INSANITY, RHETORIC, AND WOMEN:

NINETEENTH-CENTURY WOMEN'S ASYLUM NARRATIVES

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INSANITY, RHETORIC, AND WOMEN:

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ABSTRACT

Among reform movements in nineteenth-century America was insane asylum reform and women played a role in this. Some women within the walls of asylums living as patients turned to the pen as a means of informing the public about confinement laws and the treatment of inmates. Throughout the nineteenth century more than a dozen women published their asylum stories in print for others to see. Most often women writing these asylum narratives protested their confinement, asserted their sanity, and depicted abuse.

Three women writing about asylum life in the mid-late nineteenth century turned to multiple genres in their texts. While each text is distinctly different from the others, all three authors were rhetorically savvy using every means available for sharing their experience and that of other inmates. Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard, Lemira Clarissa Pennell, and Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop all offer their readers insight into how women perceived their lives behind insane asylum walls. Packard used her writing as a foundation in campaigning state legislatures for changes in confinement laws, especially as they applied to women. Her reliance on the language of True Womanhood is evident and powerful as she turns to acceptable genres for women in the mid-nineteenth century. Pennell turned to the popular nineteenth-century genre of the scrapbook piecing together her experience as a sanitary

reformer, a mother, and a woman living in a changing nation. Lathrop's narrative reflects the ideals of the independent New Woman at the turn of the century. Her use of more than one genre highlights ways in which women of the late nineteenth century had more access and agency than those locked in the image of the True Woman. Women writing multi-genre asylum narratives appear in the nineteenth century in unique ways and continue into the twenty-first century.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, have examined a dissertation titled "Insanity, Rhetoric and Women: Nineteenth-Century Women's Asylum Narratives" presented by Madaline Reeder Walter, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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DEDICATION

For Bug and Katie T.

Your unconditional love and courage

kept me going.

INTRODUCTION
INSANITY, RHETORIC, AND GENRE: NINETEENTH-CENTURY WOMEN'S ASYLUM NARRATIVES

In 1873 Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard published her account of life inside the Jacksonville, Illinois state insane asylum revealing mistreatment of women under confinement laws as well as asylum abuses. Packard's *Modern Persecution* was one of the first asylum narratives published in the United States. Packard sought to personally change state laws across the United States expanding women's rights, altering confinement laws, and limiting the power of asylum superintendents. Additionally, she strongly believed that even those who were labeled insane must be treated with respect. She declared, "Now the insane have the same inalienable right to be treated with reason, justice, and humanity as the sane; therefore, the insane ought to have the same protection of law, when needed, in defense of their inalienable rights."[1] For Packard, moving from abuse to care meant completely overhauling the asylum system. This is what she set out to do with her book.

Other women would follow in her footsteps telling their stories of life inside nineteenth-century insane asylums as part of an effort to not only share their side of the story but also to affect change. Packard set up her text as a multi-genre autobiographical account as did Lemira Clarissa Pennell in 1883 and Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop in 1890. These women incorporated the genres of narrative, newspapers, letters, images, and more into their memoirs. These texts tell of women's lives in the nineteenth century, insane asylum practices, and rhetorical devices artfully deployed for claiming sanity and protesting confinement. Why did these women choose multi-genre approaches to telling

[1] Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard, *Modern Persecution or Insane Asylums Unveiled* (New York, 1873) 401.

their stories? How did these work in guiding the purpose of the narratives? How do multiple genres play a role in the women's portrayals of themselves as True Women, New Women, or something in between? How do changes in women's lives from True Womanhood into the idea of the New Woman affect the rhetoric of these women? How do these narratives fit into a greater understanding of women's composition, asylum narratives, and the larger narrative of women's history in the nineteenth century?

