard Taylor, admitted 17 February 1865 was brought some distance to the Asylum. He was described by Dr. Cannan as: 'in a dying state – takes food but otherwise shows no perception of what is happening around him … he was certainly not a fit patient for a Lunatic Asylum, nor was he at the time of his admission in a fit state for removal to any distance': Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860- 04/09/1869, Entry no. 79, 17 February 1865, Microfilm no. 4922.

successful moral agent, and likewise, Dr. Cannan, as their representative, was similarly perceived as successful in enacting moral agency within the Asylum.

Despite this Inquiry being aborted, the evidence had shown deficits at Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. The Asylum was far removed from the ideals presented by John Conolly. It was likely that Dr. Henry Challinor, as a medical practitioner and Chair of the Parliamentary Commission, would have had some knowledge of Connolly's ideas on moral therapy and the types of spaces required in asylums.[169] It would have seemed appropriate to raise such a comparison. However, knowledge of these requirements was not apparent in Challinor's questions, or in his and the Committee's conclusions. Further, Dr. Cannan did not present the deficits of Woogaroo in relation to Conolly's requirements. Instead, the Inquiry focused on measuring ordinariness through what was 'the known'; ordinariness as represented in British gendered and social structures. This meant that this Inquiry had no impact on the environmental conditions that would become so deleterious to the Asylum patients.

The Queensland Government was likely to have been satisfied with the Parliamentary Commission's conclusions of satisfactory management. This, for them, meant success confirming their validity as leaders and by definition their legitimacy to be members of the Queensland colonial upper class. However, their continued lack of concern for the Asylum was apparent. While Dr. Challinor's resignation as Chair of the Parliamentary Commission was seemingly an affront at the Government's refusal to pay for clerical costs, it may also be that their refusal to fund clerical assistance demonstrated lack of commitment to the Inquiry. Further, if the Government was concerned at the plight of the Asylum, it is probable that they would have appointed another Parliamentary Commission Chair. Also of importance, and further confirming the Government's lack of concern for the Asylum, was that the Government did not act on the issues raised by Cannan at the Inquiry, despite Cannan admitting that he had previously pointed these out to the Government.

In using measurements of ordinariness to evaluate the success of the Asylum, the 1867 Inquiry demonstrated the importance of ordinariness to the Queensland colony. It also allowed examination of how traditional social structures representing ordinariness were adapted to the colonial environment and created a situation where,

[169] Conolly's requirements for an ideal asylum were widely presented in medical journals and lectures.

at times, ordinariness meant opposing values. This meant inaccuracy in measuring success at the Asylum. While it is argued that the Government continued to see the Asylum as a low priority, it may also be that a measure of ordinariness discouraged improvements, as the examples provided by the traditional structures were not always applicable to the colonial environment and difficult to replicate.

Ultimately the aborted Inquiry in 1867 made no difference in the conditions of the Asylum for the inmates and indeed the conclusion of 'successful management' would justify the Government's lack of concern and investment in the Asylum. However, harm, and the potential for harm, was missed in this public Inquiry as the measurement of 'satisfactory' had been based on inaccurate measures of ordinariness, thus making the conclusion of success erroneous.

Chapter 6

‘Pointing the finger’

The 1866 Commission of Inquiry and the 1867 Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry investigating Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum were both founded on concerns surrounding the moral welfare of patient, Isabella Lewers. While the Queensland press had played a part in either precipitating these Inquiries or their consequences, their role was not instrumental. This would change in 1868 and 1869. In late 1868 and early 1869 the Queensland press printed a series of letters and editorials alleging widespread harm was occurring at the Asylum. This would ultimately provoke firstly a Civil Service Commission of Inquiry in early 1869, and then a Joint Parliamentary Committee Inquiry later the same year. This chapter analyses the actions of the Queensland press, and Government response which resulted in the two 1869 Inquiries. The press, through a moral discourse, created representations of harm. The blame for harm arising from this discourse was attributed to Dr. Cannan and his Chief Warder, John Gee. However, it is argued that this moral discourse lacked credibility being founded on: unsubstantiated evidence; journalistic tactics to convince the community of harm; the influence from a senior Government official in owning a major newspaper; and possible manipulation by Dr. Cannan’s successor for his own benefit. Further, the subsequent actions by the Government occurred within an unsettled political environment and ultimately allowed a new Government to be viewed favourably by the community after a lengthy period of political unrest, economic depression and community disengagement.

This chapter argues from the context of moral politics and seeks to analyse the power of the press in constructing a moral message through the interplay between the content of the newspaper and social and political forces within colonial Queensland. This is explained through the concept of moral regulation. Moral regulation is usually understood as a form of politics whereby some people ‘act to problematise the

conduct, values or culture of others and seek to impose regulation on them.'[1] In particular, it targets how people perceive themselves and their way of life and thus is persuasive rather than coercive.[2] Moral regulation can be facilitated from different social positions, however it is usually initiated from below, thus challenging conventional power structures.[3] Moral regulation occurs through moral discourses linking moralised subjects with moralised practices and imputing that harm is occurring, or will occur, unless subjects and practices are appropriately regulated.[4] In this chapter it is argued that the press created a moral discourse around the alleged harm occurring at the Asylum and linked this to Asylum management. This moral discourse then provoked the Government to undertake moral regulation in order to remove the source of harm.

In late 1868 and early 1869, a series of Letters to the Editor from a Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum ex-staff member and three ex-patients claimed that harmful practices were occurring at the Asylum. The Queensland press reinforced the validity of their claims, built a discourse of harm around their allegations and strengthened perceptions of actual and symbolic harm. Actual harm is that which is specific and directly affects a person, persons or objects.[5] Symbolic harm is broader and indirect, and has the potential to affect a person or community's value system.[6] The discourse of harm constructed by the press was around the management of the Asylum. Management practices portrayed as harmful were moralised within the context of community expectations; the need to be benevolent as an expression of Christian values; the necessity for Victorian respectability and the need to strive for colonial economic and social progress. Also moralised was the expectation for the government to act as an effective moral agent and prevent harm.

[1] A Hunt, *Governing morals: a social history of moral regulation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 1.
[2] H Ruonavaara, 'Moral regulation: a reformulation', *Sociological Theory*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1997, p. 290.
[3] A Hunt, *Governing morals: a social history of moral regulation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 1-6.
[4] Ibid., p. 8.
[5] Ibid., p. 7.
[6] Ibid.

6.1 The political context

In late 1868, Queensland was in the grip of an economic crisis. The impact of the 1866 financial crisis precipitated by Government mismanagement[7] was still being felt, and its effects had been compounded by a lengthy drought.[8] Pastoral expansion, acclaimed as a symbol of colonial progress earlier in the 1860s, had stopped and many settlers had moved from Queensland.[9] Indeed, the 'brute realities of a mortgaged economy and an intractable environment were painfully registered.'[10] Such unfavorable economic conditions, with the Government largely to blame, would suggest a need for the Government to inspire confidence in their constituents. Yet, since 1866, Queensland politics had been marked by instability.[11] The Government appeared to have little connection with the Queensland community: there were minimal parliamentary sittings; government ministers were preoccupied by their own interests;[12] and decision-making was seemingly based around cronyism, regional and economic interests and convenience.[13]

On August 4 1868, Governor O'Connell opened Queensland's magnificent new Parliament House, a fitting finale to mark the end of his term.[14] This act also signified new beginnings for the Queensland Government. It symbolised the end of the Government's link to a convict heritage as parliament had been meeting in the old convict barracks since May 1860.[15] However, this important event coincided with a political crisis. While Robert Mackenzie, Premier, had held this position since August 1867, his government's position had always been precarious, as they were never assured a majority in Parliament. On the same day Governor O'Connell opened Parliament House, the Government was defeated by two votes during the Address-in-Reply debate.[16] Queensland was effectively left without a government. The incoming

---

[7] B Attard, 'Bridgeheads, 'Colonial Places' and the Queensland financial crisis of 1866', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* vol. 41, no. 1, 2013, p. 21.
[8] R Fitzgerald, *A history of Queensland. From the Dreaming to 1915,* University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1986, p. 129.
[9] R Evans, *A history of Queensland,* Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2007, p. 87.
[10] Ibid.
[11] B Bowden, *Work and strife in paradise: the history of labour relations in Queensland 1859-2009,* Federation Press, Annandale, New South Wales, 2009. p. 165.
[12] Ibid.
[13] P Forrest & S Forrest, *All for Queensland: the Governors and the people,* Shady Tree, Darwin, 2009.
[14] Ibid., p. 71
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

Governor, Colonel Samuel Wensley Blackall, granted Mackenzie a dissolution of Parliament on 14 August. Despite then being re-elected, Mackenzie's government again failed to win Parliament's vote in the Address-in-Reply. To expedite a solution to this impasse, Governor Blackall requested Attorney General Charles Lilley, form a government.[17] Finally, at the end of 1868, Queensland had a new government who was then faced with the onerous task of gaining community confidence after a period of political instability, a lengthy economic downturn and a general lack of connection with the Queensland community.

Letters to the Editor, and editorials, critical of the Asylum appeared in the press soon after Lilley's government took control. The discourse of harm constructed by the press would challenge this new government. Despite mid-nineteenth century governments having little interest in social policy generally,[18] the strength of the press's discourse of harm meant that the Queensland Government would be forced to respond to the challenge and act as a moral regulator, and so demonstrate their capacity to be moral agents and prove their capability as a government.

6.2 The Queensland press: creating a moral discourse of harm

The Queensland press, in particular the Ipswich based *Queensland Times,* was instrumental in precipitating the 1869 Civil Service Commission of Inquiry and the ensuing 1869 Joint Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. Colonial newspapers possessed considerable power. Part of this power came simply from the breadth of their readership. Colonial Australians were highly literate with 86 percent of men and 75 percent of women able to write in 1821[19] and presumably a higher number able to read. With reading aloud a popular pastime,[20] those who were unable to read may also have had access to the written word. The nineteenth century has been heralded as the 'great age of the printed and written

[17] Ibid.
[18] F Prochaska, *Christianity and social service in modern Britain: the disinherited spirit*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006, p. 13.
[19] E Webby, 'Reading in Colonial Australia: the 2011 John Alexander Ferguson Memorial Lecture', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 97, no. 2, 2011, p. 120.
[20] Ibid., p. 131.

word'[21] and the rapid growth of newspapers in colonial Australia[22] was testament to colonial Australians' relationship with reading and thirst for information. Indeed, by the 1860s, newspapers were the most avidly read of all local publications.[23] In 1869, with the population only at 109,897,[24] Queensland had ten newspapers. Of these, the *Brisbane Courier* had the widest readership and was the only paper published daily.[25]

The import of colonial newspapers was to seemingly provide local and international information to their readers, however their impact went well beyond the provision of content. Sue Lovell discussed the positive influences of the colonial press on the Queensland community. Lovell argued that newspapers promoted community cohesion and a sense of belonging by presenting the familiar (the ordinariness discussed in the previous chapter), sharing the challenges faced by colonists and celebrating markers indicating progress towards stability and civilisation.[26] However, colonial newspapers also had an insidious power. Timothy Cook argued that the press generally was a political institution that provoked political action.[27] However, as a political institution, the colonial press's power was not always used constructively. Objectivity was not always apparent with editors characteristically taking a polemic position against government officials and other editors.[28] As Denis Cryle noted, the level of 'altruism against resentment and public interest against personal malice' in the colonial press always needs to be determined.[29] By specifying who and what was newsworthy,[30] the press was able to not only manipulate and define the parameters of Queensland's political culture, but also that of its social culture. In short, the Queensland press had the capacity to create moral discourses and the power to provoke moral regulation.

---

[21] E Webby, *Colonial voices: letters, diaries, journalism and other accounts of nineteenth-century Australia*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1989, p. xi.
[22] E Webby, 'Reading in Colonial Australia: the 2011 John Alexander Ferguson Memorial Lecture', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 97, no. 2, 2011, p. 128.
[23] Ibid.
[24] 'The statistical register of Queensland', *The Queenslander,* 5 November 1870, p. 3.
[25] 'Newspaper and magazine titles', Trove Digitalized Newspapers and More, http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/titles?state=Queensland.
[26] S Lovell, "A fine healthy place.' The role of local newspapers in civilizing the Queensland bush', *Media History*, September, 2014, p. 1.
[27] TE Cook, *Governing with the news: the news media as a political institution*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998, p. 3.
[28] D Cryle, *The press in colonial Queensland: a social and political history, 1845-1875*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1989, p. 2.
[29] D Cryle, *Disreputable profession: journalists and journalism in colonial Australia*, Central Queensland University Press, Rockhampton, 1997, p. 10.
[30] Ibid., p. 11.

The power of the Queensland press was evident in their construction of a discourse of harm around the management of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. In late 1868 and early 1869, ex-patients, Henry Kilner, William Harmer Collard and Thomas White, and ex-staff member John Brosnan, dramatically depicted their Asylum experiences in a series of Letters to the Editor. By publishing these letters and providing editorials supporting the claims and validity of the letters, editors were able to shape a moral discourse of harm.

The conception of harm created through the press in relation to the Asylum was actual and symbolic. Actual harm was that which was occurring to the colony's vulnerable lunatic population. Symbolic harm challenged Queenslanders' personal morals associated with Victorian decorum, gendered expectations and Christianity, and community values linked to colonial progress. By implying symbolic harm, in addition to actual harm, the moral discourse was strengthened. It created moralised perceptions of the Asylum management and implied threats of broad potential harm to the colonist and the Queensland community.

6.3 Creating a discourse of harm

Claims of harm occurring at the Asylum first appeared in the *Queensland Times* in a Letter to the Editor from ex-asylum employee, John Brosnan. Brosnan's initial letter to the *Queensland Times,* written under the pseudonym of 'Justice', was not published.[31] Brosnan's next Letter to the Editor, signed as 'Argus', was published on 26 November 1868.[32] Brosnan's use of a pseudonym was not unusual as this was a common practice in nineteenth century journalism.[33] In his letter signed 'Argus', he referred to the earlier unpublished one from 'Justice' (he appeared to assume that it had been published), and maintained that 'Justice' was only one of a number of

[31] In a postscript to a later letter from John Brosnan under the pseudonym of De Facto, the Editor stated that the original letter from 'Justice' was not published: 'The Lunatic Asylum', *The Queensland Times,* 3 December 1868, p. 3.
[32] 'To the Editor of the Queensland Times', *The Queensland Times,* 26 November 1868, p. 3.
[33] D Cryle, *The press in colonial Queensland: a social and political history, 1845-1875*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1989, p. 3.

sources with damning evidence of the asylum, and that an inquiry was crucial to investigate 'the treatment of the unfortunates who are consigned to that institution'.[34]

John Brosnan provided examples of harm occurring at the Asylum in his next Letter to the Editor, writing as 'De Facto', published in the *Queensland Times* on December 3. His letter indicated a culture of neglect, immorality and corruption. Exonerating the Government from blame, Brosnan claimed that harmful practices were hidden from visiting Government officials; ushered around by the Surgeon Superintendent or the Chief Warder, 'they see all correct as they suppose, or at least so far as outward appearance goes'.[35] Indeed, Brosnan claimed, the Government could not have been aware of the true state of the Asylum or 'otherwise they would not have allowed the disgraceful scenes which have taken place to go unpunished.'[36] Brosnan sought to place responsibility for harm entirely on the management of Dr. Cannan and Chief Warder, John Gee. Providing examples of widespread mistreatment and poor medical attention, he named eleven inmates who he maintained had died from neglect and indicated that it was rumored a patient had been buried alive. Brosnan wrote that Dr. Cannan failed to promote a culture of respectability; he hired immoral women and intemperate men, allowed female inmates to roam unsupervised in the asylum grounds and required male warders, including those who were not married, to supervise females at night without the protection of a locked door. Brosnan also claimed that Cannan ignored a scam whereby the cook sold extracted meat fat to a local butcher and shared the proceeds with the Chief Warder.[37]

Allegations of actual and symbolic harm were evident in Brosnan's letter. Claims of medical mistreatment, deaths through negligence and a possible live burial suggested presence of actual harm. The colonial community would be concerned about the alleged reports of actual harm to inmates. However, it was the suggestion of symbolic harm threatening colonist's fundamental values that were likely to be unsettling and create alarm. Examples of harm in Brosnan's letter appeared to threaten a number of core Victorian values. Victorians believed that benevolence was at the heart of their

[34] 'The Lunatic Asylum', *The Queensland Times,* November 26 1868, p. 3.
[35] 'To the Editor of the Queensland Times', *The Queensland Times,* December 3 1868, p. 3.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

Christianity and was enacted by helping others and fostering public good.[38] The accusation that Asylum inmates suffered in an institution established to relieve suffering was antithetical to those Christian values. Traditional gendered expectations, discussed extensively in the previous chapter and fundamental to the colonial social fabric, seemed threatened. Virtue and respectability in female staff and patients, and temperance in male staff, were seemingly not evident at the Asylum, nor did they appear to be fostered. The requirement to supervise women inmates at night without the barrier of a locked door suggested that sexual decorum was not observed. It meant that vulnerable unmarried men's carefully contained sexual appetites may have been tempted jeopardising their potential as wholesome husbands.[39] Claims of a scam meant misuse of government resources. In a colonial environment with limited resources for social welfare, misuse of Government supplies signified harm to the colony generally by symbolically threatening its economic capacity and ultimately its future prosperity. This symbolic threat would be of concern given the economic depression in Queensland at that time.

The *Queensland Times* Editor assured readers of De Facto's authenticity and implied the he and his staff had acted responsibly in publishing his letters. The Editor explained that despite not publishing De Facto's original letter signed 'Justice', any doubts about its genuineness had since been dispelled. The author had presented himself to the *Queensland Times* and 'personally convinced us of his good faith'.[40] The Editor's reassurance implied that such 'vetting' ensured ethical journalism, and would likewise occur with any future letters concerning the Asylum. In providing a context of truthfulness around John Brosnan's letters, the *Queensland Times* Editor created an authentic foundation for a discourse of harm.

Any 'good faith' behind John Brosnan's claims was doubtful. Brosnan commenced as a lunatic warder at the Brisbane gaol, December 1861.[41] When the Asylum opened, he

[38] F Prochaska, *Christianity and social service in modern Britain: the disinherited spirit*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006, pp. 2-3.
[39] See previous chapter and: JA Allen, *Sex and secrets: crimes involving Australian women since 1880*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990.
[40] The Editor, Queensland Times, Addendum to 'To the Editor of the Queensland Times', *The Queensland Times,* 3 December 1868, p. 3.
[41] Visiting Justice to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, letter no. 1455 of 1866, 13 February 1866, Microfilm no. 6808.

transferred with the other lunatic warders.[42] The initial letter from 'De Facto' was written on the day Brosnan resigned from the Asylum.[43] Brosnan had a history of being a complainant and a focus of complaints. While employed at the gaol, he was alleged to have been 'drunk and disorderly when off duty.'[44] Ongoing feuds between Mrs. John Brosnan and the wives of other prison warders were well known to prison management.[45] In March 1866, Brosnan formally complained to the Visiting Justice that he was not promoted to Chief Warder despite being the longest serving officer. Brosnan insinuated that he was not given the senior position because he had failed to endear himself to Cannan: 'I have not made myself handy about his private residence as the more favoured ones have done' and '[am known] for speaking my mind too freely on certain matters'.[46] While Brosnan claimed he resigned freely from the Asylum,[47] he actually tendered his resignation the same day he was suspended.[48] Brosnan denied knowing the charge behind his suspension other than, he supposed, for allowing one patient to throw another against the tub.[49] He claimed the charge against him was not investigated: Dr. Cannan had stated, '"Oh if you are going to resign, what is the use of bothering any more about this charge."'[50] John Gee indicated that the real reason for Brosnan's dismissal was lateness.[51] In fact, Brosnan had habitually been late and even absent from the Asylum for days at a time.[52] Gee's description of Brosnan was not complimentary:

> … one of the most negligent warders we have ever had … he would ill-use the patients … I have frequently had to check him for rough usage; he has stood by and seen patients roughly using other patients, while washing them, and did not check them.'[53]

---

[42] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 694.
[43] Ibid.
[44] William Stakbury to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, letter no. 758 of 1865, 28 March 1865, Microfilm no. 6423.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Visiting Justice to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, letter no. 1455 of 1866, 13 February 1866, Microfilm no. 6808.
[47] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 706.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., p. 755.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

Others had also complained. Warder Sneyd alleged he had frequently witnessed Brosnan being 'negligent' towards sick patients[54] and ex-inmate John White claimed Brosnan had forcefully dragged him into a tub.[55] Thus, despite the *Queensland Times* assuring their readers that they were satisfied that 'De Facto's' intent was not malicious, other evidence suggests differently. This challenges the tenets of Brosnan's assertions, the future evidence built upon his claims and ultimately the foundations of the moral discourse of harm constructed by the press.

The *Queensland Times* published letters from ex-patient H.K. on December 1[56] and December 31.[57] While H.K. was obviously a pseudonym, the initials did little to disguise the author, Henry Kilner. Kilner was well known as an Ipswich businessman[58] and through his attempts to enter local and state politics.[59] His admissions to the Asylum were likely to have been common knowledge within the Ipswich community. Details of most Asylum committals were published in the press and likely to become gossip, particularly if the lunatic was recognised. With Ipswich being home of the *Queensland Times*, most Ipswich readers would have easily guessed H.K.'s identity. It would seem, similar to Brosnan, that the intent behind Kilner's letters was not altruistic. Rather, he would have been eager to seize opportunities to enhance his credibility by proving his sanity and the unjustness of his asylum admissions.

Asylum case notes on Henry Kilner were scant. However, it seemed from Dr. Cannan's description that he had been suffering from delirium tremens on his initial admission. His presentation, 20 July 1865, was recorded as 'mania' attributed to 'intemperance'. Initially displaying violence that lasted for four days, he rapidly

[54] Ibid., p. 727.
[55] Ibid., p. 723.
[56] 'The Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo, No 1', *The Queensland Times,* December 1 1868, p. 3.
[57] 'The Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo, No 2', *The Queensland Times,* December 3 1868, p. 3.
[58] Henry Kilner was the Ipswich agent for the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company in 1864: 'Classified Advertisements', *The Queensland Times,* 8 November 1864, p. 2. In 1865 he became General Manager for Shepherd Smith, Ipswich: *The Brisbane Courier,* July 3, 1865, p. 2. He later was well known as a chemist and druggist: Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860- 04/09/1869, Entry no. 107, 6 July 1865, Microfilm no. 4922; *The Queensland Times,* July 28 1874, p. 2.
[59] Henry Kilner attempted to enter local politics as an alderman in 1864 and 1865: *The Northern Australian,* 13 February 1864, p. 3; *The Queensland Times,* 9 February 1865, p. 3. He nominated and was not elected as a Member of Parliament in 1867: *The Queenslander,* August 3 1867, p. 7.

improved and was discharged soon after in August.[60] On Kilner's next admission, July 1868, Dr. Cannan noted a deteriorating physical and mental state: 'Now in a state of compete imbecility – sores and abrasions on hands and arms.'[61] Again, he quickly improved and was discharged in October 1868.[62] While Dr. Cannan's notes suggested that his admission was warranted, Kilner's opinion differed as was reflected in his Letters to the Editor and in his evidence to the 1869 Civil Service Commission of Inquiry.

