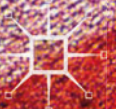


Mental Health in Historical Perspective

Investigating the Body in the Victorian Asylum

Doctors, Patients,
and Practices

Jennifer Wallis



Mental Health in Historical Perspective

Series Editors

Catharine Coleborne

School of Humanities and Social Science

University of Newcastle

Callaghan, Australia

Matthew Smith

History of Psychiatry

University of Strathclyde

Glasgow, United Kingdom

Covering all historical periods and geographical contexts, the series explores how mental illness has been understood, experienced, diagnosed, treated and contested. It will publish works that engage actively with contemporary debates related to mental health and, as such, will be of interest not only to historians, but also mental health professionals, patients and policy makers. With its focus on mental health, rather than just psychiatry, the series will endeavour to provide more patient-centred histories. Although this has long been an aim of health historians, it has not been realised, and this series aims to change that.

The scope of the series is kept as broad as possible to attract good quality proposals about all aspects of the history of mental health from all periods. The series emphasises interdisciplinary approaches to the field of study, and encourages short titles, longer works, collections, and titles which stretch the boundaries of academic publishing in new ways.

More information about this series at
<http://www.springer.com/series/14806>

Jennifer Wallis

Investigating the Body in the Victorian Asylum

Doctors, Patients, and Practices

palgrave
macmillan

Jennifer Wallis
School of History
Queen Mary University of London
London, UK



Mental Health in Historical Perspective
ISBN 978-3-319-56713-6 ISBN 978-3-319-56714-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-56714-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017937735

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2017. This book is an open access publication. **Open Access** This book is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this book are included in the book's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the book's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover image: © blickwinkel/Alamy Stock Photo; all rights reserved, used with permission

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

For Clive

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Looking back over the course of this research, I find myself indebted to many people for their advice and expertise. First and foremost, this work would never have been possible without the support of the Wellcome Trust, which funded my Ph.D. (grant number 092991/Z/10/Z) and provided a wealth of development opportunities, outreach activities, and wonderful library space throughout my research. My Ph.D. supervisor, Rhodri Hayward, has been an inspiring and constructive reader of my work, and rightly persuaded me to take my thesis in a very different direction than the one I had initially planned. My thesis examiners, L. Stephen Jacyna and Hilary Marland, offered helpful critiques and further suggestions for transforming my Ph.D. research into a book, as well as making my viva an enjoyable and particularly painless experience.

The staff and early career researchers of the Centre for the History of the Emotions at Queen Mary University of London have been a constant source of inspiration, whether giving seminar feedback, reading draft chapters, or sharing their ideas over coffee. I am especially grateful to Katherine Angel, Sarah Chaney, Sarah Crook, Thomas Dixon, Åsa Jansson, Chris Millard, Rebecca O’Neal, and Ed Ramsden. Beyond Queen Mary, Emily Andrews, Jonathan Andrews, Mike Finn, Sally Frampton, Anne Hanley, James Lees, Len Smith, and Rebecca Wynter have been generous with their time, reading and commenting on seminar papers and indeed the contents of this book. Particular thanks are due to Tom Quick for his perceptive comments on several chapters and suggestions for further reading.

As many sections of this book will attest, a fair proportion of my research time was spent in the Wakefield office of the West Yorkshire Archive Service, thumbing through grubby volumes of postmortem records and heavy casebooks. The staff at Wakefield were wonderful, fetching countless volumes from their stores for me and answering a number of queries. I am especially grateful to them—and David Morris in particular—for allowing me to reproduce so many of the images from their holdings that have informed my research and, indeed, that are crucial to it. The financial support of the British Society for the History of Science was also an invaluable aid in funding my final stint of archival research in order to complete the book.

Some of the material in this book has appeared elsewhere in slightly different forms. Elements of “The Bones of the Insane,” published in *History of Psychiatry* in 2013, are reproduced here under the terms of that article’s CC-BY licence. The book also contains some material discussed in “‘Atrophied’, ‘Engorged’, ‘Debauched’: Degenerative Processes and Moral Worth in the General Paralytic Body,” in Thomas Knowles and Serena Trowbridge’s edited volume, *Insanity and the Lunatic Asylum in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015) and I am grateful to the publishers for granting permission to draw upon this.

Outside academia, many people have shown an enthusiasm for this research that has made it all the more satisfying to complete. My parents, Mike and Sarah Wallis, provided board and lodging during my frequent archive visits, as well as giving me the benefit of their scientific expertise in identifying photomicrographs. David Kerekes has put up with an inordinate amount of unsolicited detail about nineteenth-century postmortem practice and other gems of medical history, and has remained a supportive and unfailingly generous friend when he could very well have taken leave of me. Last, but by no means least, Clive Henry—who came into my life partway through the writing of this book—has been a constantly supportive voice, and this book is dedicated to him.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

Throughout this book much of the terminology used is that used by contemporaries. Therefore, I generally refer to ‘mental disease’ rather than ‘mental illness,’ a term that reflects contemporary ideas of mental disorder as something connected with the body. ‘Asylum doctors’ is a phrase that appears frequently and is a useful shorthand for referring to staff working in an asylum in a medical role. This encompasses medical officers and superintendents, for example, but does not include attendants and nurses, or staff such as clerks and chaplains. Many staff in the former group would have undertaken varied work—both in laboratories and on the wards—and found themselves changing roles relatively frequently, so that labelling them as ‘junior medical officer’ or ‘pathologist’ is liable to become confusing, as well as potentially obscuring the wide range of work that these individuals undertook. Where relevant, however, I have made specific roles clear to avoid the reader having to look up the background of each individual mentioned.

When ‘Asylum’ (capitalised) appears it refers specifically to the West Riding Asylum in Yorkshire. The lower case ‘asylum’ refers to nineteenth-century asylums more generally. Similarly, named doctors are designated with the capitalised ‘Medical Officer,’ ‘Superintendent,’ or ‘Pathologist’; the lower case signifies that I am discussing these occupational groups in a more general sense.

For reasons that I explain more fully in Chapter “[Skin](#)”, but primarily for reasons of anonymity, I refer to patients by their real first name and

surname initial. Asylum doctors and other medical professionals are not anonymised, on the basis that most if not all of those discussed published work under their own names, and thus willingly made their work public.