This dissertation is a history of how three women used multi-genre autobiographical accounts for exposing asylum life in nineteenth-century America. It is also a rhetorical analysis of women's writing constrained by gender and labels of insanity. Simultaneously working as agents of empowerment these women spoke their truths often describing abuse and mistreatment in insane asylums. Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop were not alone in writing such accounts of asylum life. Beginning as early as 1840 and continuing to the present, women in the United States have risked their reputations as well as a return to the asylum in order to tell their stories about life inside those walls. With little legal recourse for wrongful confinement, these accounts often served as works of restoration—restoring a woman's image of sanity through explaining the circumstances of her confinement and subsequent treatment, or lack thereof. Among these are *Two Years and Three Months in the New York Lunatic Asylum at Utica* (1855) by Phebe B. Davis, Jane Hillyer's *Reluctantly Told* (1926), Margaret McGarr's *And lo, the Star* (1953), Kate Millet's *The Loony Bin Trip* (1990), and Emilie Autumn's *The Asylum for Wayward Victorian Girls* (2009). Packard's *Modern Persecution*, Pennell's *The Memorial Scrap Book*, and Lathrop's *A Secret Institution* stand apart from others in their rhetorical use of multiple genres. Looking at how and why they utilized multiple

genres offers insight into women's rhetoric, women's history, and patient perspectives in asylum history.

In general, women's history shies away from including women and madness. I argue that studying women in asylums complicates women's history in ways that must be addressed. Claiming space for women in asylums in history means accepting voices that have been labeled suspect. At the same time, even those who are labeled mad, falsely or accurately, deserve a place in the history of women and psychiatry. These voices cannot be left out of the larger narrative. An uphill battle for women's lives and misconceptions about hysteria, reproductive organs, and weak minds was fought and seems, at times, to be winning—there is more to be done on this as debates on these topics continue today. Women who lived in asylums should occupy a space alongside other marginalized groups adding another dimension to the social history of the United States. Many of these nineteenth-century women writing autobiographical accounts of asylum life protested treatment. They fought the patriarchal institution of asylums. Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop were reformers in their own ways. They did not protest outside of the gates, but from within. What these women did is what women's studies' scholars most often champion; yet because of the complications of including this area of study women's madness narratives have been exempted. I seek to return this important aspect of women's history and women's composition to its rightful place alongside the writings of Margaret Fuller, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Jane Adams, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others who hold prominent positions in nineteenth-century women's studies.

Additionally, I see how the progression of these narratives parallels movements in women's history spanning across the nineteenth century. Packard exemplifies the image

of the true woman grounded in motherhood and piety. She uses multiple genres as a means of seeking a large audience as well as establishing her ethos as the proper middle-class woman of the mid-nineteenth century. Pennell's work holds onto the ideal of motherhood in her narrative. At the same time she included sections of her sanitary reform publication and multiple references to her reform work, including newspaper articles, in her narrative depicting herself as a reformer more than anything else. She was moving away from the true womanhood image while holding onto to some of its conventions. Lastly, Lathrop as a single woman, trained as a teacher, used her multiple genres in conveying facts to her reader. She did not rely on the traditions of the true woman, but on the modern ideals of the new woman. Through multiple genre narratives, these women traced a larger picture of women's history. Their work also provides insight into psychiatric history from the patient viewpoint.

Scholars such as Elaine Showalter in *The Female Malady* (1987), Gerald Grob in his many studies of American insane asylums, and Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilization* (1988) have seen the institutionalization of those labeled insane or diagnosed mentally ill as a social issue. All three women in this dissertation describe their confinement as a social problem. My work on these female reformers thus enters these historical conversations by including patient perspectives on labeling the insane and institutionalization in nineteenth-century America. More specifically it discusses how women defined societal control in diverging contexts. Packard was a married woman holding religious beliefs conflicting with those of her husband. Pennell argued that her confinement resulted from her reform activity as a layperson. Lastly, Lathrop described her institutionalization as a means for her family and doctors to control her behavior in

general. All three of these women also addressed the treatment of some of the other women in the asylums in terms of social control due to gender, unpopular beliefs, or refusal to accept the insanity label. Much work has been done in the field of history relying on asylum records, doctors' writing, and even second-hand accounts of asylum life. This study, however, includes views of female patients rarely heard from in the nineteenth-century.

I also look at the historical value of these narratives, and I turn to a rhetorical analysis of how these women wrote their histories. My dissertation directly engages in the ongoing discussion of how and why women in the nineteenth century constructed their world through language. Carol Mattingly's *Well-Tempered Women* (1998), Shirley Wilson Logan's *We Are Coming* (1999), and numerous others have illustrated the value in this kind of work and the importance of rediscovering women's writing. Mattingly notes that her work on the Women's Christian Temperance Union revealed the illusion of a binary between conservative and liberal (radical) female reformers in the nineteenth century.[2] Such a binary, however, still exists when looking in both historical and present day contexts between those labeled mad and those believed sane. I assert that asylum narratives like those of Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop work at tearing down this dichotomy complicating strict definitions of what was "proper" behavior for a woman in the 1800s.