Echoing John Brosnan's hyperboles, Henry Kilner was highly derogatory about the Asylum in his letters to the *Queensland Times.* As an ex-patient writing of his personal experiences, he provided valuable authentic substance to a representation of harm: '… anything more disgraceful than the state of that institution at the present day cannot be pointed out in any civilized or uncivilized country in the world'.[63] Yet, his letters provided minimal evidence to support the extent of this claim. Rather, the content of his letters focused on the dire treatment suffered by lunatics prior to admission, asylum conditions that were an affront to his gentleman status and the argument that his and others' asylum detentions were unwarranted.

Henry Kilner complained of the barbarous nature of being confined in gaol or a lock-up, 'caged in a disgusting cell', while waiting for the Governor to authorise admission to the Asylum.[64] Later letters by ex-patients William Harmer Collard[65] and Thomas White[66] also protested at this requirement. Their observations seemed apt and indicated actual harm. However, this was not the first time that the harm associated with this practice had been noted. Dr. Cannan had raised his concerns about this practice at the Parliamentary Commission in 1867; he had warned that this requirement was deleterious to the lunatic's mental health.[67] Reverend William Draper, evangelist and Congregational Minister at Goodna was also critical:

---

[60] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 107, 5 August 1868, Microfilm no. 4922.
[61] Ibid., 20 July 1868.
[62] Ibid., 2 October 1868.
[63] 'The Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo, No 1', *The Queensland Times,* 1 December 1868, p. 3.
[64] 'The Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo, No 2', *The Queensland Times,* 31 December 1868, p. 3.
[65] 'Iniquitous treatment', *The Brisbane Courier,* 12 January 1869, p. 3.
[66] 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo', *The Queensland Times,* 9 February 1869, p. 3.
[67] 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1068.

> The preliminaries of lunacy are barbarous. Policemen, handcuffs, magistrates, horribly foul cells and a sense of criminality are only some of the miseries which frequently accompany the lunatic before he reaches Woogaroo.[68]

Unjust detention of men was a major thrust of Henry Kilner's letters. Kilner claimed that many inmates, who, in his opinion, were sane, had difficulty obtaining discharge despite possessing valuable trade skills that would benefit the community.[69] Suggesting that sane men were unnecessarily detained, intimated that he, similarly, had needlessly been incarcerated. Kilner cited sunstroke as a common cause of unwarranted admissions:

> Sunstroke is the cause of perhaps sixty per cent. of cases sent to the asylum, and were these patients treated rationally, with kindness and a soothing cooling application to the head, such as would be done at an hospital, they would recover rapidly.[70]

The dangers of sunstroke were popularised in the press[71] and created concerns for the colonists as the alien heat and sun provided a ready explanation for a myriad of symptoms, including aberrant behaviour. Contemporary medical discourse validated the threat of sunstroke. Dr. C. T. Macklin explained colonists' disposition to this illness:

> … when the thin skull of the European is unduly exposed … its globular shape is conducive to the concentration in a focus of the heat rays upon a limited portion of the surface of the scalp.[72]

In alluding to the prevalence of sunstroke victims in the Asylum, Kilner validated his own and others' sanity, challenging the necessity of most admissions and their subsequent treatment.

---

[68] 'The Lunatic Asylum 111', *The Brisbane Courier,* 16 January 1869, p. 5.
[69] 'The Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo, No 1', *The Queensland Times,* 1 December, 1868, p. 3; 'The Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo No. 2', *The Queensland Times,* 31 December 1868, p. 3.
[70] 'The Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo, No 1', *The Queensland Times,* 1 December 1868, p. 3.
[71] See for example: 'Sunstroke', *The South Australian Register,* 3 February 1868, p. 2; 'Deaths from sun-stroke', *The Queenslander*, 30 January 1869, p. 5.
[72] CT Mackin, 'Sunstroke, or Coup do Soleil: its causes, consequences and pathology', *Australian Medical Journal*, January, 1856, p. 5.

Henry Kilner's claims added to conceptions of actual and symbolic harm. Actual harm was apparent in his description of the punitive gaol conditions he was required to endure while waiting for a signed warrant. However, the strength of the symbolic harm was most likely to cause concern. The threat of lunacy and admission to an Asylum was a real fear for colonists. Kilner's observation that sunstroke victims formed the majority of the asylum population, who then had difficulty gaining discharge, was likely to have created apprehension for colonists; they similarly could be inflicted by sunstroke and incarcerated unnecessarily. Sunstroke generally created a sense of fear as discussed above; its difference and unknown consequences were associated with an alien colonial landscape. Fuelling the fear of possible Asylum admission were stories from the press of false imprisonment in asylums,[73] the possibility of lunacy occurring after a fright or adverse life event,[74] and the peculiarities of Queensland colonial life that may predispose towards insanity.[75] Other claims from Kilner validated conceptions of symbolic harm. Kilner's assertion that sane men with valuable trade skills who could contribute to colonial development were detained unnecessarily, implied that potential colonial progress was compromised. Kilner also expressed indignation over 'promiscuous' sharing of clothes between inmates and lack of clergy visits.[76] Such practices contrasted with the expectations associated with Kilner's middle-class gentleman status and suggested a weakening of fundamental colonial social structures.

Commendations from the wider Queensland press on publishing letters from Brosnan and Kilner endorsed the emerging discourse of harm. Queensland papers reprinted the letters from Brosnan and Kilner[77] and bestowed praise on the *Queensland Times* for their diligence in ensuring validity:

---

[73] The case of Dr. Jonathon Labatt discussed in Chapter 2 was a local example of alleged false imprisonment in the gaol for lunacy after Labatt had an altercation with a local solicitor, Select Committee on Labatt', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1864, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 1288. The report of A.M Gore being sent falsely to Bedlam was reported in 'Home Talk', *Wide Bay and Burnett Advisor,* 27 June 1866, p. 2

[74] Such cases are apparent in the Asylum Case Book. See for example Charlotte Williams whose mania occurred after a 'fright': Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860- 04/09/1869, Entry no.139, 4 November 1865, Microfilm no. 4922. An advertisement in relation to a house for sale notes the previous owner's 'sudden insanity': *The Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser,* 25 January 1866, p. 1.

[75] 'Woogaroo' (reprinted from the *Gympie Times*), *The Queensland Times,* 25 February 1868, p. 3.

[76] 'The Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo, No 1', *The Queensland Times,* 1 December 1868, p. 3.

[77] Kilner's December 1 letter was reprinted in full: *The Brisbane Courier,* 2 December 1868, p. 3; *The Queenslander* 5 December 1868, p. 4. Brosnan's letter of December 3, documenting asylum scandals,

> [The letters] appear to be destitute of those symptoms of petty malice which sometimes disfigure newspaper correspondence, and we feel almost confident that such charges have not been published before such tangible proof has been furnished that the great cause of humanity and justice demanded their publication.[78]

The *Queensland Times* sought to further consolidate the discourse of harm by moralising the accusations against Dr. Cannan and inferring the need for moral regulation. Reassuring the public of their altruistic intent, the *Queensland Times* Editor affirmed:

> [it was never their intention] to provoke a violent undiscriminating outcry, [however] … those letters do not constitute the only means by which we have arrived at the conviction that … a commission of enquiry should be appointed.[79]

While outwardly appearing supportive of Cannan, the Editor validated assumptions of harm by creating generalisations about Cannan's supposed harmful behaviour, providing a justification for his harmful actions and then proffered solutions.

The *Queensland Times* Editor surmised that the Asylum's many intemperate inmates caused Cannan's lack of concern for his patients. These patients would 'cause disgust ... [and Cannan] cannot help feel degraded at being set to watch over a lot of drunkards' instead of tending to the duties of his 'worthy and noble occupation'.[80] Challenging the Government to act to prevent further harm, the Editor recommended the construction of 'two or three houses of detention throughout the colony … for treatment of *delirium tremens*' to decrease the burden on the Asylum. Drawing on the strong moral mores attached to drunkenness, discussed extensively in the previous chapter, the Editor confirmed callousness by Cannan, appealed to the wrath of the temperance movement and implied that the Government needed to take appropriate action in relation to drunkenness.

---

received even greater publicity being reprinted or reprinted in part in: *The Brisbane Courier,* 4 December 1868, p. 2, *The Rockhampton Bulletin,* 19 December, p. 2, *The Maryborough Chronicle and Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser,* 8 December, 1868, p. 2 and *The Darling Downs Gazette,* 9 December 1868, p. 2.

[78] *The Darling Downs Gazette,* 9 December 1868, p. 2.

[79] *The Queensland Times,* 8 December 1868, p. 2.

[80] Ibid.

Cannan's perceived inattention to his role as Surgeon Superintendent was also justified by the *Queensland Times* Editor. Blaming Cannan's professional isolation on the remoteness of the Asylum, the Editor inferred that Cannan cannot help being predisposed towards unprofessionalism: Cannan 'reigns supreme in his domain – an autocrat in his secluded realm' and naturally he would be open to 'temptation and a premium to dereliction of duty'.[81] To counteract Cannan's supposed predilection for unprofessionalism, the Editor again challenged the Government to take action. He proposed that visiting surgeons be appointed as the current visits by the Visiting Justice were 'a farce'.[82] Thus, by justifying Cannan's lack of professionalism and his neglect of patients, affirmed others' accusations against Cannan. By implying that he did not resist 'temptation', and 'neglected' his duty, moralised the allegations. Offering solutions then served to reinforce the authenticity of the allegations against Cannan. This journalistic ploy reinforced the legitimacy of the accusations of harm in the letters published by the *Queensland Times* and sought to provoke moral regulation by inferring the Government needed to take action to prevent further harm.

The *Brisbane Courier* published their first commentary on the Asylum on January 8. Clarifying the reasons why they had not previously commented, the Editor implied responsible journalism. While being aware of rumours of harm in relation to the Asylum, the Editor had determined that these were speculative and lacked credibility; this type of information 'could not with propriety be used by the press.'[83] The Editor shared that the *Brisbane Courier* had received similar letters to those published in the *Queensland Times* containing 'very serious charges against some of the officials and impugning the general management of the asylum'.[84] The Editor justified his decision not to publish these letters; the authors' identities were unknown and appeared to originate from 'mal-contents'. He added:

> … it would be manifestly unfair to impeach the credit of a public institution, or the character of a man in Dr. Cannan's position, on such doubtful testimony.[85]

[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] *The Brisbane Courier,* 8 January 1869, p. 2.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

The Editor advised readers to be wary in accepting the *Queensland Times'* letters as 'truth' as some details were provided in a 'circumstantial manner' and others exaggerated:

> … there is hardly a crime which could be committed by the officials of such an institution which has not been attributed to those at Woogaroo.

Despite his patriarchal warnings to the public and the implication that the *Queensland Times* may have been irresponsible, the Editor still asked: 'What is the Government doing?' as '[the letters] detail most horrible proceedings not only a scandal to our public institutions, but disgraceful to humanity.' [86]

The *Brisbane Courier's* question to the Government querying their intentions was rhetorical; the paper had strong political alliances and the Editor was likely to have known what the Government was planning. Thomas Blackett Stephens, Queensland's Colonial Secretary, was the largest shareholder of the *Brisbane Courier* and his brother its accountant and manager.[87] Owning Queensland's most widely read paper was a source of power for Stephens. Indeed, he acknowledged this power, boasting that his newspaper acquisition was based on a 'desire to have in his hands the most potent agent not only on politics but on moral and social progress.'[88] Given Stephens' position as Colonial Secretary, it is not surprising that the *Brisbane Courier* chose not to publish letters criticising the Asylum, which was part of Stephens' portfolio. Further, as an Inquiry was announced soon after the *Brisbane Courier's* editorial, it was probable that in asking what the 'Government was doing?' the Editor was well aware that an Inquiry was to be announced. The answer to this question would not reflect badly on the Government, and in fact, would demonstrate that the Government was taking action.

The discourse of harm created by the press continued to gain strength with further allegations from John Brosnan (still writing as 'De Facto'),[89] and from ex-patients

---

[86] *The Brisbane Courier,* 8 January 1869, p. 2.
[87] D Cryle, *The press in colonial Queensland: a social and political history, 1845-1875*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1989, p. 92.
[88] *The Brisbane Courier,* 28 August 1877, p. 3.
[89] 'The Lunatic Asylum', *The Queensland Times,* 5 January 1869, p. 3.

William Harmer Collard[90] and Thomas White.[91] While these letters sought to authenticate and consolidate depictions of actual harm previously published, other allegations successfully increased the impact of symbolic harm.

Letters from William Harmer Collard and Thomas White letter reflected another aspect of symbolic harm; an undermining of the value of toil, which was viewed as necessary to help turn around Queensland's economic distress and lead to future colonial success. Collard blamed his Asylum admission on a debilitated state from 'exposure to the sun and overexertion in my trade'.[92] White attributed his charge of lunacy to the effects of drinking to excess after hard labour. After earning a 'heavy check out North; I spent it before I reached Rockhampton.' Implying that he had then suffered from 'delirium tremens', White complained:

> Let a man have a touch of delirium tremens ever so slight, and a doctor swears that he thinks it necessary that he should be sent to gaol for medical treatment.[93]

For both Collard and White, it seemed that harm had resulted from participating in a culture of masculine toil. The actual harm implied in this instance was unnecessary incarceration in gaol and the Asylum. Collard alleged that harm continued after being released from the Asylum. He wrote of his despair on discharge at having no rewards from his previous toil; being left penniless, without his own clothes and a distance from his home.[94] As discussed in a previous chapter, toil was eulogised in colonial Queensland[95] and excessive alcohol use was characteristic of male camaraderie in a culture based around toil.[96] Thus, an association between hard toil, incarceration and destitution, reflected in Collard's and White's letters was an example of symbolic harm for Queenslanders as it was antithetical to the colonial meaning of toil.

---

[90] 'Iniquitous Treatment', *The Brisbane Courier,* 12 January 1869, p. 3.
[91] 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *The Queensland Times*, 9 February 1869, p. 3.
[92] 'Iniquitous Treatment', *The Brisbane Courier,* 12 January 1869, p. 3.
[93] 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *The Queensland Times*, 9 February 1869, p. 3.
[94] 'Iniquitous Treatment', *The Brisbane Courier,* 12 January 1869, p. 3.
[95] R Evans, 'The hidden colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland ', in J Roe (ed), *Social policy in Australia. Some perspectives 1901-1976*, Cassell, Sydney, 1976, p. 75.
[96] M Lewis, *A rum state: alcohol and state policy in Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992. Also see previous chapter for an extensive discussion of a culture of masculinity in Colonial Queensland.

William Harmer Collard and Thomas White wrote of the shame in having to publically undress and bathe on entry to the Asylum.[97] Public bathing was also graphically depicted in Brosnan's January 5 letter, and made more horrific by his description of the communal bathtub: 'two feet six inches in diameter full of foul and fetid water, in which all the sores in the yard had been washed.'[98] Public stripping and bathing on entry to the Asylum, and being required to relinquish personal clothes, depicted in earlier letters from Brosnan, and by Collard and White, is reminiscent of initiation practices described by Erving Goffman. While Goffman's descriptions related to his observations of a 1950s asylum, it is likely that new inmates at Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum would similarly experience these practices as mortifying and/or de-identifying as portrayed by Goffman.[99] Further, it is probable that these practices reflected symbolic harm, being an affront to the community's strong sense of Victorian respectability.

A letter from ex-patient Thomas White, published in the *Queensland Times*, provided authenticity and strength to the discourse of harm. Thomas White signed his letter, 'A Shepherd at Cressbrook'. He drew attention to the humbleness and lack of pretentions associated with his occupation; 'I write under the shade of a tree, with a flock of sheep in front of me. I envy no man his office.'[100] The life of a shepherd was indeed perceived as humble, being the lowest paid male occupation in mid-nineteenth century Queensland.[101] It was also recognised as hazardous work. Newspapers reported aboriginals murdering shepherds,[102] being violent towards shepherds' families,[103] and shepherds becoming lost in the bush.[104] White, in emphasising his role as a shepherd, drew on the value of toil to Queenslanders, like that of the other two ex-patients. However, its impact was also derived from the humility expressed by

[97] 'Iniquitous Treatment', *The Brisbane Courier,* 12 January 1869, p. 3.
[98] 'The Lunatic Asylum', *The Queensland Times,* 5 January 1869, p. 3.
[99] E Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961, pp. 27-31.
[100] 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *Brisbane Courier,* 10 February 1869, pp. 3-4.
[101] 'The market rates of labor in Brisbane', *The Queenslander,* 13 October 1866, p. 12.
[102] See for example the following reported murders of shepherds by aboriginals: a shepherd in the employ of R. Triffith Esquire reported in *The North Australian,* 12 November 1863, p. 1; a shepherd employed at Rawley's station in *The Queenslander,* 20 April 1867, p. 5; a shepherd from Collaroy in *The Queenslander,* 10 November 1866, p. 6.
[103] See for example reports of a shepherd's wife being attacked by an aboriginal: 'Local intelligence', *The Warwick Argus and Tenterfield Chronicle*, 3 May 1867, p. 2; 'Local Intelligence' *The North Australian and General Advertiser*, 25 January 1859, p. 2.
[104] See for example report of shepherd being found at Apple Creek after being lost for seven days: *The Rockhampton and Central Queenslander Advertiser,* 25 March 1869, p. 2.

a lowly paid shepherd working in dangerous and dreary conditions seemingly for the future of Queensland. The press emphasised the appeal and apparent genuineness of White's letter; 'an air of candour',[105] 'having intelligence and seeming honesty',[106] a 'painfully interesting narrative' and '[b]ears the stamp of proof'.[107] Other newspapers reprinted these commendations.[108] Certainly the importance of this letter to the press also lay in its timing, as it was published after the initial 1869 Civil Service Commission of Inquiry had commenced and thus affirmed the need for an Inquiry and moral regulation.

Framed as authentic, and thus to be believed by the public, the added impact of White's letter was that it dramatically drew a detailed picture of inmates' day-to-day existence providing greater context and insights into the practices which represented actual and symbolic harm. White validated the types of harm identified in earlier letters. He also described the deleterious conditions for inmates that, in light of the previously established discourse, added to the representation of actual harm. These conditions included poor food, little protection from the sun, cramped conditions, tiresome domestic work and no recreational facilities. Fuelling the public's fear associated with incarceration, White described the plight of those who became physically ill and were required to enter the Asylum's makeshift hospital; three cells joined together within the male yard. White insinuated that there was little hope of recovery for these inmates: 'I never saw one leave it, except in his coffin.' He also described the requirement for inmates to care for the dying and the dead: 'I think this grave digging, and coffin-carrying, and disposing of the dead, is not the right sort of work for patients in a lunatic asylum'. [109] Erving Goffman regarded this institutional practice as demoralising, symbolically 'contaminating' those who are living with the taint of death.[110] Validating the many previous references to the Asylum as a gaol, White concluded that prisoners fare better: '[i]f the public think Woogaroo more comfortable for an insane patient than Brisbane Gaol it is a gross delusion'. Finally, White expressed gratitude to the press, justifying their role in creating a discourse of

[105] *The Queensland Times,* 9 February 1869, p. 3.
[106] 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *The Brisbane Courier,* 10 February 1869, p. 3.
[107] Ibid, pp. 3-4.
[108] 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *The Queenslander,* 13 February 1869, p. 6; 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *The Maryborough Chronicle,* 16 February 1869, p. 2.
[109] 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *The Brisbane Courier,* 10 February 1869, p. 3.
[110] E Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961, pp. 34-35

harm. White claimed his release was the result of the press beginning 'to growl about Woogaroo', as his discharge was arranged two days after the initial letter was published.[111]

The validity of the claims by William Harmer Collard and Thomas White is doubtful and even the authorship of their letters is questionable. On Collard's admission to the Asylum, December 1867, Dr. Cannan diagnosed his condition as: 'Amentia – Old drunkard – quite a cripple - incoherent – takes food well.'[112] Cannan later observed that despite improvement, his brain was 'permanently diseased.'[113] Amentia, a common nineteenth century diagnosis, indicated permanent intellectual disability.[114] In light of Dr. Cannan's observations, Collard's capacity to recall events before, and during the early stages of his admission, was probably severely compromised. His claim of being a competent tradesman was also questionable, given that he was 'quite a cripple.' Casebook notes do not suggest complete recovery as he was discharged to the care of Mr. Vowles Esq. 'who promised to look after him'.[115] Given Cannan's observations, it is probable that Collard was still demonstrating signs indicating 'brain disease' at the time of his discharge. Certainly, claims of destitution and homelessness appear exaggerated given that Mr. Vowles Esq. had undertaken to assist him. Similarities were apparent between Collard's descriptions in his letter and those in Henry Kilner's letters. Kilner had visited Collard in the Asylum to assist him gain discharge[116] and it is probable that Collard and Kilner continued contact after Collard's discharge. Kilner then may have had opportunities to assist Collard in composing his letter. Given that Collard's letter was highly literate, which was incongruous with his supposed level of brain disease, provides further support for this supposition.

---

[111] 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *The Queensland Times*, 9 February 1869, p. 3.
[112] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 258, 3 December 1867, Microfilm no. 4922
[113] Ibid., March 1868 (exact date was not provided in the Casebook).
[114] C Fox, 'Exploring 'Amentia' in the Tasmanian convict system, 1824-1890', *Tasmanian Historical Studies*, vol. 13, 2008, pp. 127-152.
[115] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 258, 10 November 1868, Microfilm no. 4922. Evidence from Release Certificates between 1865 and 1869 demonstrate that if an inmate was sufficiently recovered they were most probably discharged to the community or if not sufficiently recovered, or vulnerable, they were discharged to the care of a relative, friend or employer who had applied for their release.
[116] 'Iniquitous Treatment', *The Brisbane Courier,* 12 January 1869, p. 3.