Susan J. Hubert's *Questions of Power* (2002) and Mary Elene Wood's *Writing on the Wall* (1994) precede me in offering insight into the narratives of Packard and Lathrop. Both authors recognize how these women and others in asylums were marginalized and

[2] Carol Mattingly, *Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1998) 2.

found agency in writing. Hubert's focus is on the women's lives while Wood looks at how "permeable" asylum walls may be in light of such women's narratives.[3] My dissertation, however, is an interdisciplinary text seeking a fuller understanding of the writings of Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop situated within a historical context, turning to multi-genre rhetorical strategies, and how writing empowered these women.

Researching women's writing in archives is both fascinating and frustrating. My initial archival work led me to a number of asylum narratives written over the span of more than one hundred-fifty years. Of these narratives some were not accessible due to financial and time constraints. Looking at the ones that I was able to read in their original format a pattern emerged. There were a handful of women who turned to multiple genres for constructing their narratives. In the United States, this practice seems to begin with Packard's work and continues into the twenty-first century. It is possible that there are works preceding Packard's use of such a rhetorical strategy; however, I did not come across these in my research.

My methodology is interdisciplinary using theories of rhetoric, social history, and women's studies. Combining a strong analysis of how these women used language and for what purposes enriches the meaning of each text. At the same time, knowing the context in which they wrote is essential for an honest interpretation of these narratives. It is crucial there are no anachronistic interpretations of these women's writing. Such a move on my part would push away from a deeper "truth" and create false notions of how these women constructed their experiences. Turning to the importance of how women's writing like these multi-genre texts provided agency to women stresses the value of

[3] Susan J. Hubert, *Questions of Power: The Politics of Women's Madness Narratives* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2002). Mary Elene Wood, The *Writing on the Wall: Women's Autobiography and the Asylum* (Urbana: U of Indiana P, 1994).

studying their work. It is through such studies that scholars may come to see how diverse women in the nineteenth-century constructed themselves and the world around them. Through writing these pieces Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop took back their stories from the patriarchal institutions of nineteenth-century American asylums.

Nineteenth-century America saw great change, and quickly. Among the changes of the 1800s was the growth of the insane asylum. In the early 1800s men made up the majority of patients in asylums, and most asylums were small corporate institutions efficiently run and capable of caring for patients. By the middle of the century, women outnumbered men in asylums, more public state asylums existed than private asylums and both were overcrowded—sometimes by the hundreds.[4] Conditions in state asylums ranged from tolerable to deplorable and unsanitary. Women were the majority of inmates for several reasons: middle-class norms were extremely important in defining the sane and insane; women had few rights when it came to confinement laws; women were rarely allowed to testify in court; and women's reproductive organs were seen as a cause of insanity. As conditions in asylums worsened over the nineteenth century, reform movements arose in both America and the United Kingdom. Reformers visited asylums and were appalled by what they found. Patients were locked up in small rooms, some chained to beds or walls; they endured poor nutrition, unsanitary conditions, and abuse from the staff. Thanks to the work of reformers, like Packard, commissions on lunacy were created in many states to investigate asylum conditions and treatments. In some

[4] Population changes in the nineteenth-century from a majority of male patients in asylums to a majority of female inmates is documented in Chapter Two of Elaine Showalter's *The Female Malady*. In *Mental Institutions in America* Chapter Two Gerald Grob offers a detailed look at the charitable attitudes of the early nineteenth century that spawned the small corporate institution and the outgrowth of the public asylum when private ones proved inadequate. He also illustrates the overcrowding of public hospitals with the inclusion of one of asylum reformer Dorothea Dix's reports to Congress in 1848 that stated for 22,000 mentally ill patients in the United States there were less than 3,700 spaces (116).

cases improvements were made, more funding granted, additional asylums built to help with the overcrowding, treatment became more humane, and/or laws might be changed. In other cases nothing was done. Reformer Dorothea Dix worked tirelessly in asylum reform and was successful in seeing more asylums constructed during her lifetime; however, despite her ongoing reports of overcrowding in insane asylums, many remained full beyond capacity. Reformers continued throughout the nineteenth century to fight against poor conditions and abuses in asylums.

While much work has been done on women's reform movements in the nineteenth century, little about the women in asylums, including their efforts at reform, has been explored. Turning to the words of those labeled mad opens one to criticism regarding the reliability of the source. If, in fact, this woman's mind is in question, her story becomes somehow suspect. Whether the author is sane or insane is difficult to ascertain. I contend that this is irrelevant to a historical and rhetorical analysis; however, it is a trap into which one may easily fall. I see this as a reason such work has been overlooked in the past. These authentic women's voices must be restored to the narrative of women's history and women's composition.

Scholars of women's history and women's composition have shown how women's realities in the nineteenth century were vastly different from men's. White men could vote, own property, sign legal contracts, among other civil rights not afforded to white women.[5] Although Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop were all white women; they were married, widowed, and single, of different classes, and living in distinctly different locales. Packard lived in the Midwest and was confined in an Illinois state asylum. She

[5] Men and women of other races—African American, Hispanic, Native American—may have had some of these rights but this is outside the scope of this study.

was well educated and connected with other well-known intellectual figures of her time. Also, Packard came at her text from the standpoint of one with strong religious beliefs. It was, in fact, her religious beliefs that she claimed landed her in the asylum. Her pastor husband disagreed with her views. Pennell did not turn to religious rhetoric in her work. Her confinement, in her words, was a result of her work in sanitary reform. Also, she lived in Maine as a widow, was deemed a pauper, and found herself in a New England asylum. Lathrop was in New York, the heart of nineteenth-century reform movements. She was unmarried and at one time financially responsible for her family. These differences illuminate how despite the varied circumstances of their confinement, geographical locations, and historical positions all three women found agency in writing.

Understanding the multi-genre structure of these narratives illuminates how women in the nineteenth century over a span of decades used this rhetorical structure for creating meaning, purpose, and identity. Packard became the "True Woman" searching for a vast audience. Pennell was the reformer living in a state of flux between traditional and changing women's roles. Finally, Lathrop worked to prove her sanity with multiple genres demonstrating facts for her reader in the vein of the "New Woman." These women's writings trace the composition practices and historical timeline of nineteenth-century American women.

Across time and space Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop turned to multi-genre writing. In order to look at how multiple genres work in each text, one must know something of genre theory. Genre was traditionally studied as a static categorization of literary forms. Scholars of rhetoric and composition have moved genre away from a system of cataloging into a more fluid understanding of the term and how it functions.

Rather than serving as a description of literary styles, genre works as a reciprocal agent. Genre determines what type of text an author writes so that she creates genre through writing a text. As such, a writer creates social action through his/her use of genre as s/he either conforms to a genre or challenges it. If social action comes out of genre, one can see the value in studying these diverse compositions and the way they manipulate genres in distinct ways.

Rhetoric scholars Carolyn Miller, Anis Bawarshi, and Amy Devitt have developed ideas of genre theory and its circular nature leading to social action. Miller has served as a path breaker in genre theory. She argues that genre arises out of similar situations. What a text should accomplish often establishes its genre. She acknowledges that writers know from experience, either from reading or writing, that the form they choose, the genre, is apropos to a situation because it will create a particular reaction in the audience.[6] This reaction may be one of support, sorrow, conviction, outrage, or any number of a range of emotions that lead then to action. Her revitalized look at genre theory has opened up the field to further investigation and provided insight into writings that might be considered far removed from literature, such as eulogies, grocery lists, legal documents, and patient case files. Prior to Miller's work few scholars applied genre theory to non-traditional literary works. Miller's push to include these texts in studying genre directly connects to the forms Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop include in their writing.