The authorship of Thomas White's letter was similarly doubtful. The *Queensland Times* Editor indicated that White had visited their office soon after his discharge and spoke with the staff for some time. The Editor's impressions of White were that he was an 'honest, humane man', however, 'his manner was exited', he was 'tempted to exaggerate' and he was 'a little hasty in coming to some of his conclusions'.[117] With little evidence of such characteristics in White's very articulate letter, it could be suggested that such a lengthy meeting was to either help White formulate a letter or assist in the writing of the letter. Nor does the quality of White's letter demonstrate the 'great disadvantage' that he stated it was written under; 'no spectacles to write at night, and, writing in the day time under trees … I have done the best I could.'[118]

Debates in Parliament indicated suspicions about the validity and authorship of the letters generally. The Hon. J. G. McDougall, on March 24, asserted that he had no doubt that the 'principle mover in the matter was a gentleman who at present was a candidate for the office of superintendent … and was the instigator for most of the communications that appeared … and that he revised all, or nearly all the letters before they appeared.'[119] Mr. McDougall was referring to Dr. Henry Challinor who replaced Dr. Cannan in May when he became ill[120] and succeeded him later that same month when he was dismissed.[121] Unsurprisingly, the *Queensland Times* Editor vehemently denied that Dr. Challinor was involved with the letters they published and declared that such rumours were 'entirely without foundation'.[122] Yet, Thomas White was aware of Dr. Challinor's interest in the Asylum, as he requested that if his letter was not published, it be given to Dr. Challinor: 'to be laid before any Commission that may be appointed.'[123] There is no evidence to suggest that Dr. Challinor was the favoured successor to Cannan. However, given that Challinor was a Member of Parliament between 1861 and 1868,[124] he was likely to have been well known to Government members, and it is probable that his former colleagues knew of his

[117] 'Local and General News', *The Queensland Times,* 9 February 1869, p. 3.
[118] Ibid.
[119] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates,* [Hansard], Legislative Council, 24 March 1869, pp. 215-216.
[120] *Queensland Times,* 10 May 1869, p. 2.
[121] *Queensland Government Gazette, Volume X, From January 1st to December 31st 1869,* James. C. Beal, Government Printer, 1870, p. 641.
[122] *The Queensland Times,* 25 March 1869, p. 3.
[123] 'Local and General News', *The Queensland Times,* 9 February 1869, p. 3.
[124] Douglas Gordon, 'Challinor, Henry (1814–1882)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/challinor-henry-3185/text4777

preference for the position. Further, Challinor lived in Ipswich, the home of the *Queensland Times* and given his public position as a medical practitioner and former member of Government, it is very probable that he was well known to the Editor.

Accusations of Dr. Challinor's involvement were based on hearsay, however, evidence suggests that he may have been involved. If this was the case, this then infers that the impetus for the discourse of harm constructed by the press was to secure the position of Surgeon Superintendent for Dr. Challinor and therefore entirely built upon false premises.

6.4 An opposing voice

Providing a contrasting stance, and presenting a voice of Christianity, Reverend William Draper wrote a series of Letters to the Editor challenging the representations of harm depicted by the press and offered an alternative view. Reverend Draper was well known to the Ipswich community, being Goodna's first Congregational Minister.[125] He was openly critical of the Government, the 'professed keepers of the lunatic',[126] accusing them of being the cause of much of the harm identified by correspondents 'from the rigid and false economy which has been practised [sic] in the foundation, as well as the maintenance of the institution.'[127] In what would become an opposing argument to the alleged mismanagement by Cannan, and what the Government would need to later defend to protect its position as an effective moral agent, Draper pointed out the functional inadequacies and punitive nature of the buildings. Complaining that he had nowhere to conduct his Christian duties, Draper criticised the Asylum building generally; 'it was utterly unfit for the purpose for which it was intended'.[128] In defense of Cannan, he asserted: 'To argue that any man could satisfactorily conduct such an institution with the present means at his disposal is simply absurd.'[129] Draper provided examples of Cannan's interactions with patients and staff, attempting to affirm the superintendent's integrity and professionalism:

[125] 'Ordination at Goodna', *The Brisbane Courier,* 27 July 1864, p. 4.
[126] 'The Lunatic Asylum 1V', *The Brisbane Courier,* 20 January 1869, p. 3.
[127] 'The Lunatic Asylum', *The Brisbane Courier*, 14 January 1869, p. 3.
[128] 'The Lunatic Asylum', *The Brisbane Courier*, 13 January 1869, p. 3.
[129] Ibid.

> He accosted the majority of the patients, was jocular with some, sympathising with others; and there was not a single case which he did not appear to be perfectly acquainted with … Everyone appeared to receive him, and the warders also, with the most perfect good-will.[130]

Draper reinforced his stand against the requirement for lunatics to be gaoled prior to their asylum admission: 'patients are not criminals'.[131] Cautioning readers in accepting the letters and editorials alleging harm occurring at the Asylum, Draper wrote: 'let not the public mind be led away by prejudiced statements, which really have little if any foundation' and likely to be heard from any patient confined in an asylum:[132]

> … it is a moral impossibility for any one to avoid difficulties or severe complaints when it is considered that in nearly every case their monotonous tale is "we are not mad", "we have no right to be here" "we are unjustly confined".[133]

Unlike other letters, Draper was unable to offer insights from the stance of a patient, or a staff member, a position that had brought a sense of authenticity to the press's discourse of harm. Indeed, Draper's comments appeared to do little to dampen the impact of the discourse, but instead, offered opportunities for the major players to defend their position, further affirming the discourse. Draper had attempted to create his own discourse of harm and provoke actions of moral regulation from the Government through his criticisms and status as a minister of religion. Yet there was little support from the press for Draper's defense of Dr. Cannan and his criticisms of the Asylum buildings. Nor was there acknowledgement that his concerns about patients' entry to the Asylum echoed that expressed in the ex-patients' letters. William Harmer Collard accused Draper of deflecting the blame from the management to the defective buildings[134] while Thomas White challenged Draper's observations as a visitor, as to whether he can really be aware of the true

[130] 'The Lunatic Asylum 111', *The Brisbane Courier*, 16 January 1869, p. 5.
[131] *The Brisbane Courier,* 4 December 1868, p. 2.
[132] 'The Lunatic Asylum 1V', *The Brisbane Courier*, 20 January 1869, p. 3.
[133] 'The Lunatic Asylum', *The Brisbane Courier*, 13 January 1869, p. 3.
[134] 'The Asylum at Woogaroo', *The Brisbane Courier*, 18 January 1869, p. 3.

circumstances.[135] The *Brisbane Courier* Editor disputed William Draper's insinuation that the architect of the Asylum may have been at fault;

> No one, we are sure, was more fully aware of the incompleteness of the building for the purposes of an asylum for the insane than he was, but he was tied down in the matter of outlay, and had to do the best he could with the means at his disposal.[136]

The architect, Charles Tiffin, Colonial Architect, had designed the magnificent new Parliament House, a symbol of colonial progress and a successful government. By defending Tiffin, the Editor also defended symbols reflecting government glory. This was not an unexpected defense given the Colonial Secretary's association with the *Brisbane Courier.* In suggesting, in fact, that it was the makeshift additions authorised by Dr. Cannan that were most defective, the *Brisbane Courier* Editor effectively placed the blame for defective buildings on Dr. Cannan.[137]

6.5 Announcing a Civil Service Commission of Inquiry

On 16 January 1869, the Government finally succumbed to pressure from the press and announced a 'searching inquiry into the management of the Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo'.[138] However, Members of Parliament were critical of the proposed Civil Service Commission of Inquiry and in particular, the Colonial Secretary's decision to appoint two minor Ipswich Government officials to conduct the Inquiry. Mr. Walsh complained that the Government had not acknowledged the enormity of the issues associated with the Asylum. He reminded the Government of the previous 1866 Asylum Inquiry, prompted by himself, which had uncovered 'gross mismanagement and even criminal practices' by warders. Yet, this current Inquiry was to be led by a 'Customs House Officer', a Government subordinate.[139] Mr. Walsh warned that 'the

[135] 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *The Queensland Times*, 9 February1869, p.3.
[136] *The Brisbane Courier,* 13 January 1869, p. 2.
[137] Ibid.
[138] 'Local and General News', *The Queensland Times,* 16 January 1869, p. 3; *The Brisbane Courier,* 18 January1869, p. 2.
[139] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates,* [Hansard], Legislative Council, 27 January 1869, p. 139.

government was trifling with a most serious question.'[140] Indeed, Albert Maxwell Hutchinson, appointed Chair of the Commission, was a Government subordinate; a cotton inspector and a sub-collector for the Customs Department at Ipswich.[141] Mr. Taylor also questioned the process of the proposed Inquiry; the 'highly improper' expectation for one Government department to investigate another Government department.[142]

The Attorney General defended the Government's decision to appoint a Civil Service Commission and minor Government officials to investigate the alleged harm. He assured Parliament that too much seriousness was not warranted at this stage. The Surgeon Superintendent was a well-respected long serving member of the colony and accusations of mismanagement were only from ex-inmates and ex-warders: 'If [these] were the only excusers, it would be desirable to react with great caution.'[143] Attempting to placate Parliament, Mr. Stephens did acknowledge that improvements were required: 'a great many necessary alterations [are] to be made and the Government would take steps accordingly'.[144]

The announcement of a Civil Service Commission of Inquiry by the Government was seemingly a reaction to the discourse of harm represented by the press; the Government needed to investigate the validity of the discourse. However, the press had constructed the discourse of harm as valid and believable, and the Government's seemingly 'uncommitted' investigations into the authenticity of the discourse were thus seen as 'perfunctory'.[145] Certainly, the instigation of the Inquiry was not viewed as moral regulation as the Inquiry did not appear to have the capacity or capability to remove the source of harm. Parliament's lack of faith in this Inquiry was very evident when, even before the Inquiry's completion, it moved for the formation of a Joint Parliamentary Inquiry. A Joint Parliamentary Inquiry would be more credible; it would include senior members from both Houses of Parliament and thus be in keeping with the seriousness of the moral discourse.

---

[140] 'Parliament, Legislative Council', *The Brisbane Courier,* 28 January 1869, p. 2.
[141] *Pugh's Queensland Almanac, Law Calendar, Directory and Coast Guide for 1869,* Theophilus P. Pugh, Brisbane, 1869, pp. 64, 71.
[142] 'Parliament, Legislative Council', *The Brisbane Courier,* 28 January 1869, p. 2.
[143] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates,* [Hansard], Legislative Council, 27 January 1869, p. 139.
[144] 'Parliament, Legislative Council', *The Brisbane Courier,* 28 January 1869, p. 2.
[145] *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser,* 16 February 1869, p. 3.

6.6 Report of the Commission of Inquiry and its aftermath

The Civil Service Commission released their report on April 7 1869. The Commission determined that allegations against the Surgeon Superintendent and the Chief Warder 'had failed of substantiation.'[146] Concluding a lack of credibility from some witnesses, the Commission noted the 'vindictive ill-will' from John Brosnan and other ex-warders interviewed, and general lack of reliability of the evidence from ex-patients.[147] The Commission suggested that the Surgeon Superintendent's actions might represent 'reprehensible harshness', yet, when seen in the context of 'the absence of means and appliances for better or milder treatment', the 'willful character of the harshness is doubtful.'[148] The final remarks of the Commission suggested they were unable to allocate responsibility for harm; 'and we leave it to your decision, who is responsible – the Surgeon Superintendent, or the Responsible Ministers who … have had charge of the department.'[149] Head of the Civil Service Commission, A. M. Hutchinson, furnished a separate report outlining his own 'cursory observations'. His conclusions, while still equivocal, further devolved Cannan from blame: 'no amount of professional skill or ability could, under existing conditions, render the institution adequate to the due care and proper treatment of the … patients confined therein.'[150]

The press was highly critical of the Commission's report and conclusions. It seemed that the Commission's lack of certainty on where to lay blame, and an unwillingness to place blame, validated the lack of faith the press and Members of Parliament had in this Inquiry. Through their criticism of the report, the press was able to construct a separate moral discourse that contradicted the findings of the Civil Service Commission. In doing so, the press clearly indicated that harm had resulted from the actions of Dr. Cannan.

The press claimed the Civil Service Commission's conclusions lacked credibility at a number of levels. The conflict of interest, initially recognised in Parliament, of Government officials investigating another Government department and other

[146] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 690.
[147] Ibid., p. 691.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Special report of A. M. Hutchinson, Esq., on the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, referred to in the report of the Commissioners, 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 905.
[150] Ibid., p. 908.

Government officials, was viewed as a fundamental flaw.[151] The ready assumption that witnesses who were ex-warders and ex-patients were acting from 'personal motives', whereas witnesses for the defense were not seen to have the same motivation, was perceived as 'unfathomable'.[152] The press maintained that the Commission's overall conclusion that the Surgeon Superintendent was not to blame,[153] and that possibly the responsible minsters may be at fault,[154] was not feasible. Instead, the press argued, a reading of the evidence overwhelmingly demonstrated that the fault lay with Dr. Cannan; Woogaroo was 'a goal for lunatics'[155] and Cannan was responsible for all the 'evils and abuses'.[156] The *Brisbane Courier* Editor also questioned Cannan's evidence that he had continually made representations to the responsible minsters for improvements and repairs to the Asylum. Indeed, as argued by the *Brisbane Courier* Editor, Mr. Stephens had only recently indicated to Parliament that no minister was likely to have refused requests given that a 'very modest outlay' would have prevented the 'worst hardships'.[157] This observation was strategic, given, as previously noted, that Mr. Stephens was the chief shareholder of this paper.

On 24 March, the Hon. Eyles Irwan Caulfield Browne moved for the appointment of a Joint Parliamentary Committee:

> … to inquire into and report upon, all matters connected with the management of the Lunatic Asylum, and into the fitness or otherwise of the building and premises for the purpose to which they are appropriated.[158]

As stated earlier, this call for a Joint Parliamentary Inquiry occurred before the previous Civil Service Commission of Inquiry was completed. While Mr. Browne stated that he was sure the current Commission 'would faithfully perform the duty entrusted to them',[159] it was probable, in raising this motion before the Commission

[151] *The Queenslander,* 1 May 1869, p. 4.
[152] Ibid; 'The Woogaroo Asylum', (From the Express), *Queensland Times,* 4 May 1869, p. 3.
[153] *The Queenslander,* 1 May 1869, p. 4; 'The Woogaroo Asylum', (From the Express), *Queensland Times,* 4 May 1869, p. 3.
[154] *The Queensland Times,* 4 May 1869, p. 2.
[155] *The Queenslander,* 1 May 1869, p. 4
[156] The Woogaroo Asylum', (From the Express), *Queensland Times,* 4 May 1869, p. 3.
[157] *The Brisbane Courier,* 17 May 1869, p. 2.
[158] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates,* [Hansard], Legislative Council, 24 March 1869, p. 214.
[159] Ibid., p. 215.

released its findings, that he was insinuating that the outcome would not be credible. Finally, on May 13, yielding to parliamentary pressure and a discourse of lack of trustworthiness constructed by the press in relation to the Civil Service Commission's findings, the Colonial Secretary moved for a Joint Parliamentary Committee Inquiry.[160] On the same day, he announced that the Government intended to suspend Dr. Cannan.[161] These actions indicated endorsement of the discourse of harm constructed by the press.

Dr. Kevin Izod O'Doherty, Member of Parliament and seemingly the sole voice of dissent, challenged the Government's ready acceptance of Dr. Cannan's guilt. Dr. O'Doherty insinuated that current and previous Colonial Secretary Departments needed to take more responsibility for the blame as they had overseen the Asylum. Further, as Visiting Surgeon to the Asylum, appointed 1 February 1869 by the current Government,[162] he had furnished a report to the Colonial Secretary describing the dire state of the Asylum. While the Colonial Secretary had accepted his report, no further action had been taken.[163] O'Doherty had resigned from the position soon after.[164] He agreed with Mr. Hutchinson's observation that 'as an establishment for the care of the insane, [Woogaroo Asylum] was simply a delusion.' Yet, Dr. O'Doherty stated, he understood that Dr. Cannan had repeatedly pointed out the deficiencies of the Asylum to the Colonial Secretary's Office, but his pleas were almost always ignored. Suggesting that the Government had even stripped Cannan of his capacity to adequately minister to the ill, he claimed that Dr. Cannan was not even allowed medical comforts for his patients. O'Doherty concluded, similar to the Commission, that blame was equivocal:

> It was really very hard for the House to put a finder on that officer, or anybody else and say, "you are wholly and solely to blame."[165]

Despite Dr. O'Doherty's first-hand knowledge, and request to shift the blame, the *Brisbane Courier* reported the dismissal of Dr. Cannan and John Gee two days later.[166]

---

[160] Queensland *Parliamentary Debates,* [Hansard], Legislative Council, 13 May 1869, p. 155.
[161] Ibid., p. 164.
[162] *Queensland Government Gazette, Volume X, From January 1st to December 31st 1869,* James. C. Beal, Government Printer, 1870, p. 173.
[163] Queensland *Parliamentary Debates,* [Hansard], Legislative Council, 13 May 1869, p. 161.
[164] *Queensland Government Gazette, Volume X, From January 1st to December 31st 1869,* James. C. Beal, Government Printer, 1870, p. 428.
[165] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates,* [Hansard], Legislative Council, 13 May 1869, p. 161.

A copy of the Executive Minutes from May 19, 'by which Dr. K. Cannan was dismissed from the 'Civil Service of the Colony' was sent to the Governor for authorisation on May 27 blaming Cannan for the 'grossest mis-management [which] has for some time past prevailed.'[167]

6.7 Conclusion

The dismissal of Dr. Kearsey Cannan and John Gee meant that the discourse of harm constructed by the press, which 'pointed the finger' at these chief officers of the Asylum, had succeeded. It is very apparent that the foundations of this moral discourse were not credible. The motives behind John Brosnan's letters were clearly malicious. The letters from Henry Kilner appeared to be a means to assure his gentleman status and the authorship of the other ex-patients' letters was questionable. There is also a suggestion that the entire moral discourse was orchestrated by Cannan's successor, Dr. Challinor. Further, given the polemic position taken by many colonial papers against other papers and the Government, it is very probable that the *Queensland Times* constructed the discourse of harm for their own publicity. Indeed, the *Queensland Times* did receive much publicity and were commended by other newspapers for their exposé. The strength of the discourse meant that opposing voices were not heard, and instead, reinforced the discourse by allowing opportunities for the chief protagonists to further justify their position and dampen any opposition.

As the moral discourse evolved, pressure increased on the Government to act as a moral regulator. While the Government attempted to placate the press and Parliament by initiating a Civil service Commission, this was not seen as commensurate with the seriousness of the moral discourse and therefore not an appropriate act of moral regulation. The Government then accepted that Dr. Cannan and his Chief Warder were the chief cause of harm, and removed them. This was indeed a form of moral regulation that appeared to align with the discourse. It meant that the root cause of harm was removed and thus the threat of wider symbolic harms would be alleviated. The instigation of a Joint Parliamentary Inquiry was likely to have been seen as a

[166] 'Social', *The Brisbane Courier,* 15 May 1869, p. 2.
[167] 'Dismissal of Dr. Cannan', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings* 1869, p. 909.

means to affirm Cannan and Gee's guilt. Acting as an effective moral regulator would have facilitated community faith in Government decision-making and confirmed Lilley's Government's position as an effective moral agent.

Despite the moral discourse lacking credibility, the letters from Brosnan and others, and the evidence from the Civil Service Commission, did point out the harmful and concerning conditions that the Asylum inmates needed to endure. Kilner, Collard and White did highlight the 'criminal' treatment of those charged with lunacy while waiting for admission to the Asylum. Descriptions of their experiences were supported by Reverend Draper's remarks on the unjustness of such treatment. Also highlighted was the untherapeutic and neglected physical environment, and lack of facilities to treat the physically ill and dying. Yet, what was focused on was the need to lay blame. In allowing the blame for harm to rest on Cannan and Gee meant that any responsibility was deflected from the Government and the seriousness of the neglected conditions at the Asylum not acknowledged.

This chapter has demonstrated the power of the press in creating a position whereby, with minimal credible evidence, they were able to provoke the Government to act as a moral regulator and consequently manipulate decision-making associated with health services. The Government's actions as a moral regulator, in turn, maintained their façade of success in relation to being seen as an effective moral agent.

Chapter 7

A culture of dichotomy

Letters to the Editor from John Brosnan and ex-patients in late 1868 and early 1869, had painted Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum in deleterious terms. Their depiction of widespread inhumane treatment occurring at the asylum had been magnified by the press and formed a pivotal part of the moral discourse they constructed. The press and Parliament seized upon examples of excessive force and inhumane treatment from the evidence of the consequent Civil Service Commission of Inquiry to affirm the discourse of harm. However, the importance placed on this evidence meant that other types of evidence were overlooked.

An analysis of the evidence surrounding the 1869 Commission of Inquiry suggested a different picture of the Asylum to the one depicted in the press. There *was* evidence of inhumane treatment from male staff. However, in stark contrast to this harshness were examples of benevolence occurring throughout the Asylum. This chapter explores the contrasting features of this culture of dichotomy. It is argued that excessive force and inhumane treatment from male staff were sanctioned within an Asylum moral discourse grounded in the Asylum's punitive roots, and justified and strengthened by the context of an inappropriate and neglected environment. In contrast, examples of benevolence are explained as a reaction to the Asylum's negative environment. Acts of benevolence were also an expression of nineteenth century Christianity by staff.

7.1 The Asylum environment: unsuitable and neglected

In 1869 Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum had been open for almost five years. It had been the subject of Government inquiries in 1866 and 1867, and in 1869 it was to undergo two more inquiries. The frequency of these investigations suggests that it was regularly scrutinised. However, while being open to such a public gaze, the

Government continued to pay little heed to the Asylum. Despite numbers of inmates growing, and the buildings and environment being unsuitable, the Government did little to relieve the adverse conditions for those living at the Asylum. Evidence from the 1869 Civil Service Commission of Inquiry confirmed its unsuitability as an Asylum.

The 1869 Civil Service Commission of Inquiry concluded that a poor Asylum environment was to blame for many of its management issues:

> … the defective nature of the buildings used as an Asylum, the want of a proper supply of water, the want of recreational grounds.[1]

Dr. Kevin O'Doherty and Dr. William Hobbs, appointed Visiting Medical Officers February1869,[2] were highly critical of the state of the Asylum in their reports to the Government. O'Doherty described the overcrowded female sleeping quarters; small unventilated female cells which accommodated up to fifteen patients at night[3] with a foul odour emanating from the female wards generally because of crowded conditions.[4] Drawing attention to the grim state of the male yard, he wrote, 'men were ankle deep in mud in some parts' and 'many of the worst class of patients were simply wallowing like pigs in the mire.'[5] The Asylum's inadequate water supply and lack of drainage, he warned, were health hazards.[6] Dr. Hobbs was similarly alarmed at the potential for disease: 'how these unfortunate people have escaped the low typhoid fever that usually is met within overcrowded dwellings is difficult to explain.'[7]

The Government expressed surprise over the Commission's conclusions and Dr. O'Doherty and Dr. Hobbs' criticisms. Indeed, Mr. Stephens implied that the Asylum's poor state must be due to Dr. Cannan's inadequate management; he could not have informed the Government of its true condition nor applied for requisitions to

---

[1] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 917.
[2] *Queensland Government Gazette, Volume X, From January 1st to December 31st 1869,* James. C. Beal, Government Printer, 1870, p. 173. Their roles have been variously termed; 'visiting medical officer', 'visiting surgeon' and 'visiting doctor'.
[3] O'Doherty to Colonial Secretary, 18 February 1869, 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 994.
[4] Ibid., p. 993.
[5] Ibid., p. 994.
[6] Ibid., p. 995.
[7] Hobbs to Colonial Secretary, 21 February 1869, 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 996.

remedy the deficiencies.[8] While such accusations aligned with the discourse of harm constructed by the press and moral regulation enacted by the Government, they were incorrect. Dr. Cannan had repeatedly pointed out the Asylum's deficiencies to the Government.