Building on Miller's work, Anis Bawarshi offers the notion that genre not only serves as social action, but that it defines social actions. He suggests, "genres do not simply help us define and organize kinds of texts; they also help us define and organize

[6] Carolyn R. Miller ,"Genre as Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 1984, 70:151-167. 152.

kinds of social actions that these texts rhetorically make possible."[7] An example of this may be found in Packard's madness narrative. Her text is organized using specific genres of the conduct manual, the sermon, etc. At the same time these genres are what "make possible" the reform movement that develops in response to her text. It is through the familiar rhetoric of the conduct manual, for example, that Packard motivates middle-class men and women as they are drawn to the language that has traditionally told them how to behave in society. Bawarshi adds, "Genre helps shape and enable our social actions by rhetorically constituting the way we recognize the situations within which we function."[8] Packard seemingly drew on this knowledge of how conduct manuals created social action and she manipulated the form for her own purposes. Packard serves as a strong example for what genre theorists discuss in their work. Her use of varied genres offers a clear example of how genres are constructed for the purpose of creating action.

Pennell's *Memorial Scrap Book* does not offer the easily understood genres of Packard's work. Going back to the idea of genre as circular provides a way of getting into Pennell's mutli-genred narrative. Amy Devitt states, "defining a genre as a kind of text becomes circular, since what we call a kind of text depends on what we think a genre is."[9] Pennell created what she called a scrapbook though it is not an aesthetic text or made from mixed media that one expects from a scrapbook. Her treatment and construction of a scrapbook illustrates her understanding of the social value of scrapbooks in the 1880s. Devitt notes that "contructing [a] genre" also serves as "constructing the situation."[10] Scrapbooks were both personal and public texts pieced

[7] Anis Bawarshi, "The Genre Function." *College English,* Jan 2000, 62: 335-360. 335.
[8] Bawarshi 340.
[9] Amy Devitt, *Writing Genres* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2004) 7.
[10] Devitt 21.

together to tell a story of someone's schooling, career, or life in general. Because they are pieced together from various sources, they are, by nature, multi-genred. Scrapbooks were also familiar and acceptable. Pennell built her text and titled it a scrapbook calling into play the notion that her text was situated in the world of that which others could understand and to which they could relate. She transformed what may have been an alien and controversial subject, insane asylums, and brings it into a safe space through the genre of the scrapbook.

Unlike Pennell, Lathrop seeks to write a seamless narrative; however, her text moves from one genre to the next in what seems to be a less than systematic way. This confirms what Miller, Bawarshi, and Devitt offer as the reciprocal nature of genre; that as a writer constructs genre, genre constructs the writer.[11] Lathrop's use of autobiography, letters, legal interviews, and poetry invites an audience of varied readers into her text. Unlike Packard, there is not the overarching theme of creating social action through asylum reform. Lathrop's seems to be a personal intention. Her use of multiple genres allowed her to offer a way into her story from a plethora of perspectives. Through this she may convince readers that she was wrongfully confined and mistreated—her motive in writing *A Secret Institution*.

How these women portrayed asylum life requires historical context. Chapter one provides an overview of how the insane were treated over time from medieval England up through the mid-nineteenth century in the United States. This begins with the religious view that the mad were possessed. Holding this belief often resulted in exorcisms of those thought to be insane. Early on, men and women devoted to God most often took

[11] Anis Bawarshi, *Genre and the Invention of the Writer: Reconsidering the Place of Invention in Composition* (Logan: Utah State UP, 2003) 17.

care of the insane. Institutions such as hospitals, poorhouses, and asylums built as early as the sixteenth century housed the mad. Insane asylums and mental hospitals took over the care of those believed crazy in the nineteenth century. During this time patients wrote of their experiences in asylums oftentimes declaring their sanity and wrongful confinement. This chapter sets up a context for understanding when and how women were confined. Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop did not write in a vacuum. It is content and context playing together on the page. Understanding the history behind the institutions and treatments that led to these works is essential to see how and why rhetorical strategies of the narratives were put into practice.

Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard's *Modern Persecution, or Insane Asylums Unveiled* serves as the subject of chapter two. In this chapter I provide a rhetorical analysis of Packard's autobiographical account of life within the Jacksonville Insane Asylum in Illinois. This first volume of her two-volume work set the stage for the additional narratives she would publish. *Modern Persecution* told the tale of how Packard came to be confined, her life inside the asylum, her long-awaited release, and the beginnings of her reform work. It is clear in reading this text that she sought every means necessary for engaging her readers and convincing them of the need for legal reform. She turned to sermons and letters, as well as captivity narratives. Her goal of reform motivated her penning of a multi-genre narrative exposing herself and the Jacksonville Asylum to the public. Packard's narrative pushed asylum reform issues into the public forum. Writing in multiple genres could widen her audience as it appealed to a larger forum. Her use of multiple genres also allowed her to depict herself as a True Woman grounded in strong middle-class values of the nineteenth century.

In chapter three I turn to the 1883 account of Lemira Clarissa Pennell in *"Precedents" and Explanations: Memorial Scrap Book A Book of Personalities*. Of the three texts in this study, Pennell's is the least well known. Pennell's narrative, although short, is a literary decoupage of genres. She intertwined newspaper articles, letters from trustees of the asylum, and testimonials from doctors involved in sanitary reform. These forms are not separated from but are fully integrated in her narrative. I analyze how she combined these texts and what strategies she used in order to make her point. Although there were those who protested her confinement, her "bizarre" behavior was unacceptable to doctors and public officials. She was going to be put in the poor house or an asylum. This is extremely dissimilar from Packard's experience. I want to explore these differences as well as the seemingly disjointed structure of Pennell's work. In doing this, I look at several of Pennell's other writings for clarifying and explaining aspects of *The Memorial Scrap Book* that are confusing without additional context. Her multi-genre work rested on the notion that her reader followed her writing and had a general knowledge of her sanitary reform work and controversial incidents with her church. Including these other writings makes it clear that Pennell's scrapbook fits into her larger body of work. Both in their respective parts and as a whole these texts illustrate that Pennell had her feet in two worlds. She sought reform for the betterment of humanity as a mother but also as a woman challenging the professional men of medicine. Pennell's multiple genres place her in between Packard and Lathrop and the worlds in which they lived.

Chapter four looks at *A Secret Institution*. Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop's 1890 multi-genre asylum memoir recounted her time in the New York State Lunatic Asylum in

Utica, which similarly integrates court documents, letters, and poetry. Lathrop, unlike Packard or Pennell, began her narrative with her family history. She set herself up as a model of middle-class values from a respectable family. She went on to protest her treatment and that of her fellow inmates. Hers was not only a protest of her diagnosis and confinement, but of asylum abuse as well. She does this using fact after fact rather than a reliance on values moving away from True Womanhood into the representation of a New Woman. I analyze how Lathrop's work resists the institution of the asylum in society and its patriarchal structure. She finds a powerful voice as a result of her confinement. Lathrop uses this voice for a multi-genre narrative of facts. This opposition of agency and oppression plays a particularly strong role in Lathrop's work.

Like scholars in history and rhetoric have been doing, I want to add the complexities of what it meant to be insane, a woman, a reformer, and a writer in nineteenth-century America. Simultaneously, I want to explore the multi-genre autobiographical construction of these texts. Knowing the cultural, gendered, medical, familial, and religious influences and restraints on the language women used in nineteenth-century America is crucial to a truly rich reading of their work and an understanding of their social significance. Having a better knowledge of what these women did through their writing will inform studies in rhetoric and composition, History, women's studies, and disability studies. Three women wrote along the margins and in doing so gave readers insight into labels of insanity, oppression, and agency.

CHAPTER ONE
RISING DISCONTENT: CONFLICTING BELIEFS IN AMERICAN INSANE ASYLUMS

"Insane Asylums are the '*Inquisitions*' of the American government," commented asylum patient, Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard, to Dr. McFarland in the Illinois State Insane Asylum. Earlier in the same conversation with the asylum superintendent, recorded in Volume II of *Modern Persecution, or Insane Asylums Unveiled* (1873), McFarland reprimanded Packard: "I don't like your calling this place a *prison*, so much; for it isn't so."[12] However, Packard would rely on this rhetoric of confinement as unlawful imprisonment throughout her writing and reform work. Packard is one of several important players in the history of nineteenth-century insane asylums. While doctors tell one history, patients, especially female patients, often tell one far different. There was disagreement between Packard and McFarland that spoke to a larger issue of the time. When Packard entered the Illinois State Insane Asylum at Jacksonville in 1860, asylums were sites of conflict and contention.

What was it Packard saw in asylum life that McFarland, as superintendent, could not or would not see? How was the patient perspective in opposition or agreement with that of the doctors? What changes in treatment lead to the conflicts between doctors and lay superintendents, patients and doctors, and among doctors themselves that developed over time? How does this fit into the larger history of asylums in America? In this chapter I argue that although treatment changed over time in insane asylums in the United States, by the mid-nineteenth century there was contention between these multiple entities resulting in disagreement among doctors, patients, reformers, and the public.