The unsuitable Asylum buildings had long been a concern to Dr. Cannan. Instances when Cannan had pointed out issues have been discussed previously. Cannan's report to the 1866 Select Committee to 'enquire into the working of the hospitals of the colony' was discussed in Chapter 3. While Cannan boasted of the Asylum's success to the Select Committee, he also raised concerns relating to overcrowding and lack of sanitary arrangements.[9] Cannan again emphasised the overcrowding and the Asylum's unsuitable environment at the 1867 Commission of Inquiry,[10] as discussed in Chapter 5. The Government did not respond to Cannan's concerns. These were not the only examples. As early as November 1866, Cannan had alerted the Colonial Secretary to the negative impact of the Asylum's inadequate design; patients were required to live and sleep in overcrowded conditions, they were unable to be classified because of lack of space[11] and sexual impropriety was apparent in the requirement for males and females to occupy the same building.[12] When Cannan requested extra accommodation, the Colonial Secretary had replied, 'this question must stand over for a time: no funds available'.[13]

The Colonial Secretary's reply in November 1866 that funds were unavailable to provide extra Asylum accommodation was probably accurate given that Queensland was experiencing a severe financial crisis at the time. Yet, ambitiously, the Government had already funded a building earlier that same year, completed in August 1866, to house fifteen paying patients.[14] As discussed in Chapter 5, the building had remained vacant; the 1866 financial crisis meant that the Government did not have the capacity to make the building ready for paying patients. The Colonial

[8] *The Brisbane Courier,* 17 May 1869, p. 2.
[9] 'The Hospitals of the Colony', *The Brisbane Courier,* 19 July 1866, p. 2.
[10] Cannan to Challinor, June 14 1867, 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 992.
[11] Under moral management, inmates would normally be classified according to their behaviour, physical condition and stage of convalescence and accommodated according to this classification.
[12] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 3164 of 1869, November 10 1866, Microfilm no. 6410.
[13] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 3164 of 1869, November 10 1866, Microfilm no. 6410.
[14] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 761.

Secretary's refusal prompted Cannan to seek permission, in January 1867, to house convalescent males in the unoccupied building.[15] Despite the request being approved, Cannan saw the proviso that no additional expense be incurred as tantamount to a refusal. The building could not be occupied before being suitably furnished, connected to a proper water supply and without an additional warder being employed.[16]

The Government eventually addressed one of the concerns raised by Cannan, the inappropriateness of males and females occupying the same building. In October 1867 Colonial Secretary Alfred Palmer witnessed impropriety occurring between male and female patients during an official visit.[17] This was particularly concerning to Mr. Palmer; sexual impropriety meant that the Government was not meeting Victorian society's strict gendered expectations and therefore could be seen to be failing in their role as an effective moral agent.

Strictly segregated gendered spaces were hallmarks of nineteenth century asylum design (discussed extensively in Chapter 4). Gendered spaces mirrored the decorum of Victorian society and served to reinforce social prescriptions of femininity and masculinity, through gendered work and leisure.[18] Pragmatically, segregation also prevented immoral sexual activity occurring between male and female patients. Woogaroo Asylum's design did not meet Victorian standards of sexual propriety, as segregation was difficult to enforce. Prior to 1868, the Asylum's single building housed the entire patient population. Females occupied the lower level and their dormitory windows opened onto the male yard.[19] The old gaol fence separating the male and female yards was ineffective; the timber had shrunk and broken in places creating gaps wide enough to allow males and females to interact with each other.[20] Visiting Justice Magistrate Goggs warned of immorality: 'if so disposed, they [males and females] could excite each other by abuse … through the cracks in the

[15] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 245 of 1867, January 28 1867, Microfilm no. 6828.
[16] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 761.
[17] Ibid..
[18] C Coleborne, 'Space, power and gender in the asylun in Victoria, 1850s-1870s', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia. Histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2003, pp. 49-53.
[19] 'The Hospitals of the Colony Inquiry', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1653
[20] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 755.

boarding.'[21] John Gee expressed disdain at the behaviour he had witnessed: 'the most disgusting scenes take place [with patients] exhibiting themselves to each other, especially on the part of the women.'[22] When Alfred Palmer similarly observed indecent behaviour, he ordered female patients move to the vacant building.[23] Although this relocation required the construction of eight refractory cells, a lavatory, nurses' accommodation and a water tank, these additions were hastily approved. In June 1868 the females moved into their own building.[24] This move did relieve some of the overcrowding for male inmates. It also helped assure sexual propriety as gendered spaces were separated. However, the new female building would prove to be cramped and unsuitable.

It is not surprising that conditions were so poor at the Asylum as the buildings were not designed for the function they fulfilled. As Charles Tiffin, Colonial Architect, stated:

> The present brick building, where the male lunatics are confined was originally intended to be a portion of the administrative block of the permanent Asylum and none of the blocks specifically designed for the accommodation of lunatics have ever been erected.[25]

The women's building, occupied by over fifty females was constructed to house only fifteen paying patients[26] and as evident from Dr. O'Doherty's report,[27] its inadequacy was profound. Compounding the Asylum buildings' lack of suitability was a state of disrepair. The Government failed to supply hardware for maintenance with evidence that broken locks and panes of glass were not replaced, despite multiple requisitions being forwarded.[28]

It is clear that Dr. Cannan did attempt to address the Asylum's deficiencies. It is also apparent that the various Governments between 1865 and 1869 ignored Cannan's

---

[21] Ibid., p. 754.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid. p. 761.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., p. 693.
[26] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1067.
[27] O'Doherty to Colonial Secretary, 18 February 1869, 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 994.
[28] Cannan to Colonial Secretary, Queensland State Archives, Colonial Secretary's Office, Inward Correspondence, Letter no. 3164 of 1866, November 10 1866, Microfilm no. 6410.

recommendations. Cannan's continued frustration at the state of the Asylum and lack of Government response was reflected in Clerk Alfred March's evidence to the Civil Service Commission:

> [Dr. Cannan] was at his wits end to know how to classify … patients, or to give them that treatment which he wished to give; he had no hospital, no lavatory, no proper drainage to the yards, choked up privies … insufficient yards; no sheds for such patients as might wish to work at their respective trades, insufficient accommodation for the chief warder and matron, and for stores, … inadequate supply of water, insufficient labour for bringing up water, the cooking defective … through the want of a stove, which was applied for several times; an insufficient number of warders and nurses; all these have been the subjects of verbal and written applications and requisitions, which were not promptly attended to; they were approved, but never properly or promptly carried out; from ignoring the requisitions altogether, or from neglecting them for a very long time, the Asylum has suffered much.[29]

Reports from Dr. O'Doherty and Dr. Hobbs were also ignored. Their visiting medical officer role was created as a professional safeguard, to augment the Visiting Justice position and report on the state of the Asylum.[30] With their reports being unheeded, the role was perfunctory. In fact, Dr. O'Doherty saw it necessary to resign after receiving an official reply of 'no action in this matter'; he could not continue being a 'passive witness and report on things sickening to our common humanity'.[31]

Thus, in 1869, the Woogaroo Asylum environment was unsuitable and neglected. Patients and staff occupied buildings that were never designed for their current use. Their unsuitability meant that patients experienced overcrowded conditions and staff thwarted in their capacity to provide comfort for their patients and any therapeutic interactions. Dr. Cannan was not to blame for its state, as stated by Mr. Stephens, as the various Governments had not responded to his pleas for assistance. While the

[29] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 745.
[30] 'Parliament, Legislative Council', *The Brisbane Courier,* 28 January 1869, p. 2.
[31] O'Doherty to Colonial Secretary, 18 February 1869, 'The Lunatic Asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 997.

Civil Service Commission had blamed the Asylum's poor environment for many of the management issues reported to the press, it is also probable that the negative environment contributed to an asylum culture that supported negative asylum practices.

7.2 Moral discourse to sanction inhumane practices

Examples of inhumane treatment were apparent in the 1869 Civil Service Commission Inquiry evidence and included male inmates' entry to the asylum, the use of unnecessary force and harsh treatment of refractory patients. These practices were sanctioned by an Asylum moral discourse.

The construction of a moral discourse by the press to promote moral regulation was discussed extensively in the previous chapter. In this instance, explanations on the construction of a moral discourse sanctioning negative asylum practices centre on the process of 'moralisation'. 'Moralisation' imputes a sense of 'wrongness' to a particular 'conduct, habit or disposition'[32] and by association, ascribes a perception of 'correctness' to an opposing 'conduct, habit or disposition'. A designation of 'wrongness' or 'correctness' is dependent on meaning making. Similar to the outside world, asylums constructed their own unique meanings around madness.[33] These meanings developed over time and were based on what Erving Goffman termed, a particular 'interpretive scheme'[34] founded on 'broad suppositions as to the character of human beings'.[35] Differential treatment then is a consequence of meaning making; whether the 'conduct, habit or disposition' was designated with a sense of 'correctness' or 'wrongness'[36] and thus justified. The presence of a moral discourse meant that staff reacted to meanings, rather than the patients' actual 'conduct, habit or disposition'.

---

[32] A Hunt, *Governing morals: a social history of moral regulation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 8.
[33] C Coleborne, 'Space, power and gender in the asylun in Victoria, 1850s-1870s', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia. Histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2003, pp. 50-51.
[34] E Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961, p. 83.
[35] Ibid., p. 81
[36] Ibid.

7.3 Male entry to the Asylum: pragmatism and meaning making

Male entry into the Asylum was graphically described in inhumane terms in Letters to the press[37] and in the Civil Service Commission of Inquiry evidence. On admission, new inmates were brought into the refractory yard containing the most violent and noisy men.[38] Dr. O'Doherty's description of the mixture of patients was apt:

> … every species of derangement of intellect being represented amongst them, from the raving and dangerous maniac to the harmless imbecile or the seemingly sensible and quiet mono-maniac and recovered dyspomaniac.[39]

Encountering madness in its many degrees would certainly have been confronting to new arrivals. Yet, lack of space and the unsuitable Asylum design meant that there was nowhere else to receive these men, until assessed by Dr. Cannan. As warrant and committal papers arrived with the new admission,[40] little was known about these men prior to their arrival,[41] including their potential for violence.[42] It was therefore sensible to place all new inmates in a yard structured to deal with violence in order to decrease risk and, particularly, as the only other yard was for quieter convalescent patients.

Public bathing on admission, depicted in shameful terms in Letters to the press,[43] was a reality. New male inmates were expected to bathe publically in one of the

[37] See previous chapter's discussion.
[38] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 750.
[39] O'Doherty to Colonial Secretary, February 18 1869, Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 994.
[40] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 701.
[41] While there was a telegraph line at the Asylum, this had been broken on a many occasions and there was no evidence that this was used to alert Dr. Cannan to the nature of the new arrivals.
[42] A review of the casebook indicates that many new male admissions were violent on admission. See for example: William Harwood who had originally been in a hospital but became so violent that he was sent to Woogaroo: Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860- 04/09/1869, Entry no. 264, 9 March 1867, Microfilm no. 4922; and James Lewis Smith who was 'very excitable and violent' on admission: Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860- 04/09/1869, entry no. 265, 7 March 1867, Microfilm no. 4922.
[43] 'To the Editor of the Queensland Times', *The Queensland Times,* 26 November 1868, p. 3; 'The Lunatic Asylum at Woogaroo, No 1', *Queensland Times,* December 1 1868, p. 3; 'Iniquitous Treatment', *The Brisbane Courier,* 12 January 1869, p. 3; 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *The Queensland Times*, 9 February 1869, p. 3.

refractory yard's three tubs, give up their own clothes and dress in ones marked 'Asylum'.[44] Ex-inmates, Thomas White,[45] William Harmer Collard[46] and Joseph Peters[47] described the distasteful nature of this practice. Peters detailed his experience to the Commission:

> … a warder came to me, and took me into the refractory yard, where the tubs were and told me to strip; I had to go into a tub and wash; the water was very dirty; I was naked; this was in the presence of a warder and the patients in the yard; when I got out of the tub I was furnished with a shirt and a pair of moleskin trousers.[48]

Erving Goffman described asylum admission procedures as 'processes by which a person's self is mortified'.[49] The humiliation reflected in Peter's statement certainly reflects Goffman's description. Further, as many newly admitted men were acutely mentally ill, this practice would have been, at the least, disconcerting, but more likely frightening, and indeed 'mortifying'.

Practical explanations underpinned the need for public bathing on admission. It would seem realistic to expect that most new inmates would require bathing soon after arriving at the Asylum. Some would have arrived unkempt and dirty. A disordered mental state may have meant not having had the capacity and/or facilities to care for themselves. Others may not have opportunities to bathe for some time if they had been transported from a distance. Gee also explained that this requirement allowed the patient's physical state to be assessed and reported to Dr. Cannan.[50] Moreover, the refractory yard was the only area available for male patients to bathe. Bathing was generally problematic at the Asylum; there were no bathrooms and water had to be carted from the creek.[51] Gee suggested to the Civil Service Commission that bathing on admission was not as objectionable as described; new

---

[44] 'Eight weeks in Woogaroo' [By an ex-patient], *The Queensland Times*, 9 February 1869, p. 3.
[45] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p 711.
[46] Ibid., p, 724.
[47] Ibid., p. 703.
[48] Ibid.
[49] E Goffman, *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961, p. 24
[50] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* pp. 701, 750.
[51] Ibid., p. 750.

patients were not required to bathe in the same water as the dirtier patients, as these men were bathed last and the water then refreshed.[52]

Male admission procedures appeared odious and callous, yet other explanations suggest that the intent was pragmatic rather than one of harm as had been insinuated in the press. These practices were accepted and justified as they served the practical purpose of promoting cleanliness, aiding assessment and managing risk. Further, there were no other options in the Asylum's unsuitable environment. While the pragmatic intent justified the harsh treatment, another type of meaning making also served to sanction these practices. When new male inmates entered the Asylum, meaning making meant that these men were perceived within a particular 'interpretive scheme', as potentially violent and dirty inmates. A conception of 'dirtiness' as part of the 'character' of refractory patients is discussed later in this chapter. Assumptions around lunacy and violence appeared to be commonplace and as argued elsewhere, were reflected in the title of the legislation governing these men's admission and detention at the Asylum, 'The Dangerous Lunatics Act'. Mr. Embling, a politician from Victoria, articulated this notion:

> The moment any man or woman became of unsound mind, he or she was dangerous, as there was no security against such person breaking out into violence at any moment.[53]

Inhumane treatment on admission was thus in accord with these broad suppositions made about these men's 'characters'. Moralisation around the 'characters' of new men resulted in a designation of 'wrongness'; treatment was commensurate with this moral determination. However, an unsuitable environment requiring men to be admitted to a refractory ward and to undergo public bathing, justified the necessity of the treatment, strengthened the discourse and further reinforced the need for harsh treatment.

7.4 Justifying the use of excessive force towards male inmates

Colonial Australian asylums were generally violent places.[54] Reports of extreme violence reflected the danger associated with nineteenth century asylums. Lee-Ann

[52] Ibid.
[53] 'Legislative Assembly', *The Age,* 8 March 1867, p. 6.

Monk described a Kew Asylum inmate in 1858 killing two fellow inmates with a fence paling.[55] Indeed, without the use of psychotropic medications that were not introduced for almost another hundred years, it would have been very difficult to manage and control aggression associated with mental illness.

Dr. Cannan acknowledged the risk of violence,[56] and certainly, evidence from the Inquiry demonstrated aggression and violence from patients. Small altercations were apparent: 'he [inmate Francis McNamara] was in the habit of taking food from other patients who often gave him a kick or cuff for doing so.'[57] More serious violence was also evident. Dr. Cannan had punished inmate, George Hudson, with a diet of bread and water after he assaulted another patient.[58] Cannan provided orders on how to manage violence. He instructed that while 'unnecessary force is a grave offence', force may at times be necessary,[59] and in such instances staff were to seek assistance so the patient could be 'over-powered without a struggle'.[60] Cannan's instructions seem idealistic given the limited staff and sudden nature of violent acts.

In his evidence to the Civil Service Commission of Inquiry, John Brosnan spoke of violence from warders at the Asylum. He alluded to excessive force being used and general unjustified brutality from male staff. He claimed most male staff were intentionally violent and 'ill-usage' directed at inmates was common.[61] It is difficult to ascertain the actual frequency and levels of male staff violence and 'ill-usage'; evidence was contradictory and staff understandably would have been reluctant to admit to using violence and inhumane treatment. There was obvious culpability associated with disclosing intentional violence and as Dr. Cannan observed, warders did not like to 'give evidence against each other'.[62] Nonetheless, the Inquiry evidence certainly contained examples of excessive force and inhumane treatment by male staff directed at male inmates. What was also apparent was a moral discourse justifying these behaviours.

---

[54] C Coleborne, 'The creation of the colonial asylum', in D Kirby & C Coleborne (eds), *Law, history, colonialism. The reach of empire*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2001, p. 111.
[55] L-A Monk, 'Working in the asylum: attendants to the insane', *Health and History*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2009, pp. 86-87.
[56] The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 763.
[57] Ibid., p. 711.
[58] Ibid., p. 731
[59] Ibid., p. 763.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid., p. 701.
[62] Ibid., p. 762.

The use of excessive force by warders as self-defense appeared to be sanctioned. Thomas Phillips and Edward Kennedy denied witnessing or using violence, yet freely admitted employing excessive force in self-defense.[63] Cornelius Brosnan was dismissed for using 'unnecessary force' towards patient Patrick Fahy. However, claiming innocence, he stated that Fahy's facial bruising occurred when he defended himself against Fahy.[64] It would seem reasonable that staff would use force to defend themselves and as suggested in Phillips' and Kennedy's evidence, because it did seem reasonable, it was not considered violence. It was also understandable that moralisation around violence against staff would impute a judgement of 'wrongness' to such actions, justifying the use of excessive force. Moralisation also included meaning making. Not only were the attacks against warders imputed with 'wrongness', but also the 'character' of the attacker. Thus a moral discourse justified excessive force being used in self-defense and also sanctioned its use in retaliation. Cornelius Brosnan's evidence seemed matter of fact when he explained that he and Warder Thomas Phillips 'beat up' patient George Hodgson after Hodgson had 'thrown' Phillips when being forced into a refractory cell.[65]

A moral discourse sanctioning the use of excessive force was strengthened by a need to demonstrate power. Cornelius Brosnan shared to the 1869 Civil Service Commission that despite witnessing excessive force on a number of occasions he had not reported it. His observation and explanation implied that excessive force was common and acceptable: 'my fellow warders told me that it was necessary to use rough treatment, or that the patients would walk over me and think me a coward.'[66] His evidence also intimated that demonstrating excessive force was an attribute of an effective male warder. Lee-Ann Monk, in her study of the Kew Asylum, Victoria, also explained this practice. She argued that use of force by male attendants had a dual function. Force defined the masculine character of the attending role differentiating it from the attending role of the female nurse. It also created a hierarchy between the unformed masculinity of the patient, unrestrained in their

[63] Ibid., pp. 708, 711.
[64] Ibid., p. 763.
[65] Ibid., p. 722.
[66] Ibid.

violence, and the refined masculinity of the warder, who used force with restraint.[67] Given the prevalence of the use of excessive force by Woogaroo male warders apparent in the Civil Service Inquiry evidence, and lack of evidence of excessive force from the female side despite the presence of violent patients,[68] it is likely that in addition to demonstrating power over patients, Woogaroo male warders similarly used force to define their masculinity.

7.5 Male refractory patients: victims of excessive force and inhumane treatment

Excessive force and inhumane treatment was usually directed towards refractory inmates. These men were often described in animalistic terms, implying that they possessed animal-like characteristics. Their actions were depicted in 'brute' terms, 'knocking patients about and taking their food',[69] or their general 'character' associated with 'filth' and 'dirt', 'he was a very filthy patient I have seen him drink his own … and eat is own …'[70] Such representations were not peculiar to Woogaroo. Eighteenth century paintings depicted madmen with animal-like features reflected contemporary social constructions of madness.[71] Dr. Norton Manning similarly implied that the mentally ill possessed animal like attributes in his remarks to the 1869 Joint Parliamentary Commission into Woogaroo: 'these patients are always particularly dirty; and there is a peculiar smell about them, which seems to be part and parcel of the disease.'[72] It would seem that meaning making ascribing the 'character' of refractory patients as animalistic meant by association that they were lacking in human qualities. Moralisation then deemed such characteristics with a sense of 'wrongness' and the men deserving of treatment commensurate with this moral determination and their animalistic inhuman qualities.

---

[67] L-A Monk, 'Gender, space and work: the asyum as gendered workplace in Victoria', in C Coleborne & D MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003, pp. 61-71.
[68] Eliza Gibbon was a example of an extremely violent patient who was reported to be subject to frenzied rages and required restraint most of the time: 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 761.
[69] The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 707.
[70] Ibid., p. 735.
[71] L Gamwell & N Tomes, *Madness in America: cultural and medical perceptions of mental illness before 1914*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1995, pp. 23-25.
[72] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 971.

The Civil Service Commission Inquiry evidence contained descriptions of warders using excessive force on refractory patients. These included that from ex-patient William Harmer Collard:

> If they [refractory patients] did not walk as fast as the warders wished, I have seen the warders strike them on the head or behind the ear with keys fastened on a string, until the blood would spurt out … I have seen patients walk with both hands up to their head as if in dread of this treatment … I have seen it done a dozen times a day.[73]

Brosnan described the extreme force used against refractory patient John Brennan:

> I saw five warders engaged with him, some holding, some beating, and some endeavouring to put a strait jacket on him; they were kicking and beating him with their hands while he was lying in a cell.[74]

Treatment of refractory patients was associated with their characteristic 'dirtiness' or 'filth'. As these were indicative of animal attributes, it would seem necessary to remove the 'dirtiness' and 'filth' by bathing. Excessive force was therefore justified in removing animal-like 'dirtiness' and 'filth'. Warder James Clifford claimed it was a common practice to forcefully 'compel' refractory patients into bathtubs.[75] Warder Cornelius Brosnan had witnessed Warder Barry beating a refractory patient, when he refused to go into dirty water.[76] Other evidence demonstrates another form of brutality; warders directing patients to enact harsh treatment on their fellow inmates. Ex-patient Peters Daniel McCormack, confined in a refractory cell at night, was taken from his cell each morning and stripped by two or more patients supervised by a warder:

> … if he was unwilling to go into the tub, he was taken sometimes by two and sometimes by four patients, and thrust forcibly into the tub; the towel … was then put round his neck, and twisted up until he lost all power; he was then held by two patients, and another patient,

[73] Ibid., p. 725.
[74] Ibid., p. 721.
[75] Ibid., p. 731.
[76] Ibid., p. 721.

> perhaps overlooked by a warder, [who] would then wash him with a mop.[77]

When inmates demonstrated violence and/or dirtiness, they were placed in refractory cells. Being devoid of human comforts, refractory cells were appropriate for men demonstrating animal-like attributes. Henry Kilner described the cells' inhospitality:

> I arrived here in July during the cold weather, and the cell was washed once or twice a day with cold water, and was constantly damp and wet, and I was obliged to lie with my head to the door, as the other end of the cell was quite wet.[78]

Providing straw for bedding in cells was a common practice for refractory patients as punishment for violent behaviour,[79] when they destroyed their bed and bedding or had 'dirty habits'.[80] The use of straw seemed to affirm the refractory patient's animal-like status. John Gee described Henry Kilner as a 'fit subject for straw' because 'he was so filthy in his habits'.[81] Dr. Cannan's explanation for why patients were given straw was similarly in accord with this status: 'it is much better to give them straw and let them roll about in it.'[82] The worst of the inmates were even denied clothes when detained in cells. Warder John Phillips' defended George Hudson's treatment:

> … he was sometimes locked up at night in a cell with nothing but straw, without bed or bedding, or clothes; this happened frequently … in consequence of his tearing up his clothes and bedding; he would tear any amount of clothes, and there would be nothing but pieces of rags left in the morning.[83]

Phillips' explanation reflected a sense of frustration. However, the extreme nature of these behaviours confirmed perceptions of such men as non-human and therefore deserving of actions commensurate with this status.

---

[77] Ibid., p. 704.
[78] Ibid., p. 719.
[79] Warder Edward Kennedy described a 'saucy and violent sailor' who had on two occasions been put in a cell with straw only as a punishment for violence to a warder: Ibid., p. 708.
[80] Ibid., p. 731.
[81] Ibid., p. 756.
[82] Ibid., p. 752.
[83] Ibid., p. 731.

The moral discourse associated with refractory patients served another purpose; it justified attendants distancing themselves from the inhumanness of some of the worst 'dirty' patients. The requirement for patients to wash Daniel McCormack with a mop while supervised by an attendant was justified because of the extreme nature of his dirty habits;[84] separating him from human contact generally, and from the humanness of the attendants specifically. John Gee's definition to the Civil Service Commission of a 'dirty patient' strongly evoked the 'character' of an animal and the need for distance from such inhumanness:

> I may describe a dirty patient as one who smears himself all over with his own ___ and also the walls of his cell … and one who is not like a human at all; I have likewise frequently seem them mix their __ up with their food, and frequently I have seen the warders when going to wash these patients, have to go away from them; the stench was so intolerable that no one could stand it; if I had not witnessed all those myself, I could not have believed that human beings could have been in that state that I have seen them in here.[85]

7.6 The Asylum's unsuitable environment: reinforcing the moral discourse

The Asylum's environment contributed towards conditions precipitating violence and reinforced the moral discourse justifying excessive force from staff and inhumane treatment of inmates. The Asylum environment was punitive. Staff and patients had been relocated from the prison to Woogaroo on its opening in 1865, and a prison culture was similarly transplanted. Despite inmates no longer being required to live with criminals, other aspects of the Asylum continued to reflect prison life. Its physical resemblance to a prison has been discussed elsewhere and noted by Reverend William Draper:

[84] Ibid., p. 708.
[85] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 757.

> I call it so because it is so known, but I still contend that no power can make it anything but a prison without great alterations and additions.[86]

Use of prison terminology, such as 'cells' and 'mustering', and warders having the same uniform as prison officers, reinforced the prison-like culture.[87] Being accustomed to prison work, warders were likely to be familiar (and comfortable) with employing excessive force to control prisoners and the use of inhumane treatment as punishment. It was therefore not surprising that prison practices were continued in the Asylum, became indicative of the Asylum environment and justified within a moral discourse.

A crowded untherapeutic Asylum environment exacerbated the potential for violence. Inmates crowded together in small spaces had minimal activities and amusements to offer distraction and relieve their boredom. Dr. Cannan's idealistic instructions on how to manage violence were unlikely to have been effective. British asylums (and some Australian asylums) during the same period provided padded rooms to manage violent patients.[88] However, Woogaroo Asylum only offered small, poorly ventilated, wooden prison-like cells located in the male and female yards;[89] punitive and inappropriate constructions likely to aggravate further violence rather than control it.

With limited Asylum spaces, violence from patients and excessive force and inhumane treatment from attendants would have been very public. Indeed, the public nature of these behaviours and practices meant that they would have become characteristic of the Asylum environment. Evidence from the Civil Service Commission certainly suggested that they were commonplace. It would seem logical that if the behaviour or characteristic associated with the moral discourse were commonplace, and its consequences, the moral discourse would certainly be reinforced.

---

[86] 'The Lunatic Asylum. To the editor of the Brisbane Courier', *Brisbane Courier*, 13 January 1869, p. 3.
[87] Calls for tenders show uniforms for Prison Warders and Lunatic Warders between 1865 and 1869 grouped together. There is no evidence of uniforms being included in the estimates for the Asylum during this time.
[88] P Nolan, *A history of mental health nursing*, Stanley Thornes, Cheltenham, 1993, p. 43.
[89] The Hospitals of the Colony Inquiry', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1866, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 1653.

Lack of resources and an unsuitable environment did not offer options to manage patients any differently. John Gee described his frustration at refractory patients' destructive behaviour:

> I have put patients into those cells with bed and bedding, and in the morning have found them torn up: I have known them to tear their clothing up and thrust it through the grating bars … I have put them in on several occasions without clothing, but with bed or bedding, or else straw; they were dirty and also destructive; there was no other means of dealing with such patients … sometimes there has not been sufficient quantity [of hay], and then they were given beds; in such cases it was a mere matter of form giving them beds, as they would tear them up in ten minutes and stick them through the bars.[90]

Gee's frustration is understandable. There were limited supplies to replace destroyed clothes and bedding. There was also a sense from Gee that he understood the detriment of placing patients in cells. Citing an example of an inmate who continually escaped from a strait jacket, he stated: 'there was no other place where these patients could have been secluded in a milder manner.'

A culture sanctioning inhumane treatment of male inmates was apparent at Woogaroo. While it has been argued extensively that a moral discourse served to justify these practices, it also seemed that a punitive, inhospitable and inappropriate environment contributed towards the construction of this discourse and served to perpetuate it.

7.7 A culture of benevolence

Despite a negative culture being predominant in the male section of the Asylum, another contrasting culture was apparent across the Asylum; a culture of benevolence reflecting humanity and nineteenth century Christian values. This was surprising as it was set against the same inhospitable and unsuitable asylum environment that fostered a moral discourse condoning inhumane treatment of male inmates.

[90] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 752.

It was expedient for the press and Parliament to overlook examples of benevolence contained within the Civil Service Commission of Inquiry's evidence; benevolence negated the press's discourse of harm and the Government's consequent moral regulation. Further, a negative gaze aligned with the strong Victorian pious belief that 'mankind had fallen' and a need to continually seek evidence of this.[91] Yet, such a gaze excluded signs of what Frank Prochaska described as one of the 'most urgent of [Victorian] Christian values', benevolence. [92] Universal benevolence was a fundamental tenet of nineteenth Christianity, supporting the moral belief of the need to act for the common good.[93] As Evan Radcliffe observed, nineteenth century moral writers argued that [man] had a humble function; to perform benevolent acts on those who were closest to [him]. This then would serve to promote universal benevolence.[94] A culture of benevolence throughout the Asylum suggested that Asylum staff embraced this important nineteenth century Christian value.

Examples of benevolence were apparent from senior management, Dr. Cannan and John Gee. Both men had been dismissed because of their integral role in the discourse of harm constructed by the press. Yet, evidence from the Civil Service Commission of Inquiry painted a contradictory picture.

John Brosnan's description of Dr. Kearsey Cannan to the Civil Service Commission was damning, depicting Cannan as harsh, uncaring and lacking in professional responsibility.[95] Indeed, Cannan did have a tendency towards arrogance, as discussed earlier in Chapter 3, particularly when his professional status was challenged. It is probable that some interactions with staff, including Brosnan, may have been interpreted as harsh and uncaring because of this characteristic. Yet, others portrayed him differently. Contrary to Brosnan's claims, Cannan's sense of duty was noted. He was attentive to the Asylum patients; he visited healthy patients daily, sick patients two to three times a day and always attended in emergencies.[96] Examples of his benevolence were readily shared to the Commission. He was depicted as

[91] F Prochaska, *Christianity and social service in modern Britain: the disinherited spirit*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006, p. 6.
[92] Ibid., p. 2.
[93] E Radcliffe, 'Revolutionary writing, moral philosophy, and universal benevolence in the eighteenth century', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 54, no. 2, 1993, p. 221.
[94] Ibid. pp. 224-225.
[95] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* pp. 694-698.
[96] Ibid., pp. 707, 735, 749.

compassionate. Female staff described him as caring; ex-Matron Jane Hill noted his consistent kindness to patients,[97] as did her successor Mary Doonan.[98] Visiting Justices John McDonnell and Magistrate Matthew Grogg also reported Cannan interacting kindly with inmates.[99] Grogg claimed that 'even in the worst cases', he was well received by patients.[100] His attention to patient comfort had led him to countermand John Gee's orders; ordering bedding for refractory inmates instead of straw[101] and allowing butter for sick patients.[102] It is telling that despite being dismissed by Cannan, ex-Warder Cornelius Brosnan expressed admiration for Cannan's strive to promote a culture of benevolence: he 'always had the welfare of the patients at heart', did not tolerate patients being treated badly, would admonish staff if they spoke harshly and any cruelty would result in instant dismissal.[103]

John Gee was similarly depicted as benevolent with descriptions from the Inquiry differing greatly to those provided by John Brosnan. John Brosnan was highly critical of the Chief Warder accusing him of poor leadership and acting unkindly to inmates.[104] However, Henry Kilner, who was generally disparaging of the Asylum and staff, shared that he 'invariably received consideration and kindness' from Gee.[105] Other examples were apparent. When John Clancy refused medical comforts believing they were poisoned, Gee provided him with brandy from his own supply to reassure him of its safety.[106] Alfred March described Gee's interactions with inmate Michael Fahy, a patient known for his aggression; 'he joked with him and treated him the utmost kindness.'[107] Also noting that Gee encouraged patients to join in recreational activities such as cricket, March claimed that since Gee's appointment, patients' welfare had considerably improved.[108]

[97] Ibid., p. 699.
[98] Ibid., p. 749.
[99] Ibid., pp. 740, 753.
[100] Ibid., p. 753.
[101] Ibid., p. 708.
[102] Ibid., p. 708.
[103] Ibid., p. 734.
[104] Ibid., p. 702.
[105] Ibid., p. 720.
[106] Ibid., p. 741.
[107] Ibid., p. 745.
[108] Ibid., p. 742.

Benevolence was also evident in Asylum practices. Letters to the Editor had claimed discharged patients were sent destitute into the community,[109] yet the Inquiry evidence suggests differently. Each discharged patient was offered a blanket, a suit of unbranded asylum clothes, tea, sugar, tobacco and a loaf of bread. If penniless, Gee or Cannan provided patients with money from their own funds.[110] Evidence of benevolent practices in relation to food and eating were particularly apparent in the Asylum culture. When patients were unable to eat, staff appeared to employ encouraging compassionate tactics. When John Meek became physically ill, warders spent considerable time coaxing him to eat. John Gee even brought a herring from his own kitchen to tempt him.[111] Reverend Henry Brun was asked to visit Michael Fahy to help persuade him to eat when he refused food.[112] Physically ill patients were offered treats. Dr. Cannan frequently provided such patients with sweets from his own kitchen; custard, sponge cakes or 'anything they may fancy'.[113] Reverend Draper noted the delicacies provided to entice patient Charlotte Williams to eat.[114] Sick patients were allowed choices from a range of invalid foods instead of being required to follow the rigid diet supplied to ordinary patients.[115]

It is apparent that while benevolence was depicted through acts of kindness, it was also reflected in acts to compensate for the Asylum's poor environment and lack of resources. Patients' food intake was important to the staff, as it was indicative of a measure of health; Asylum Casebook entries equated 'eating' with signs of improvement, and conversely, lack of appetite signifying ill health.[116] Staff were likely to have taken particular interest in encouraging ill patients to eat in order to promote their health. However, it may also be that while staff had little control over

[109] Iniquitous Treatment', *The Brisbane Courier,* January 12 1869, p. 3.
[110] Ibid., p. 750.
[111] Ibid., p. 741.
[112] Ibid., p. 737.
[113] Ibid., p. 749.
[114] Ibid., p. 733.
[115] See for example: Alice Skipper who was admitted to the Asylum as 'emaciated' and was prescribed a 'generous diet': Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860- 04/09/1869, Entry no.165, no date given, Microfilm no. 4922; Francis Beatin who was prescribed a 'good diet and tonic', Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860- 04/09/1869, Entry no.195, no date given, Microfilm no. 4922.
[116] See for example: James Johnson who was described by Dr. Cannan in the Casebook as 'improved much in health – taking food well', Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860- 04/09/1869, Entry no. 51, No date given, Microfilm no. 4922; Richard Taylor who was described by Dr. Cannan 'In a dying state – takes food', Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860- 04/09/1869, Entry no. 79, 17 February 1865, Microfilm no. 4922.

an inhospitable physical environment, some comfort could be provided to inmates in need through food. Further, it seemed a common practice for senior staff to provide food from their own kitchen, and for discharged patients, money from their own funds, compensating for lack of Asylum resources.

Benevolence from female staff and Dr. Cannan was reflected in the care of Catherine Althers.[117] Catherine, a German woman, entered the asylum pregnant in October 1867.[118] In January 1868, she gave birth to a baby, who only lived one day, and Catherine, also, died soon after.[119] John Brosnan implied that Catherine had needlessly suffered in his Letter to the Editor. He admitted that the information he had about Catherine was secondhand, yet intimated that it was reliable, as it had been obtained from 'sane' female patients and the warder on duty. Brosnan claimed that 'the unfortunate woman and a new-born were found dead in the morning' when Catherine's cell was opened. Insinuating that Cannan had treated Catherine poorly, he wrote: 'She was certainly a maniac, but that was no reason why a female, labouring under an illness, should not have proper medical attendance.'[120] Thomas White, likewise, had heard rumours from others of Catherine's negligent treatment.[121] However, Catherine Althers' compassionate care was in stark contrast to Asylum rumours.

Catherine Althers' Casebook notes indicated the acute serious nature of her illness. She was admitted suffering from 'acute mania' and soon afterwards began having 'fits of violence' followed by 'convulsions and insensibility.'[122] Her condition deteriorated as her convulsions became almost incessant and 'wasting of flesh' began to occur.[123] Nursing care of Catherine would have indeed been intensive and stretched the limited female staffing capacity. She was nursed in a refractory cell.[124] Despite its obvious unsuitability for an acutely ill patient, the cell would have been isolated from

[117] Catherine Althers story has been previously published in: J Bradshaw & W Madsen, 'Gender and domesticity in Woogaroo Asylum 1865-1869, in B Knight, B Walker-Gibbs & J Delamoir (eds), *Research into 21st century communities,* Post Pressed, Teneriffe, 2007, pp. 33-46.
[118] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 248, 18 October 1867, Microfilm no. 4922.
[119] Ibid., 31 January 1868.
[120] 'To the Editor of the Queensland Times', *The Queensland Times,* 23 March 1869, p. 3.
[121] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 717.
[122] Queensland State Archives, Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions) 5/11/1860-04/09/1869, Entry no. 248, 1 November 1867, Microfilm no. 4922.
[123] Ibid., 1 January 1868.
[124] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 744.

other patients and allowed Catherine, and her husband, when he visited, a degree of privacy. Matron Mary Doonan stated that nursing staff 'made her as comfortable as [they] could' within such a restrictive environment with a nurse 'always in attendance' and Dr. Cannan visiting up to four times a day.[125] The severity of her convulsions meant that two nurses were always required to dress and feed her; Catherine's jaw remained rigid for hours and nurses would wait until it relaxed to provide her with food and water.[126] An odorous sore on Catherine's back increased the intensity of her nursing care; the sore necessitated frequent dressings and its ooze so foul that her clothing and linen was constantly required to be changed. Further, its smell meant that the cell door had to remain open to allow nurses to comfortably attend her.[127] Mary Doonan delivered Catherine's baby, who was born suddenly during a convulsion. The rapid birth did not allow time to call for Dr. Cannan, however he arrived immediately after the delivery.[128] Mary Doonan cared for Catherine's weak male baby in her own bed and after his death he was 'waked' in her rooms.[129]

Mary Doonan remained with Catherine from the time of the birth of her baby until her death. Care provided by early nineteenth century nurses was similar to what would be given by family members or servants.[130] Certainly, Mary Doonan's comments echoed this; 'Had she been my own mother I could not have paid her more attention.'[131] Her husband stayed for two of those nights wishing to be with her when she died. Despite Catherine being 'cranky' and not recognising him, he claimed she liked Mrs. Doonan as she treated her kindly.[132] In taking the baby into her own bed, Mary Doonan's actions reflected the historical roots of nursing where women nursed family members and friends in their own domestic spaces.[133] Even after Catherine's death, benevolence was accorded to her and her family; her husband and children were

[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid., p. 748.
[128] Ibid., p. 744.
[129] Ibid., p. 749.
[130] R Dingwall, AM Rafferty & C Webster, *An introducton to the social history of nursing*, Routledge, London, 1987, p. 4.
[131] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings,* p. 749.
[132] Ibid., pp. 759-760.
[133] Ibid.

welcomed at her funeral and her baby's body was exhumed and placed over Catherine's when she was buried.[134]

Benevolence and humanity were evident in the many facets of Catherine's care: a constant presence of nursing staff; efforts to achieve comfort in a prison-like environment; the inclusion of her family; a respect for the dead and care of a dying baby in the matron's own domestic space.

7.8 Conclusion

Despite the Letters to the press from ex-patients discussed in the previous chapter lacking credibility, there was a sense that these and other inmates' experiences would have been negative in the unsuitable and neglected Woogaroo Asylum environment. The picture painted of the environment in the letters from Dr. O'Doherty and Dr. Hobbs, and in the Civil Service Commission Inquiry evidence, was certainly dismal. Patients and staff would have experienced difficulties living and working in such an environment. The Government had attempted to deflect the blame for this environment onto Cannan, yet there is no doubt that the Government had been made aware of the Asylum's short-falls numerous times.

There is evidence that some male patients would have suffered in a culture sanctioning unnecessary force and inhumane treatment. These practices were embedded, justified and perpetuated in a moral discourse. While such practices were inexcusable, it was not surprising, given the unsuitable Asylum environment and its punitive roots, that such a culture had emerged.

This chapter also demonstrated evidence of a contrasting culture of benevolence throughout the Asylum. It was not unexpected to find evidence of a culture that reflected strong nineteenth century values of Christianity. However, this culture appeared remarkable set against the negative Asylum environment. The presence of this culture, and evidence of benevolence from the main players, challenged the press's discourse of harm and the Government's consequent moral regulation in dismissing Dr. Cannan and Thomas Gee.

[134] Ibid., p. 747.

Chapter 8

'A House of Mirrors'

The use of expert witnesses in the nineteenth century was a new practice emerging from the industrial revolution and the growth of professionalism. Expert witnesses were associated with the qualities linked to professionals: scientific knowledge; progressivism; and credibility. Those who purchased the services of an expert then became associated with the positive and progressive attributes of professionalism. Being an expert was an attractive proposition for professionals as it allowed them to validate their own status and that of the profession generally. This chapter explores the use of expert witnesses by the Queensland Government in the second Inquiry of 1869 into the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum conducted by a Joint Parliamentary Commission and the associated benefits gained by the Government and the experts.

The negative response to the initial Inquiry of 1869 conducted by a Civil Service Commission meant that the Government needed to appease the community and Parliament. The use of expert witnesses in a second Inquiry in 1869 was a means of achieving this. In employing expert witnesses the Inquiry was seen to be taking a progressive stance and focusing on ways to move the Asylum towards what was considered best contemporary practice.

It is argued that the use of expert witness was the Government's way of creating a 'house of mirrors'. In using experts, the Government appeared to embrace the concept of progress and contemporary practice, with their actions symbolising to the community that they were taking action to right actual and symbolic harm and were working towards colonial advancement. However, this appeared to be a means of deflection as the use of experts ensured the focus of the Inquiry was on the future and not on the past; blame then could not be attributed to current or past governments. The credibility gained from this progressive stance also masked the Government's eventual lack of commitment in carrying through on the positive changes, informed

by the use of expert witnesses and as recommended by the Joint Parliamentary Commission.

8.1 Background to the 1869 Joint Parliamentary Committee Inquiry

The initial 1869 Commission of Inquiry into the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum conducted by a Civil Service Commission had attracted negative response from the press and Parliament. As discussed in the previous chapter, Government efforts to investigate the supposed harm occurring at the Asylum through this Inquiry were deemed inadequate and tokenistic. The release of the Civil Service Commission's report and recommendations compounded this discontent and concerns were raised in Parliament:

> The manner in which the gentlemen composing the Commission attempted to gloss over the most glaring defects in the management of the Asylum, in order to shield the Surgeon-Superintendent from blame, leads to a well-grounded suspicion that, there is something more to be revealed before the blame can be fairly apportioned among the real delinquents.[1]

To 'reveal' what was still hidden and identify the 'real delinquents', a Joint Parliamentary Committee was appointed to conduct a second Inquiry.[2] The press were optimistic and commended the move: 'the appointment of a joint-committee is we trust, the real commencement of a thorough and sweeping reform in the management of that institution',[3] to right actual and symbolic harm. It would seem that this Inquiry had the potential to redeem faith in the Government's capacity to effectively care for its vulnerable lunatic population and to be a capable moral agent.

The subsequent Joint Parliamentary Inquiry did little to satisfy 'suspicions' and hunt out 'delinquents'. While the Government had determined that the Commission was to

[1] 'House of Representatives', *The Brisbane Courier*, May 17 1869, p. 2.
[2] 'The Lunatic asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 915.
[3] *The Brisbane Courier*, 17 May 1869, p. 2.

inquire into past management practices,[4] the Joint Parliamentary Committee took a different approach. At its inaugural meeting the scope of the Inquiry was revised:

> … [to investigate] the suitability of the present buildings, and … the possibility of adapting them to the purpose for which they were intended, as well as … the latest systems for the management of Lunatic Asylums.[5]

The Committee justified their change in direction. The Government had already taken action based on the evidence from the previous Inquiry by dismissing Dr. Cannan and Chief Warder John Gee. It was therefore pointless to reinvestigate past management practices and better to look towards how the Asylum could be improved to reflect contemporary standards.[6] While the change in scope appeared progressive and proactive, it was also a strategic move by the Commission. It meant that Dr. Cannan and John Gee would not have the opportunity to respond to charges of mismanagement. It also prevented the possibility of earlier Governments and/or Government officers being judged as culpable for previous harm occurring at the Asylum. This was particularly relevant given that the Chair of the Committee, Alfred Palmer, had held the position of Colonial Secretary from 1867 to 1868,[7] and overseen the Asylum and its management during that time.

The Joint Parliamentary Committee's change in focus was also important given the previous 1869 Inquiry's comments on the inadequacy of the buildings and grounds. Nineteenth century buildings were a reflection of colonial progress and a source of pride for the colonists. Indeed, any built environment is explicit in its capacity to communicate a set of values and is a 'conscious expression' of a community.[8] Woogaroo Asylum buildings served as tangible evidence of colonial success, or lack of success. The Asylum buildings thus symbolised Queensland's achievements as a young colony; its capacity to replicate British values through its governance and built environment, its Christian commitment to those afflicted by lunacy and ability to

[4] 'The Lunatic asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 915.
[5] Ibid., p. 917.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Palmer, Sir Arthur Hunter, Member Biography, Queensland Parliament, https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/members/former/bio?id=1872729953.
[8] TB Anderson & RG Moore, 'Meaning and the built environment. A symbolic analysis of a 19th-century urban site', in *The recovery of meaning*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, 1988, p. 402.

foster a population who could build a progressive colony. Therefore, being seen to be proactive in working towards making positive changes to the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum built environment meant a progressive colony and a government who could serve as an effective moral agent.

8.2 The use of expert witnesses in the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry

The Joint Parliamentary Committee employed expert witnesses to support their proactive focus. Employing expert witnesses was indeed apt. Experts would provide contemporary knowledge on lunacy and its treatment, and increase the likelihood that the Inquiry process, report and recommendations were perceived as credible. This strategy certainly had the potential to lead to a 'sweeping reform' by providing recommendations in line with the most modern schools of thought. It was also befitting a government who aspired to be viewed as progressive and successful. Further, as the scandals purported to have occurred at Woogaroo had been reported across Australia,[9] such an Inquiry and the use of expert witnesses provided an opportunity for the Government to save face.

The evolution of the expert witness was synonymous with the rise of professionalism. The industrial revolution in nineteenth century Britain saw the growth of professionalism and knowledge-based professions through what Andrew Scull termed, 'the creation of an urban-industrial civilisation of a radically novel sort'.[10] As the industrial revolution brought an increase in human productivity and growth in manufacturing and commerce, the values and disciplines of the marketplace were inexorably altered.[11] This made way for massive social changes with traditional social hierarchies challenged and, at times, fractured.[12] From such changes professionalism was able to emerge, and of significance for this thesis, the growth of knowledge based professions.

[9] See for example: 'Corporal punishment at penal settlements', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 21 1869, p. 5; 'Intercolonial News, Queensland', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, June 1 1869, p. 2.
[10] A Scull, C MacKenzie & N Hervey, *Masters of Bedlam: the transformation of the mad-doctoring trade*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1996, p. 5.
[11] Ibid., pp. 4-5.
[12] Ibid.

Medicine was a knowledge-based occupation that sought to gain through the growth of professions by declaring exclusive ownership of a set of scientific knowledge, skills, training and ethical standing.[13] Doctors were able to benefit from having a professional status and middle class doctors could acquire social and professional prestige, not previously available to them. [14] They were also able to assume a level of power. Alan Hunt argued that medical knowledge became associated with moral regulation through what he termed, 'medico-moral projects'. [15] This type of association provided a moral legitimacy to the medical profession giving it a greater level of influence, and ultimately a degree of control as medical knowledge became enmeshed with various moral discourses.

The role of expert and expert witness was an offshoot from the growth of professions. With increased capital from the proliferation of manufacturing and commerce, came opportunities for the sale of diverse forms of service, including specialised expertise.[16] The new knowledge based professions were able to sell something less tangible than those in industry, their unique skills and expertise.[17] Indeed, the status and moral legitimacy attached to the medical profession's knowledge and skill base would have made it an attractive resource to buy.

Seven expert witnesses appeared in the 1869 Joint Parliamentary Inquiry. Of these, five were medical practitioners and two were architects. Charles Tiffin, Brisbane architect, was certainly an appropriate choice to attest to the suitability of the Asylum buildings and facilities. His expert standing was evident. Appointed as the first Queensland Colonial Architect, December 1859,[18] he had his Office broadened to Superintendent of Roads and Buildings in March 1869[19] as a cost saving measure.[20] While the new position was said to be burdensome for Tiffin, with added

[13] D Duman, 'The creation and diffusion of a professional ideology in nineteenth century England', *Sociological Review*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1979, p. 119.
[14] PJ Martyr, *Paradise of quacks: an alternative history of medicine in Australia*, Macleay Press, Paddington, 2002, p. 11.
[15] A Hunt, *Governing morals: a social history of moral regulation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 78.
[16] A Scull, C MacKenzie & N Hervey, *Masters of Bedlam: the transformation of the mad-doctoring trade*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1996, p. 5.
[17] Ibid.
[18] 'Government notifications', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 27 December 1859, p. 2.
[19] 'Current Events', *The Telegraph,* 16 January 1873, p. 2.
[20] 'The Architect', Queensland Parliament, https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/explore/history/parliament-house/the-architect

administrative responsibility,[21] the title suggested prestige given that 'Roads and Public Buildings' were tangible evidence of Queensland's progress. Tiffin was well known to the Queensland community: his plan for the design of a new Parliament House had been awarded first prize in April 1864;[22] he had been an Office Bearer for the School of Arts since 1859;[23] he frequently provided public lectures;[24] and was the architect of many public buildings.[25] Further, his expertise in asylum design was evident from the previous 1869 Inquiry when he had outlined his research, knowledge and interest in this area.[26] Tiffin's appearance as an expert witness at the Inquiry certainly would have reflected credibility and expertise. Further, as noted earlier in this thesis, he had drawn the original plans for Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum.

The Joint Parliamentary Committee would not have been surprised at Tiffin's damning observations on the state of Woogaroo Asylum. Tiffin had previously disclosed that the only structure built according to his original plans was the administration building, which had then been adapted for general accommodation for the inmates.[27] When asked by the Joint Parliamentary Committee, 'What respect do you consider the accommodation insufficient?' he was indeed critical and had replied, 'The whole of it.'[28] His recommendations for improvements based on a contemporary cottage design[29] were in stark contrast to his descriptions of the current profoundly inadequate buildings. Further, his proposed design was suggestive of positive change to the Woogaroo environment.

Charles Tiffin's expertise in relation to asylum design was not in question, however, the expertise of his contemporary, Richard George Suter, was somewhat doubtful. It is likely that Suter's appearance at the Inquiry was motivated by the need for financial gain and to promote his name as an architect. Suter had his own architectural practice between 1865 and 1868, and in 1869 was in the employment of Benjamin

[21] Ibid.
[22] 'Public Works', *The Brisbane Courier,* 16 April 1864, p. 2.
[23] 'Local Intelligence', *The Moreton Bay Courier,* 20 April 1859, p. 2.
[24] See for example: announcement that Tiffin will be giving a lecture to the Queensland Philosophical Society on Earth Closets, 'Telegraphic', *The Brisbane Courier,* 25 August 1866, p. 4.
[25] 'The Architect', Queensland Parliament, https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/explore/history/parliament-house/the-architect
[26] 'The Lunatic Asylum', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 692.
[27] Ibid., p. 693.
[28] The Lunatic asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 933.
[29] Ibid., p. 934.

Backhouse,[30] suggesting that his practice may have flagged. Suter's criticisms of the Asylum buildings were no different to that of Tiffin. Commenting on the 'prison-like appearance' of the male building and the inadequate design of the female side, he stated: 'I have seldom seen building[s] more unsuited to the purpose'[31] While Suter claimed expertise, this seemed exaggerated given that his claim was based on his history of designing a hospital. Suter justified his lack of familiarity with asylum design: asylums were 'in effect … hospitals of the insane', and the only difference would be that lunatic patients required less space, except for those in the infirmary.[32] Despite Suter's obvious lack of knowledge of contemporary asylum design, it was his plans that the Joint Parliamentary Committee chose to recommend to the Government, as they were more affordable than those submitted by Tiffin. [33]

Use of expert witnesses in the nineteenth century yielded mixed results.[34] The nineteenth century public valued scientific knowledge and believed experts had the power to generate unique answers from their ownership of a particular aspect of scientific knowledge.[35] However, Woods suggested that the nineteenth century expert role was often tokenistic, and may have offered little value; the title of 'expert' was more valued than the actual 'expertise' they offered.[36] This indeed appeared to be the case with Suter. As will be argued later, the four Brisbane medical practitioners, similarly, offered little value to the Inquiry. Further, the reasons for undertaking the role of expert witness was more often for its benefits, than for altruistic reasons. Indeed, for the medical practitioner, this role was quite attractive. It included financial remuneration to supplement, at times, a mediocre income. It also provided an opportunity to promote the doctor's professional status; the doctor was required to publically provide his educational qualifications, affiliations, experience and extent of

[30] For architects in Brisbane see: *Pughs Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar for 1865* Brisbane, Theophilus P. Pugh General Printing Press, Brisbane, 1865*; Pughs Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar for 1866*; Brisbane, Theophilus P. Pugh General Printing Press, Brisbane, 1866; *Pughs Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar for 1867,* Brisbane, Theophilus P. Pugh General Printing Press, Brisbane, 1867; *Pugh's Queensland Almanac, Law Calendar, Directory and Coast Guide for 1868,* Theophilus P. Pugh*,* Brisbane, 1868; *Pugh's Queensland Almanac, Law Calendar, Directory and Coast Guide for 1869,* Theophilus P. Pugh*,* Brisbane, 1869.
[31] The Lunatic asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 968.
[32] Ibid., p. 969.
[33] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* [Hansard], Legislative Council. August 17 1869, p. 737.
[34] C Hamlin, 'Scientific method and expert witnessing: Victorian perspectives on a modern problem', *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1986, p. 486.
[35] Ibid.
[36] A Woods, 'From practical men to scientific experts: British veterinary surgeons and the development of government scientific expertise, 1878-1919', *History of Science*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2013, p. 457.

his specialist knowledge.[37] Inquiries, in particular, allowed doctors to demonstrate their power and that of their profession by assuming moral authority in social decision-making.[38]

Inquiries certainly provided an avenue for medical practitioners to generally promote the credibility and the professional status of their profession, and for the Brisbane doctors appearing at the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry, the potential to promote themselves. Doctors were not always held in high regard and had a mixed reputation in colonial Australia. Philippa Martyr argued that Australia was haven to a number of disreputable doctors. These included debarred British medical practitioners able to legally practice outside of Britain, those who were not medical practitioners yet swore in a court of law that they were, and doctors who were simply unpopular in their home country.[39] Thus medical practitioners in 1869 needed to find ways to enhance their reputation and justify the authority and morality of medicine generally. Further, health legislation appeared to hold little importance to the Queensland Government during the nineteenth century.[40] Without clear legislation to differentiate their practices from other health care providers, doctors needed to validate their exclusivity in relation to illness and healing, and their capacity to provide medical treatment that surpassed services from others. Medical practitioners were required to compete against unregulated health practitioners who provided more affordable treatment, relatives and friends who delivered free nursing care and druggists and pharmacists who sold a ready supply of 'cure-all' medicines.[41]

Each of the Brisbane doctors appearing as expert witnesses in the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry appeared to offer minimal expert knowledge. Dr. Waugh did concede that his experience with lunacy was limited; almost non-existent in Australia and 'only slight

[37] KM Odden, "Able and intelligent medical men meeting together': the Victorian railway crash, medical jurisprudence, and the rise of medical authority', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2003, p. 38.
[38] CA Jones, *Expert witnesses: science, medicine, and the practice of law*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1994.
[39] PJ Martyr, *Paradise of quacks: an alternative history of medicine in Australia*, Macleay Press, Paddington, 2002, p. 70.
[40] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 59.
[41] For discussion of types of health practitioners in colonial Australia and drugs available from druggists see: PJ Martyr, *Paradise of quacks: an alternative history of medicine in Australia*, Macleay Press, Paddington, 2002.

… in the old country'.[42] However, his lengthy experience generally as a doctor and the citing of medical knowledge gained from 'the old country', lent a sense of legitimacy to his 'text-book type' evidence on structural requirements, management, moral treatment, staff roles and patient activities.[43] Dr. William Hobbs and Dr. Hugh Bell, similarly admitted being unfamiliar with lunatic asylums, other than Dr. Hobbs' very recent appointment as Medical Visitor to Woogaroo Asylum.[44] However, both claimed legitimate expert status through other types of experience; Dr. Hobbs through his role as Government Medical Officer,[45] and Dr. Bell in his private practice.[46] Both believed that their medical role in certifying lunatics helped validate their expert status. [47] However, 'expertise' demonstrated through medical certification is questionable given that a review of medical certificates noted widespread perfunctory type entries.[48] Dr. Henry Challinor, current Acting Surgeon Superintendent to the Asylum, likewise, had no previous experience of lunatic asylums, other than his very recent appointment to the Asylum.[49] Challinor and the Joint Parliamentary Committee attempted to promote the extent of Challinor's expertise by emphasising the importance of his previous role as chair of the 1867 Commission of Inquiry into the Asylum.[50] However, this claim lacked credence as the 1867 Inquiry had been short lived and incomplete, and as discussed in Chapter 5, Challinor had abruptly resigned his chair when the Government refused to fund his request for clerical services.[51]

Despite being limited in their capacity to offer expertise to the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry, the Brisbane doctors were likely to have benefitted professionally from their expert witness role. Dr. Waugh was a relatively recent arrival in Brisbane and may not have been as well known as the other Brisbane doctors appearing at the Inquiry,

---

[42] The Lunatic asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 944.
[43] Ibid., pp. 944-946.
[44] Ibid., p. 948.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., p. 983.
[47] Ibid., pp. 950, 958.
[48] A review of warrants and medical certificates between 1865 and 1869 provide evidence of similar terms being repeatedly used: 'of unsound mind'; 'dangerous lunatic'; 'unfit to take care of himself'. There was very little evidence of examination of the unique features of the patient and the two medical certificates provided from different doctors for a patient were, more often than not, identical to each other.
[49] Ibid., pp. 959-966.
[50] Ibid., p. 959.
[51] H. Challinor to Under Colonial Secretary, 9 July 1867, 'Lunatic Asylum Woogaroo', Queensland Legislative Assembly 1867, *Votes and Proceedings,* p.1085.

who had practiced in Brisbane for some time.[52] Further, Waugh was a homeopath.[53] The unpopularity of homeopathy in Britain had led to some homeopaths immigrating to Australia with an expectation of a greater degree of medical freedom.[54] However, Waugh's homeopathic roots had put him 'offside' with his Brisbane medical contemporaries.[55] Waugh had attempted to promote himself to the Brisbane community through his role as president of the Philosophical Society,[56] and by conducting public lectures.[57] His appearance beside long standing Brisbane doctors would have helped promote his credibility as a medical practitioner to the Brisbane community.

Dr. Hobbs used the Inquiry to advocate for the expansion of his Government Medical Officer role. This would presumably have led to increased status and remuneration. Hobbs claimed a pressing need for reception houses to be introduced in Queensland. Reception houses were already in use in New South Wales and Hobbs proposed that they would offer an alternative to the much criticised practice of housing lunatics in prisons while waiting for a warrant to authorise their Asylum admission. Hobbs also suggested their use for those suffering from delirium tremens. His argument that short stays in reception houses may negate the need for asylum admission in some cases, increased the attractiveness of his proposal. Hobbs recommended the Medical Visitor to the Asylum (a role he currently held) be given more authority and take the form of a Lunatic Inspector to assist in Asylum management. Recommending that such changes be enacted in legislation, he reminded the Government of Queensland's lack of lunacy legislation and suggested that patients may be being detailed illegally.[58] Hobbs' career did benefit; the Committee recommended reception houses be established and that the current Government Medical Officer (Dr. Hobbs) should be in

[52] Dr. Waugh arrived in Brisbane in 1858. Dr. Hobbs and Dr. Challinor arrived in 1849 and Dr. Bell in 1852: R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, pp. 449-451.
[53] Ibid. p. 451.
[54] PJ Martyr, *Paradise of quacks: an alternative history of medicine in Australia*, Macleay Press, Paddington, 2002, p. 54.
[55] R Patrick, *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987, p. 451.
[56] RS Browne, *The doctors or medical practitioners of early Brisbane*, http://www.brisbanehistory.com/brisbane_doctors.html
[57] For information on Waugh's lecture, Spectrum Analysis' at Philosophical Society see: 'Epitome', *The Brisbane Courier,* 11 November 1865, p. 2.
[58] The Lunatic asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 955.

charge.[59] While Hobbs did eventually become medical officer to a Brisbane Reception House,[60] Lunatic Inspectors were not introduced.

Dr. Henry Challinor's appearance at the Inquiry gave him an opportunity to prove his capability as Surgeon Superintendent at Woogaroo. As previously discussed, Challinor had been acting in this position since Dr. Cannan's dismissal. However, it was doubtful whether his former role as a local Ipswich doctor would have prepared him for the complexity of an asylum superintendent position. Dr. Challinor outlined the various improvements required at the Asylum to the Commission. Nonetheless, these were ones that had been identified earlier by Dr. Cannan at the 1869 Civil Commission Inquiry, and, as Challinor admitted, most were already underway when he took over as Acting Superintendent.[61] It seemed that Challinor's portrayal of himself as an expert in lunacy and an effective asylum superintendent to the Joint Parliamentary Commission had not been convincing. The Commission's Report recommended an experienced superintendent be sought. The Hon. Mr Browne, Joint Parliamentary Committee member, explained this recommendation to Parliament; it didn't mean that the Committee wanted to 'get rid of him [Challinor]', it was just that he lacked the requisite experience.

> Dr. Challinor's own evidence is quite sufficient to show that however skilful he is as a medical man, he is not possessed of any experience in the treatment of the insane as practised in the United Kingdom and in other countries.[62]

Dr. Norton Manning, Superintendent of Gladesville, Sydney, formerly Tarbin Creek Asylum, was the most notable and credible medical expert witness appearing before the Joint Parliamentary Committee.[63] Manning was a significant figure in psychiatry in New South Wales and recognised for his expertise in lunatic asylum management and treatment of the insane.[64] It seemed that his esteem was well earned. After visiting Sydney in 1867, Manning had returned to Britain and then spent a year

[59] Ibid., p. 919.
[60] 'Telegraphic', *The Brisbane Courier,* 12 March 1870, p. 4.
[61] The Lunatic asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 966.
[62] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* [Hansard], Legislative Council, 17 August 1869, p. 739.
[63] The Lunatic asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 971.
[64] S Garton, *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales 1880-1949*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1988, p. 22.

studying asylum administration and treatment methods throughout the Western world. On returning to Sydney he was appointed Superintendent of the Tarbin Creek Asylum. He later became Inspector of the Insane in 1876 and the First Inspector General of the Insane in 1878.[65] Manning became renowned for his humanitarian influence on psychiatric care in New South Wales.[66]

Manning was highly critical of the conditions at Woogaroo Asylum; 'I do not think that anything could be much worse'.[67] Yet, he attributed much of the blame for the Asylum's state on the defective 'buildings and appliances'.[68] Manning also shed doubts on the credibility of the evidence from the previous 1869 Inquiry; evidence from 'discharged patients and discharged attendants … is not to be relied upon.'[69] This evidence had formed the foundations for the press's moral discourse and the Government's blame. Questioning the validity of the evidence may have been a way of protecting Cannan, a member of his own profession. However, criticisms of Cannan's record keeping reflected an authoritative stance, in keeping with Manning's expert status:

> … there are many cases that are extremely chronic in their character, but the Medical Superintendent, by looking over the books once a month, would have his attention called to those cases, and would see how they were getting on; otherwise he might not give proper attention to them.[70]

Manning's criticism of Cannan's record keeping is not surprising as nineteenth medicine was intent on collecting figures and statistics. Manning's lectures and publications often focused on various lunacy statistics,[71] validating the scientific foundations of this specialist branch of medicine and his expert status.

---

[65] Ibid.
[66] P Shea, 'One hundred years ago in New South Wales', *Australasian Psychiatry*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2001, p. 29.
[67] 'The Lunatic asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 971.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., p. 978.
[71] For an example of Manning's work that relied heavily on lists and statistics relating to mental illness see: N Manning, *The causation and prevention of insanity,* Thomas Richards Government Printer, Sydney, 1880.

Dr. Manning's expert opinion on how the Asylum could be improved was grim: 'the best thing to be done is to begin again'. [72] When the Commission insisted that this was not possible and that they required recommendations on how to correct the current facilities,[73] Manning insinuated that this was false economy; emphasis must be placed on 'cure' rather than 'safekeeping'. He was pragmatic in his clarification:

> … although we like to put it upon a philanthropic basis, it is really in a commercial point of view an object to treat the patients so that they may speedily recover and relieve the State of the expense they entail.[74]

The Joint Parliamentary Committee explained that it was Manning's 'valuable' evidence that formed the basis of their report and recommendations to the Government.[75] Certainly, acknowledging Dr. Manning's valuable contribution gave a sense of authority and credibility to the Commission's findings. While the report appeared to recommend other expert witnesses' suggestions, they were often the same ones that Manning had made. The need for reception houses and lunacy legislation, which Dr. Hobbs had argued for, Manning also promoted. Similarly, both Tiffin and Suter had recommended and provided plans for cottage style accommodation, and Manning likewise advocated for this system of lunacy accommodation.

While the report acknowledged a number of Dr. Manning's recommendations, others were modified. Manning's conclusion that the Asylum environment had contributed to management problems was included. Indeed, the report described the dire state of the Asylum:

> … defective buildings, the want of a proper supply of water, the want of recreation grounds, and the absence of employment and amusement for the inmates.[76]

The Committee report did acknowledge Manning's initial suggestion that a new Asylum at a different site was needed. However, the Committee also conceded that this was the ideal and not likely to be possible given the expense to the colony.

[72] The Lunatic asylum', Legislative Assembly 1869, *Votes and Proceedings*, p. 972.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid., p. 918.
[76] Ibid., p. 917.

Instead, they argued, the suggested improvements advised by Manning would suffice and as Queensland's population grew, new asylums could be built in other parts of the colony. [77] Manning had emphasised the urgent need for improved staff accommodation; 'five or six' attendants slept together in a small room,[78] the chief warder and his family shared two small rooms and the matron was required to sleep alongside her nurses. [79] Arguing that suitable accommodation was necessary, generally, to better manage staff, Manning explained the importance of appropriate staff accommodation on the female side:

> … it is impossible that she [the matron] can exercise any proper control over the attendants if she lives and sleeps with them.'[80]

The Committee did heed part of Manning's advice and recommended accommodation for the Chief Warder be constructed near the Asylum entrance so he could be aware of who was entering and leaving.[81] Other changes to staff accommodation, considered essential by Manning, were not acknowledged.

The Joint Parliamentary Commission also used their report to reinforce Dr. Cannan's guilt. Cannan's lax record keeping, noted by Manning, was embellished to suggest that Cannan failed to keep any patient records: 'the want of any system of registration of patients' was 'a great defect'.[82] Further, despite Manning doubting the credibility of the previous Inquiry's witnesses, the Committee continued to validate their witnesses by referring to their accusations throughout the report as 'abuses.' [83]

8.3 Government acceptance of the report and recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry

The Joint Parliamentary Committee report and recommendations were debated in Parliament during August 1869. The debate demonstrated a lack of support from Arthur Hodgson, the Colonial Secretary. Hodgson attempted to downplay the

[77] Ibid., p. 918.
[78] Ibid., p. 973.
[79] Ibid., p. 974.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid., p. 918.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

importance of the report citing objections to most recommendations. He suggested that some were now unnecessary as a number of changes had already been instigated; the yards had new fencing which made the outside environment larger and more accommodating, and Dr. Challinor had initiated extra inmate activities and a better patient registration system.[84] Hodgson also objected to the recommendation that called for an increase to the size of the Asylum to allow it to house 400 inmates. He explained that such expansion was entirely unnecessary given that the average occupancy of the asylum was only around 180 inmates.[85] The proposed structural changes and addition of verandahs to the male ward, he asserted, would make the building unsafe.[86] Hodgson was particularly critical of the recommendation that a management committee oversee the Asylum.[87] He cited a litany of difficulties associated with this recommendation: the distance a committee would need to travel to attend the Asylum; the lack of suitably qualified men to fill the committee positions; and the need to remunerate the committee members.[88] Alfred Palmer's retort to Hodgson's disapproval implied sarcasm; maybe the Colonial Secretary was reluctant to 'have the power taken out of his hands'.[89] Other Members praised this recommendation and suggested its possible benefits: 'it would greatly strengthen the hands of the superintendent' and 'release' the Colonial Secretary 'from many onerous duties, which he had not time to tend'.[90]

Parliament was generally supportive of the Joint Parliamentary Committee report and recommendations despite the Colonial Secretary's negative feedback. However, it was almost united in its opposition to Clause 14, the recommendation that an appropriately qualified and experienced superintendent be sought from Britain. Most speakers supported Arthur Hodgson's conclusion that it was unnecessary to replace Dr. Challinor.[91] However, arguments for Challinor's suitability had little to do with his professional capability. Praise largely related to his many favourable personal qualities.[92] Mr. Francis admitting that he and Dr. Challinor were close friends, felt he

[84] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* [Hansard], Legislative Council, August 19 1869, p. 758.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., p. 759.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., p. 761.
[89] Ibid., p. 730.
[90] Ibid., p. 733.
[91] Ibid., p. 760.
[92] Ibid., pp. 739-743.

could point out Challinor's positive attributes; 'conscientious, … indefatigable … and excellent temper.'[93] Mr. Forbes commended Challinor for his sense of 'charity' and claimed he was more than adequate for the role; 'all that is required 'to fill the superintendent role is a man possessing' sufficient moral character with other qualifications.'[94] Besides, as Charles Lilley remarked, 'the gentleman had given up his practice in Ipswich' to take up the position[95] and indeed as Mr. Forbes had mentioned, what position would he fill if he was 'dispensed with?'[96] Eyles Browne supported the recommendation; 'the colony should turn over a new leaf' in relation to the Asylum, and Challinor's age, lack of experience and knowledge made him unsuitable for the position.[97] Nonetheless, Browne's opposition remained unacknowledged by Parliament and Clause 14 was rejected. The *Queenslander* Editor's report of this decision was sarcastic, and seemingly a reaction to the debate's lack of clear reason; he agreed with Parliament that a Surgeon Superintendent not be appointed from England because 'as soon as he discovers under what conditions he is expected to carry out his system, he will either leave in disgust or be unable to grapple with the many difficulties surrounding him.'[98]

The Joint Parliamentary Commission Report and recommendations were eventually accepted on August 19 in their entirety, except for Clause 14.[99] Despite his earlier objections, the Colonial Secretary praised the report as 'valuable' and expressed regret that a joint parliamentary committee had not been appointed earlier. He also commended the press, in particular the *Queensland Times* for alerting the Government to the state of the Asylum.[100] It seemed likely that Government acceptance of the report singled optimism for the future of Woogaroo Asylum.

[93] Ibid., p. 733.
[94] Ibid., p. 734.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid., p. 739.
[98] 'The Woogaroo Inquiry', *The Queenslander*, 21 August 1869, p. 4.
[99] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* [Hansard], Legislative Council, August 19, 1869, p. 767.
[100] Ibid., p. 758.

8.4 Outcomes from the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry

The use of expert witnesses in the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry brought a degree of success to the Queensland Government. Accepting the report provided the Government with all of the attributes associated with expert witnesses; scientific advancement, progress and moral standing. In addition, the Inquiry process and accepting the evidence of experts was seen to be righting the perceived harms sending a message to the community that the Government was acting effectively as a moral agent. The *Queenslander,* so scathing in their report of the previous 1869 Inquiry, commended the Joint Parliamentary Committee on their Report: 'unquestionably one of the most important and satisfactory documents that have emanated from Parliament for some time past.'[101] Later, in October 1869, the *Queenslander* offered further praise: 'improvement … effected in the management and resources of this institution within the last few months is an undoubted and highly gratifying fact', and likened Woogaroo Asylum to the 'more advanced institutions of other colonies'.[102] Other newspapers similarly reported favourably on the subsequent improvements to the Asylum.[103]

Reports that positive changes were occurring as a consequence of the Joint Parliamentary Inquiry were largely incorrect. The only recommendations finally carried out were Clauses 15 and 16; the establishment of a Lunacy Act and the construction of Receiving Houses.[104] Announcing a Lunacy Act soon after the report was accepted[105] signaled to the Queensland community that change was happening. A Reception House was constructed from the old military hospital in Brisbane in early 1870,[106] with patients being admitted in March[107] even before it was fully completed.[108] This was further tangible evidence of positive change and earned the Government praise from the *Queensland Times* Editor for its speediness in adapting

[101] Ibid.
[102] 'The Woogaroo Asylum', *The Queensland Times,* 30 October 1869, p. 6.
[103] See for example: 'Notes for General Circulation', *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 November 1869, p. 3.
[104] 'Receiving Houses' had previously been referred to as 'Reception Houses' in the Inquiry evidence.
[105] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* [Hansard], Legislative Council, 2 September 1869, p. 875.
[106] 'Current Topics', *The Queenslander,* 12 March 1870, p. 2.
[107] 'Central Police Court', *The Brisbane Courier,* 10 March 1870, p. 2.
[108] 'Current Topics', *The Queenslander,* 12 March 1870, p. 2.

this building.[109] Certainly Arthur Hodgson had been correct when he informed Parliament in August 1869 that improvements were also occurring at the Asylum. A report from Dr. Hobbs, as visiting doctor, dated 14 August, outlined some of these improvements. Changes included: fencing of the yards to allow a view of the river; an increase in the size of the recreation area; and twice weekly dancing parties for the patients.[110] These changes, however, seemed to be a result of agitation from the press and parliament during the previous Inquiry as they had commenced prior to August 1869.

Most other changes to the Asylum did not eventuate. It is apparent that there were plans to begin improvements. On September 4, Public Works announced improvements were about to begin, including the construction of cottage wards,[111] and tenders were called for additions to the female building.[112] While a tender was accepted,[113] this was later revoked when it was revealed that the Colonial Secretary had bribed the successful Ipswich firm to offer the lowest tender.[114] Two cottage wards were constructed in 1870; one for males and one for females.[115] Each only accommodated twelve patients.[116] This was despite Dr. Norton Manning recommending multiple cottage wards be constructed,[117] and plans submitted by Suter specifying that each cottage would be large enough to house thirty-two patients.[118] These cottages did little to ease the severe overcrowding. In November 1870, Dr. Handcock, Visiting Justice to the Asylum, found thirty-two men occupying two small badly ventilated rooms.[119] A crisis occurred in February 1872 when a number of patients and staff died from typhoid fever. In his official report to the Colonial Secretary, Dr. Hobbs blamed the Asylum's inadequate environment for this outbreak: 'overcrowding, imperfect ventilation, defective drainage and impure water'.[120]

---

[109] 'Local and General News', *The Queensland Times,* 29 March 1870, p. 2.
[110] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* [Hansard], Legislative Assembly, August 19 1869, p. 758.
[111] 'Public Works', The Brisbane Courier, 4 September 1869, p. 4.
[112] 'Government notifications', *The Queenslander,* 4 September 1869, p. 4.
[113] Official notifications', *The Brisbane Courier*, 20 September 1869, p. 3.
[114] 'Government Contracts', *The Queenslander,* 16 October 1869, p. 2.
[115] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 93.
[116] 'Parliamentary Paper. Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum', *The Brisbane Courier,* 7 May 1870, pp. 5-6.
[117] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* [Hansard], Legislative Council. 17 August 1869, p. 737.
[118] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* [Hansard], Legislative Council, 13 August 1869, pp. 730-731.
[119] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 94.
[120] Dr. Hobbs to Colonial Secretary, cited in ibid., p. 93.

Increased funding to the Asylum also did not eventuate. Mr. Walsh had pointed out to Parliament in August 1869 the dire need to provide extra funds to the Asylum:

> … he hoped the Government would not let a few hundreds or thousands of pounds stand in the way of making such improvements as would provide for the well being of the unfortunate individuals who to be confined there.[121]

Yet there is no evidence, despite Parliament agreeing to the recommendations by the Committee, that extra funding was planned for the Asylum to fund the proposed changes. In fact, funding to the Asylum fell in 1870.[122] A lack of expenditure was very apparent when in September 1867 the Colonial Secretary refused Dr. Challinor £3 to carry out improvements to the river wharf, and in November 1970, denied him funds to provide nurses with uniforms.[123]

8.5 Conclusion

Government debate following the release of the report and recommendations had hinted at the possibility of an optimistic future for those who lived and worked at Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. Government acceptance of almost all of the recommendations from the 1869 Joint Parliamentary Inquiry suggested they would commit to these recommendations, and further, funding would be made available to support the proposed changes. While initial activity did suggest the Government was fulfilling their obligations in relation to the Asylum, this did not continue. Instead, the Government showed a disinclination to follow through on the recommended changes. Certainly, as evident from the 1872 outbreak of typhoid at the Asylum, further harm had ensued as a consequence of the Government not acting on these recommendations.

---

[121] *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* [Hansard], Legislative Assembly, 19 August 1869, p. 765.
[122] R Evans, Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969, p. 95.
[123] Challinor to Under Secretary, 14 September 1869 cited in ibid., p. 93; Challinor to Under Secretary, 21 November 1870, cited in ibid., p. 93.

The use of expert witnesses appeared to initially redeem the Government in the eyes of the community. Despite most of the experts being tokenistic and providing little expertise, the Government gained from the credibility, and professional and scientific standing associated with the process of using expert witnesses. Indeed, their acceptance of all but one of the recommendations, founded on the evidence of the renowned Dr. Norton Manning, suggested to the public that their decision-making would right actual and symbolic harm. However, it also appeared that the Government, confident in the community's support, accepted the attributes associated with the use of expert witnesses as license to continue in the ineffective parsimonious direction that they had previously taken. There was evidence of some positive changes that had begun as a response to the 1869 Civil Service Commission Inquiry. However, while Lunacy Legislation and Reception Houses were introduced as part of of the recommendations from the 1869 Inquiry Joint Parliamentary Inquiry, these were not changes to the Asylum. The Joint Parliamentary Inquiry did not result in 'sweeping reforms'. Instead, it seemed that the Government used expert witnesses to construct a 'house of mirrors'. The Government's inadequate actions, and indeed inaction, were hidden under the guise of the positive attributes attached to the expert witnesses.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the first five years of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum through the lens of public inquires. The thesis established the minutiae of life inside a colonial Asylum in the 1860s and constructed individual narratives around some patients and staff. However, as the evidence around each Inquiry was analysed, a much broader picture was apparent. The Asylum did not exist in isolation, and in fact, its trajectory, and, in turn, the experiences of Asylum patients and staff, were dependent upon broad social, political and economic influences and the interplay between these influences and the Asylum. Other more specific influences were also of importance: the power of individual personalities on the institution and wider political outcomes; the press in provoking government decision-making in relation to the Asylum; and political posturing by the colonial Queensland Government. This conclusion discusses the significance of these findings and argues their relevance to contemporary health care.

The impact of Queensland Government decision-making was paramount in shaping the trajectory of the Asylum between 1865 and 1869. This decision-making demonstrated interplay between political processes and colonial social expectations. These processes and expectations, in turn, were influenced by: Queensland's roots as a convict colony and the need to move away from the taint of its origins; the inexperience of a young Government and a need to posture success; an economic depression; the impetus to transplant British social institutions onto an alien colonial landscape; and the power of the press.

The complexity of influences on Government decision-making interacted with the Asylum, which had its own layers. Firstly, featured prominently throughout this thesis was the unsuitability of the Asylum buildings and environment and the negative impact of this on patients and staff. Secondly, the staff, including its Surgeon Superintendent, were inexperienced, with some being ex-gaol warders. Thirdly, the Asylum patients had wide-ranging issues; social, physical and mental health problems.

Interacting with these multiple layers of influences associated with the Asylum was the impact of various personalities. The power associated with the nineteenth century

profession of medicine was very apparent in this thesis. The inaugural Asylum Surgeon Superintendent proved to be arrogant, manipulative and yet benevolent. His successor, and an ex staff member, were likely to have orchestrated his dismissal. The various Colonial Secretaries, whose portfolios included the Asylum, were influential. Indeed, one of these ministers also owned Queensland's most important newspaper.

The consequences for the Asylum of multiple influences and institutional layers interacting with each other were negative; an Asylum trajectory punctuated by scandals, four public Inquiries, staff dismissals, and deleterious conditions for the inmates. When moral harm was reported to be occurring at the Asylum, blame was sought from inside the Asylum, ignoring the many other influences on the Asylum. Blaming from within allowed the Government to remain guiltless and, by association, to be seen as an effective moral agent.

Understanding the impact of a multitude of external influences interacting with the layers of Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum in the 1860s has implications for understanding contemporary Australian health care institutions. Twenty-first century health care institutions, like Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, are situated in the broad social, economic and political context. These institutions are complex; staffed by many layers of health professionals and administrative staff, they perform multiple functions. Further, they are dependent upon external Government funding and are required to function according to health legislation. Yet, these institutions are perceived as 'silos'. The multitude of external factors interacting with the multifaceted institution affecting its trajectory and the experiences of its patients and staff, is usually not acknowledged. When mistakes occur, blame is sought from inside the institution, as it was at Woogaroo, instead of taking into account the institution's interaction with external authorities, the community and social expectations.

This thesis demonstrated the power of the press in influencing Government decision-making associated with Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum. The various governments had been repeatedly informed of the Asylum's negative conditions, yet they had not responded. Nonetheless, the Queensland press was successful in provoking Government reaction. By constructing a discourse of harm around Asylum management, the press orchestrated moral regulation from the Government. Despite the sources for the discourse of harm lacking credibility, despite obvious journalistic

ploys being used, and despite this discourse being seemingly constructed for the benefit of Dr. Cannan's successor, the press was successful. The Government initiated an Inquiry, and when this proved unequal to the seriousness of the harm constructed in the moral discourse, another was instigated. Such Government reaction is redolent of the manner in which current changes are made to Australian mental health policy. When negative mental health events are reported in the press, the Government perceives a need to 'do something' and is impelled to make mental health policy changes.[1] As Whiteford, Harris and Diminic warn, such changes lead to 'piece-meal, ad hoc reform.'[2] It is hoped that the twenty-first century press is somewhat more rigorous in ensuring the credibility of their claims than that of Queensland newspaper editors from the 1860s. However, questions still need to be asked as to whether the Government's need to 'do something' is based on a real crisis in mental health services, or whether it is a consequence of a failure in one or more of the many influences on mental health services. Questions even need to be asked as to whether it is a 'crisis' manufactured by the press and their various influences.

The thesis aimed to understand what it was like for mentally ill patients detained in Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum in the 1860s. Sadly, it was found that these people suffered in being required to live in an unsuitable and inadequate environment. An asylum culture condoning inhumane treatment of male patients compounded their suffering. Various Royal Commissions and Inquiries over the past forty years have similarly exposed the mentally ill being treated inhumanely and living in poor conditions.[3] This has resulted in tighter regulations ensuring humane treatment in mental health facilities. However, these relatively recent revelations of abuses warn us not to be complacent and believe that with the asylums of old gone, that people with mental health issues won't experience negative conditions. Despite the growth of strong mental health consumer movements, the mentally ill remain vulnerable. Tight health budgets have led to decreased bed numbers and shorter stays in mental health units, and as a consequence, some mental health consumers have no-where to go,

[1] [1] H Whiteford, M Harris & S Diminic, 'Mental health service system improvement: translating evidence into policy', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry,* vol. 47, no. 8, 2013, p. 703.
[2] Ibid.
[3] For example: Chelmsford Royal Commission 1988-1990; the 10B Inquiry 1990; and the Burdekin National Inquiry 1993.

even when acutely ill. Homelessness is a reality for some[4]; others are required to live in unsuitable accommodation.[5] Such negative living conditions are oddly evocative of the negative environment of Woogaroo in the 1860s. The knowledge that those who are made vulnerable by their mental illness are currently living in poor conditions has a greater impact when it is made clear that there are similarities with the 1860s. Despite the many Inquiries, Royal Commissions, and changes to Government policy since the 1860s, this population continues to suffer through the piece-meal and ad hoc approach to policy and health services.

This thesis depicted the men and women employed to 'attend' at Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum; the ancestors of Queensland's current mental health nursing workforce. The nickname 'Woogaroo screw', denoting mental health nurses employed at one of the many institutions succeeding Woogaroo Asylum, connects them to these first workers. However, this term also has negative punitive connotations and reflects the findings from this thesis of the negative male culture. However, this thesis also presented another picture – one that showed these early attendants and nurses acting beneficently. This is significant; it belies the negative picture suggested in the nickname and provides a legacy, where, even in negative punitive conditions, the ancestors of current day mental health nurses still carried out acts of beneficence to their patients. Further, these small examples of benevolence demonstrated at Woogaroo Asylum amidst a negative and neglected environment demonstrate that humanistic ideals will continue to be apparent and if fostered may result in a better way of life.

The title of this thesis 'Façade of success' encapsulates the benevolent pretensions of the Queensland Government in relation to the Asylum. While ostensibly reacting to perceptions of harm at the Asylum by initiating Inquiries, little would improve, and in fact, conditions at the Asylum continued to deteriorate. Yet, the Government evaded blame and claimed 'success' as an effective moral agent. Governments still evade

[4] See for example: B Spicer, D I Smith, E Conroy, P R Flatau & L Burns, 'Mental illness and housing outcomes among a sample of homeless men in an Australian urban centre', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry,* vol. 49, no. 5, 2015.
[5] See for example: newspaper report of mentally ill patients being discharged early to live in backpacker accommodation: R. Titellius, 'Mentally ill patients discharged from hospital, dumped in backpacker hostels', *Perth Now,* 17 January 2016, http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/western-australia/mentally-ill-patients-discharged-from-hospital-dumped-in-backpacker-hostels/news-story/ecdcb0ad9dcb575bbecf1baad1378501

blame, instead, preferring to paint pictures of success. The success claimed by the previous Australian Prime minister, Tony Abbot, in 'stopping' the asylum seeker boats belied this Government's abject failure in being an effective moral agent demonstrated in the inhumane conditions suffered by asylum seekers in detention centres. Political posturing was obvious in the 1860s from an inexperienced Government attempting to create distance from a convict past and garner community confidence in a period of political and economic instability. This history prompts us to ask questions about current Governments' political posturing in order to expose pretensions and to query their capacity to rectify what is wrong.

This thesis began by evoking a picture of the remains of Queensland's first lunatic Asylum. Its end returns to contemporary times and draws parallels between the findings from this thesis and current issues. This thesis is significant in that it fills a gap in the body of knowledge around colonial lunatic asylums and more specifically Queensland mental health history. However its significance is also this end point. The social, economic and political processes that negatively affected the lives of a vulnerable population between 1865 and 1869 continue to be reflected in twenty first century government decision-making.

References

Primary sources

Contemporary Newspapers and Periodicals

Australian Medical Journal

The Age

The Brisbane Courier

The Courier

The Darling Downs Gazette

The Maryborough Chronicle

The Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser

The Moreton Bay Courier

The North Australian

The North Australian and General Advertiser

The Queenslander

The Queensland Times

The Rockhampton and Central Queenslander Advertiser

The Rockhampton Bulletin

The Sydney Morning Herald

The South Australian Register

The Telegraph

The Warwick Argus and Tenterfield Chronicle

The Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser

Government Published Records and Collections of Documents

Queensland Government Gazette
Queensland Legislative Assembly, Votes and Proceedings
Queensland Legislative Council, Votes and Proceedings
Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums, Copy despatch from the Right Honorable Secretary of State, with Enclosures relative to Public Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums, Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command

Queensland State Archives

Casebook Woogaroo (male and female admissions)
Colonial Secretary's Inward Correspondence

Secondary Sources

Books

Adkins, A.W.H. *Merit and responsibility: a study in Greek values,* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1960.

Alford, K. *Production or reproduction? An economic history of women in Australia, 1788-1850,* Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1984.

Allen, J.A. *Sex and secrets: crimes involving Australian women since 1880*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990.

Arlidge, J.T. *On the state of lunacy and the legal provision for the insane*, Churchill Press, London, 1859.

Bashford, A. *Purity and pollution: gender, embodiment, and Victorian medicine*, Macmillan, London, 1998.

Blainey, G. *The tyranny of distance: how distance shaped Australia's history,* Sun Books, Melbourne, 1966.

Boschma, G. *The rise of mental health nursing: a history of psychiatric care in Dutch asylums, 1890-1920*, Amsterdam University Press, 2003.

Bostock, J. *The dawn of Australian psychiatry,* Australian Medical Publishing Company, Sydney, 1968.

Brothers, C.J. *Early Victorian psychiatry, 1835-1905*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1961.

Cassell, J.L. *The Giddens reader*, Macmillan Press, Houndmills, Hampshire, 1993.

Coleborne, C. *Reading 'madness': gender and difference in the colonial asylum in Victoria, Australia, 1848-1880*, Network Books, Perth, 2007.

Madness in the family: insanity and institutions in the Australasian colonial world, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2010.

Coleborne, C., MacKinnon, D.
'Madness' in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003.

Collingwood, R.G. *The idea of history*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993.

Conolly, J. *Treatment of the insane without mechanical restraints*, 1847, Dawsons of Pall Mall, London, 1968.

The construction and government of lunatic asylums and hospitals for the insane: with plans, Churchill, London, 1847.

Cook, T.E. *Governing with the news: the news media as a political institution*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998.

Cryle, D. *The press in colonial Queensland: a social and political history, 1845-1875*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1989.

Disreputable profession: journalists and journalism in colonial Australia, Central Queensland University Press, Rockhampton, 1997.

Cummins, C.J. *The administration of lunacy and idiocy in New South Wales,* Department of Public Health, Sydney, 1967.

Deutsch, A. *The mentally ill in America. A history of their care and treatment from colonial times*, 2nd edn, Columbia University Press, New York, 1949.

Digby, A. *Madness, morality and medicine: a study of the York Retreat, 1796-1914*, Cambridge University Press Cambridge, 1985.

Dingwall, R., Rafferty, A.M., Webster, C.
An introduction to the social history of nursing, Routledge, London, 1987.

Dwyer, E. *Homes for the mad. Life inside two nineteenth-century asylums*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1987.

Elton, G.R. *The practice of history*, 2nd edn, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2002.

Evans, R. *A history of Queensland,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007.

Finnane, M. *Wolston Park Hospital 1865-2001 – a retrospect,* publisher not stated, place of publication not stated, date of publication not stated.

Fitzgerald, R. *From the Dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1982.

Fitzgerald, R., Megarrity, L., Symons, D. *Made in Queensland: a new history*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2009.

Fitzpatrick, D. *Oceans of consolation: personal accounts of Irish migration to Australia,* Ithaca, Cornwell University Press, 1994.

Forrest P., Forrest, S. *All for Queensland: the governors and the people,* Shady Tree, Darwin, 2009.

Foucault, M. *Madness and civilization: a history of insanity in the age of reason*, Random House, New York, 1965.

Gaddis, J.L. *The landscape of history: how historians map the past*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002.

Gamwell, L., Tomes, N. *Madness in America: cultural and medical perceptions of mental illness before 1914*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1995.

Garton, S. *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales 1880-1949*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1988.

Geller, J.L., Harris, M. *Women of the asylum*, Anchor, New York, 1994.

Giddens, A. *New rules of sociological method: a positive critique of interpretative sociologies*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1976.

Central problems in social theory: action, structure, and contradiction in social analysis, vol. 241, University of California Press, California, 1979.

The constitution of society, Polity, Cambridge, 1984.

Goffman, E. *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, England, 1961.

Stigma: notes on a spoiled identity, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963.

Gregory, H. *A tradition of care. A history of nursing at the Royal Brisbane Hospital*, Boolarong Publications, Bowen Hills, 1988.

Grob, G. *Mental illness and American society*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1983.

Hughes, R. *The fatal shore*, Pan, London, 1987.

Hunt, A. *Governing morals: a social history of moral regulation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

Hunter, R. McAlpine, I. *Three hundred years of psychiatry*, Oxford University Press, London, 1963.

Johnson, W.R. *A documentary history of Queensland from reminiscences, diaries, parliamentary papers, newspapers, letters and photographs*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1988.

The call of the land. A history of Queensland to the present day, Jacaranda Press, Milton, 1982.

Jones, C.A. *Expert witnesses: science, medicine, and the practice of law*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1994.

Jones, K. *A history of the mental health services*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1972.

Kennedy, E.B. *Four years in Queensland*, Edward Stanford, London, 1870.

Kirkby, D. *Barmaids: a history of women's work in pubs*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Lewis, M. *A rum state: alcohol and state policy in Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992.

Managing madness. Psychiatry and society in Australia 1788-1980, Australian Governmnent Printing Service, Canberra, 1988

Manning, N. *The causation and prevention of insanity,* Thomas Richards Government Printer, Sydney, 1880.

Marwick, M. *The new nature of history: knowledge, evidence, language*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001.

Martyr, P.J. *Paradise of quacks: an alternative history of medicine in Australia*, Macleay Press, Paddington, 2002.

Mercier, C.A. *Lunatic asylums, their organisation and management*, C. Griffin, London, 1894.

Monk, L-A *Attending madness: at work in the Australian colonial asylum*, vol. 84, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2008.

Moran, J. *Committed to the state Asylum: madness and society in nineteenth century Ontario and Quebec,* McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 2000.

Nolan, P. *A history of mental health nursing*, Stanley Thornes, Cheltenham, 1993.

Patrick, R. *A history of health and medicine in Queensland 1824-1960*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1987.

Paul, H.W. *Bacchic medicine: wine and alcohol therapies from Napoleon to the French paradox*, vol. 64, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2001.

Piddock, S. *A space of their own. The archaeology of nineteenth century lunatic asylums in Britain, South Australia, and Tasmania*, Springer, New York, 2007.

Pleasants, N. *Wittgenstein and the idea of a critical social theory: a critique of Giddens, Habermas and Bhaskar*, Routledge Press, London, 2002.

Proschaska, F. *Christianity and social service in modern Britain: the disinherited spirit*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006.

Ross, W. *The fell tyrant or the suffering convict*, J. Ward, London, 1836.

Rothman, D. *The discovery of the asylum: social order and disorder in the new republic,* Little Brown, Boston, 1971.

Scull, A. *Museums of madness: the social organization of insanity in nineteenth-century England*, Allen Lane, London, 1979.

Madhouses, mad-doctors, and madmen: the social history of psychiatry in the Victorian era, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1981.

Social order/mental disorder: Anglo-American psychiatry in historical perspective, University of California Press, Berkely, 1989.

The asylum as utopia: W.A.F. Browne and the mid-nineteenth century consolidation of psychiatry, Tavistock/Routledge, London, 1991.

The most solitary of afflictions: madness and society in Britain, 1700-1900, Yale University Press, London, 2005

Scull, A., Mackenzie, C. & Hervey, N. *Masters of Bedlam: the transformation of the mad-doctoring trade*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1996.

Showalter, E. *The female malady: women, madness and English culture 1830-1980*, Penguin, New York, 1985.

Smith, L.D. *Cure, comfort and safe custody: public lunatic asylums in early nineteenth century England,* Leicester University Press, London, 1999.

Sturma, M. *Vice in a vicious society: crime and convicts in mid-nineteenth-century New South Wales*, University of Queensland Press, 1983.

Tomes, N *A generous confidence: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the art of asylum keeping, 1840-1883,* Cambridge University Press, New York, 1984.

Tosh, J. *The pursuit of history*, 5th edn, Pearson Education, London, 2010.

Tyrer. J.H. *History of the Brisbane Hospital and its affiliates: a pilgrim's progress*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1993.

Waters, M. *Modern sociological theory*, Sage, London, 1994.

Webby, E. *Colonial voices: letters, diaries, journalism and other accounts of nineteenth-century Australia*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1989.

Weller, P. *Royal commissions and the making of public policy*, Macmillan Education, Melbourne, 1994.

Windschuttle, E. *Women, class and history. Feminist perspectives on Australia 1788-1978*, Fontana, Melbourne, 1980.

Zinn, H. *The politics of history,* 2nd edn, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1990.

Pughs Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar for 1865, Brisbane, Theophilus P. Pugh General Printing Press, Brisbane, 1864.

Pughs Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar for 1865, Brisbane, Theophilus P. Pugh General Printing Press, Brisbane, 1865.

Pughs Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar for 1866, Brisbane, Theophilus P. Pugh General Printing Press, Brisbane, 1866.

Pughs Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar for 1867, Brisbane, Theophilus P. Pugh General Printing Press, Brisbane, 1867.

Pugh's Queensland Almanac, Law Calendar, Directory and Coast Guide for 1868, Theophilus P. Pugh, Brisbane, 1868.

Pugh's Queensland Almanac, Law Calendar, Directory and Coast Guide for 1869, Theophilus P. Pugh, Brisbane, 1869.

Journal articles and book chapters

Anderson, T.B., Moore, R.G.
'Meaning and the built environment. A symbolic analysis of a 19th-century urban site', in *The recovery of meaning*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, 1988, pp. 379-406.

Angela, C. 'Method and theory in the practice of nursing history', *International History of Nursing Journal*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1996, pp. 5-32.

Attard, B. 'Bridgeheads, 'Colonial Places' and the Queensland financial crisis of 1866', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 11-36.

Bradshaw, J. Madsen, W.
'Gender and domesticity in Woogaroo Asylum 1865-1869, in B. Knight, B. Walker-Gibbs & J. Delamoir (eds), *Research into 21st century communities,* Post Pressed, Teneriffe, 2007, pp. 33-46.

Brunton, W. 'The place of public inquiries in shaping New Zealand's national mental health policy 1858–1996', *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2005, pp. 2-24.

Coleborne, C. 'Legitimising lunacy and the female lunatic body in nineteenth-century Victoria', in D. Kirby (ed), *Sex, power and justice: historical perspectives on law in Australia,* Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995, pp. 86-98.

'The creation of the colonial asylum', in D. Kirby & C Coleborne (eds), *Law, history, colonialism. The reach of empire*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2001, p. 106-122.

'Space, power and gender in the asylum in Victoria, 1850s-1870s', in C. Coleborne, & D. Mackinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum,* University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003, pp. 47-60.

'Passage to the asylum; the role of the police in committals of the insane in Victoria, Australia, 1848-1900', in R Porter & D Wright (eds), *The confinement of the insane: international perspectives. 1800-1965*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 129-148

'Regulating 'mobility' and masculinity through institutions in colonial Victoria, 1870s-1890s', *Law Text Culture*, vol. 15, 2011, pp. 45-71.

'Insanity, gender and empire: women living a 'loose kind of life' on the colonial institutional margins, 1870-1910', *Health and History*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2012, pp. 77-99.

Coleborne, C. Mackinnon, D.
'Psychiatry and its institutions in Australia and New Zealand: an overview', *International Review of Psychiatry,* vol. 18, no. 4, 2006, pp. 371-380.

Cushing, A. 'Convicts and care giving in colonial Australia, 1788–1868', in A.M. Rafferty & R. Elkan (eds), *Nursing history and the politics of welfare*, Routledge, London, 1997, pp. 108-132.

D'Antonio, P. 'Staff needs and patient care: seclusion and restraint in a nineteenth-century insane asylum', *Transactions and Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1991, pp. 411-423.

'The legacy of domesticity: nursing in early nineteenth century America', *Nursing History Review*, vol. 1, 1993, pp. 229-246.

Digby, A. 'Changes in the asylum: the case of York, 1777-1815', *The Economic History Review,* vol. 36, no. 2, 1983, pp. 218-239.

Duman, D. 'The creation and diffusion of a professional ideology in nineteenth century England', *Sociological Review*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1979, pp. 113-138.

Evans, R. 'The hidden colonists: deviance and social control in colonial Queensland' in J. Roe (ed), *Social policy in Australia. Some perspectives 1901-1976*, Cassell, Sydney, 1976, pp. 74-100.

Finnane, M. 'The ruly and the unruly. Isolation and inclusion in the management of the insane', in C. Strange & A. Bashford (eds), *Isolation. Places and practices of exclusion*, Routledge, London, 2003, pp. 89-103.

Fletcher, B. 'Australia's convict origins', *History Today*, vol. 42, no. 10, 1992, pp. 39-43.

Fox, C. 'Exploring 'Amentia' in the Tasmanian convict system, 1824-1890', *Tasmanian Historical Studies*, vol. 13, 2008, pp. 127-152.

Garton, S. 'Asylum histories: reconsidering Australia's lunatic past', in C. Coleborne & D. MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia, histories heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003, pp. 11-22.

"Once a drunkard always a drunkard': social Reform and the problem of 'habitual drunkenness' in Australia, 1880-1914', *Labour History*, vol. 53, 1987, pp. 38-53.

Gray, K. & Wegner, D.M. 'Moral typecasting: divergent perceptions of moral agents and moral patients', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 96, no. 3, 2009, pp. 505-519.

Grimshaw, P. ‘Women and the family in Australian history’, in E. Windschuttle (ed), *Women, class and history. Feminist perspectives on Australia 1788-1978*, Fontana, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 37-52.

Hamlin, C. 'Scientific method and expert witnessing: Victorian perspectives on a modern problem', *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1986, pp. 485-513.

Howard, L.C. 'Of intemperance, class and gender in colonial Queensland. A working-class woman's account of alcohol abuse', *History Australia*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2011, pp. 139-157.

Howe, R., Swain, S. 'Fertile grounds for divorce: sexuality and reproductive imperatives', in K. Saunders & R. Evans (eds), *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation,* Harcourt Brace Jovanich Group, pp. 158-171.

Hudson-Rodd, N., Farrell, G.
'The Round House Gaol: Western Australia's first lunatic asylum', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, vol. 7, no. 4, 1998, pp. 152-162

Huggins, M.J. 'More sinful pleasures? Leisure, respectability and the male middle classes in Victorian England', *Journal of Social History*, no. 3, 2000, pp. 585-600.

Kellett, J. 'Bread or blood, 1865', in R. Evans & C. Ferrier (eds), *Radical Brisbane. An unruly history*, The Vulger Press, Carlton North, 2004, pp. 41-50.

King, A. 'The odd couple: Margaret Archer, Anthony Giddens and British social theory', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 61, 2010, pp. 253-260.

Lake, M. 'Historical reconsiderations 1V: the politics of respectability; identifying the masculinist context'. *Historical Studies,* vol. 22, no. 86, 1986, pp. 116-131.

Lewenson, S.B., McAllister, A.
'Learning the historical method: step by step', in M. De Chesnay (ed), *Nursing research using historical methods,* Springer Publishing, New York, 2015, pp. 1-21.

Lovell, S. "A fine healthy place.' The role of local newspapers in civilizing the Queensland bush', *Media History*, September, 2014, pp. 1-12

Lusk, B. 'Historical methodology for nursing research', *Image Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1997, p. 355-359.

Macklin, C.T. 'Sunstroke, or Coup do Soleil: its causes, consequences and pathology', *Australian Medical Journal*, January, 1856, pp. 5-13.

Moore, C. 'Colonial manhood and masculinities', *Journal of Australian Studies,* vol. 56, pp. 35-50.

Monk, L-A. 'Gender, space and work: the asylum as gendered workplace in Victoria', in C. Coleborne & D. MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003 pp. 61-72.

'Working in the asylum: attendants to the insane', *Health and History*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2009, pp. 83-101.

Odden, K.M. "Able and intelligent medical men meeting together': the Victorian railway crash, medical jurisprudence, and the rise of medical authority', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2003, pp. 33-55.

Piddock, S. 'The 'Ideal Asylum'', in C. Coleborne & D. MacKinnon (eds), *'Madness' in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2003, pp. 37-48.

'To each a space: class, classification, and gender in colonial South Australian institutions', *Historical Archaeology*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2011, pp. 89-105.

Piper, A. 'Great expectations: efforts to entice women to Queensland from 1860 to 1900', *Queensland History Journal*, vol. 20, no. 8, 2008, pp. 370-390.

Porter, R. 'Introduction' in R. Porter & D. Wright (eds), *The confinement of the insane. International perspectives, 1800-1965,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 1-19.

Prest, A.R. 'Royal commission reporting', in M. Bulmer (ed), *Social research and royal commissions*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1980, pp. 178-205.

Radcliffe, E. 'Revolutionary writing, moral philosophy, and universal benevolence in the eighteenth century', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 54, no. 2, 1993, pp. 221-240.

Ruonavaara, H. 'Moral regulation: a reformulation', *Sociological Theory*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1997, pp. 277-293.

Sarnecky, M.T. 'Historiography: a legitimate research methodology for nursing', *Advances in Nursing Science,* July, 1990, pp. 1-10.

Scull, A. 'The domestication of madness', *Medical History*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1983, pp. 233-248.

Shea, P. 'One hundred years ago in New South Wales', *Australasian Psychiatry*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2001, pp. 29-34.

‘A generous confidence (book review)’, *Journal of Social History,* vol. 19, no. 3, 1986, pp. 521-522.

Shepherd, A., Wright, D.
'Madness, suicide and the Victorian asylum: attempted self-murder in the age of non-restraint', *Medical History*, vol. 46, 2002, pp. 175-196.

Showalter, E. 'Victorian women and insanity', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1980, pp. 157-181.

Spearrit, K. 'The market for marriage in colonial Queensland', *Hecate*, vol. 16, no. 1/2, 1990, pp. 23-42.

Spicer, B. Smith, D. I., Conroy, E. Flatau, P. R. & Burns, L.
‘Mental illness and housing outcomes among a sample of homeless men in an Australian urban centre’, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry,* vol. 49, no. 5, 2015, pp. 471-480.

Virtue, R. 'Lunacy and social reform in Western Australia', *Studies in Western Australian History*, vol. 1, 1977, pp. 29-65.

Walk, A. 'Some aspects of the “Moral Treatment” of the insane up to 1854', *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 100, no. 421, 1954, pp. 807-837.

Webby, E. 'Reading in Colonial Australia: the 2011 John Alexander Ferguson Memorial Lecture', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 97, no. 2, 2011, pp. 119-135.

Whiteford, H., Harris, M. & Diminic, S.
‘Mental health service system improvement: translating evidence into policy’, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry,* vol. 47, no. 8, 2013, pp. 703-706.

Woods, A. From practical men to scientific experts: British veterinary surgeons and the development of government scientific expertise, 1878-1919', *History of Science*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2013, pp. 457-480.

Wright, D. 'Getting out of the asylum: understanding the confinement of the insane in the nineteenth century', *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1997, pp. 137-155.

Theses

Arieno, M.A. Victorian lunatics: a social epidemiology of mental illness in mid-nineteenth century England, Doctor of Philosophy in History thesis, The University of New Mexico, 1984.

D'Antonio, P.O.B. Negotiated care: a case study of the Friends Asylum, 1800-1850, PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1992.

Day, C. Magnificence, misery and madness: a history of the Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1995.

Evans, R. Charitable institutions of the Queensland Government to 1919, Master of Arts thesis, University of Queensland, 1969.

Hardy, A.V "...here is an Asylum open..." Constructing a culture of government care in Australia 1801-2014, Doctor of Philosophy thesis, University of Newcastle, 2014.

Lane, K.C. Benevolent self–interest: a factor in social policy governing lunatics, 1808-1862 (England), Master of Arts thesis, San Jose State University, 2000.

Published on-line

Barst, J.M. 'The Molesworth Report into the Dissolution of Convict Transportation to Australia, August 1838', *Britain Representation and Nineteenth Century History,* Extension of Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net, accessed 11 October 2015, http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=julie-m-barst-the-molesworth-report-and-the-dissolution-of-convict-transportation-to-australia-august-1838

Browne, R.S. *The doctors or medical practitioners of early Brisbane*, accessed 13 July 2015, http://www.brisbanehistory.com/brisbane_doctors.html

Douglas, G. 'Cannan, Kearsey (1815–1894)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed 13 July 2015, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cannan-kearsey-3160/text4723

'Challinor, Henry (1814–1882)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed 8 December 2014, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/challinor-henry-3185/text4777

O'Donoghue, K. 'Ballow, David Keith (1804–1850)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed 13 July 2015, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ballow-david-keith-1735/text1913

Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage
'South east Queensland 2001. Cultural heritage places study stage 1: volume 1 - overview', accessed 10 January 2016, https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:243545/SEQ2001_Cultural_Heritage_Places_Study.pdf

Queensland Heritage Register
'Wolston Park Hospital Complex', 2006, accessed 3 September 2015, https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600340#

Queensland Government Heritage Register, accessed 10 January 2016, http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/data-sets/heritage-register.xml

Titellius, R. ‘Mentally ill patients discharged from hospital, dumped in backpacker hostels’, *Perth Now,* 17 January 2016, accessed 21 January 2016, http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/western-australia/mentally-ill-patients-discharged-from-hospital-dumped-in-backpacker-hostels/news-story/ecdcb0ad9dcb575bbecf1baad1378501

Tuke, S. *Description of The Retreat, an institution near York, for Insane Persons of the Society of Friends*, 1813, Google Books, accessed 31 October 2015, https://books.google.com.au/books?id=SwEIAAAAQAAJ&dq=Tuke+Description+of+the+retreat&lr=&source=gbs_navlinks_s

Wilson, P. 'Macalister, Arthur (1818–1883)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed 5 August 2015, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macalister-arthur-4055/text6455, published first in hardcopy 1974, accessed online 5 August 2015.

Winston, M. ‘Moral patients’ An ethics of global responsibility, viewed 9 January 2016, http://ethicsofglobalresponsibility.blogspot.com.au/2008/02/moral-patients.html

Indigenous place names’, accessed 10 January 2016, Jahttp://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/8690/indigenous_place_names.pdf

‘Newspaper and magazine titles’, Trove Digitalized Newspapers and More, accessed 17 November, 2014, http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/titles?state=Queensland,

‘Palmer, Sir Arthur Hunter, Member Biography’, Queensland Parliament, accessed 15 April 2013, https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/members/former/bio?id=1872729953.

‘Remembering Goodna: Stories from a Queensland mental hospital’, Museum of Brisbane. Exhibition 23 March 2008. Sponsored by Griffith University, Brisbane City Council and Queensland Government, accessed 13 January 2016, https://www.museumofbrisbane.com.au/whats-on/remembering-goodna/

‘The Architect’, Queensland Parliament, accessed July 4 2015, https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/explore/history/parliament-house/the-architect viewed.

‘Trove’, National Library of Australia, http://trove.nla.gov.au.

‘Wacol mental asylum Brisbane Queensland’, accessed 11 January 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2oiUaGkdl4

Wolston Park site history: overview’, Wolston Park Centenary Cricket Club, accessed 11 January 2016, http://www.wpccc.com.au/index.php/history/6-wolston-park-site-history-overview