[12] Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard, *Modern Persecutions, or Insane Asylums Unveiled, As Demonstrated by the Report of the Investigating Committee of the Legislature of Illinois* Vol. 2 (Hartford, 1875) 132-134

"Caring" for the Mad in a Developing Nation

Asylums in America prior to the 1800s were rare, and treatment, although perhaps well intentioned, was inhumane by modern standards. In 1773 the first patient was admitted to the Public Hospital for Persons of Insane and Disordered Mind in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. Restraints, water treatments, bleeding, and purging were common practices in the hopsital.[13] Such treatment of the insane was not new. Early theories of medicine used in treating the mad, according to historian Michel Foucault, included four main methods practiced as far back as the 1600s. These were consolidation, purification, immersion, and regulation of movement. These four treatments addressed varied constitutions seen as the cause of insanity.

The use of one treatment over another depended on the cause of insanity. Consolidation treated a "lack of robustness" in the body.[14] Most common in treating this was the administering of iron. Consuming iron filings would rejuvenate the body with its missing strength.[15] Purification was "the simplest but also the most impossible of cures. It would consist of substituting for the melancholic's overcharged, thick blood, encumbered with bitter humors, a light, clear blood whose new movement would dissipate delirium."[16] While there is evidence that blood transfusions of sorts took place and cured the mad more common treatments included elixirs of myrrh, aloe, vitriol, soap,

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[13] According to social historian Steven Mintz, "The first American hospitals to admit the insane (established in Philadelphia, New York, and Williamsburg, Virginia, during the second half of the eighteenth century) relied heavily on physical restraints, bleeding and blistering, cold baths, and potent purgatives" (97). *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995).

[14] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage, 1965) 160.

[15] Foucault 161-162. While Foucault noted this as a treatment for insanity it was one used in medicine for hundreds of years not restricted to those labeled mad.

[16] Foucault 162.

and vinegar were also prescribed as a cure.[17] Immersion was connected with the purity of water that also "serv[ed] as a universal physiological regulator" for the body out of sort, i.e. mad.[18] Cold baths, hot baths, and showers given while patients were restrained could all be deemed proper treatments for the insane dependent upon the believed cause of the illness.[19] Lastly, regulation of movement that developed out of the idea "that madness is the irregular agitation of the spirits" relied upon structured exercise—walking, running, riding, etc. Controlling movement would later involve machines such as the "rotary machine" involving strapping a patient to a large wheel that turned rapidly.[20] Such early use of mechanics developed into other restraining and moving machines used commonly throughout the nineteenth century in the United States. Regulating physical movement of patients was a point of contention in the early nineteenth century as chains were cast off from Europe to England and, later, the United States.

The first American mental institution used chains and physical control as an integral part of basic living conditions. In Williamsburg patients lived in cold dark cells rather than ventilated rooms. Additionally a ten-foot tall fence surrounded the early asylum buildings.[21] According to the historical background of the hospital, superintendents placed patients in individual cells both as a means of keeping them safe, assumedly from other inmates, and in order to isolate them, or keep them from harming

[17] Foucault 163-166. Although the idea that blood-letting would cure madness did become popular in the 1600s it was not accepted completely. Foucault stated that when the Philosophical Society of London sought to experiment with this treatment on Bedlam patients in the 1660s the doctor charged with the task would not perform it. Doctor Jean-Baptiste Denis, however, did treat a patient with "amorous melancholia" by draining blood and "replaced [it] with a slightly smaller quantity taken from the femoral artery of a calf; the following day he began again, but this time the operation involved only a few ounces. The patient became calm; the following day his mind cleared; he was soon entirely cured." 162-163.
[18] Foucault 167.
[19] Foucault 171-172.
[20] Foucault 172-177.
[21] *Public Hospital: The Colonial Williamsburg Official History Site*, 21 March 2011 <http://www.history.org/almanack/places/hb/hbnos.cfm>.

others. Administrators and doctors perceived patients as a threat to each other and society as a whole. While Williamsburg built the first hospital dedicated solely to treating the insane, other colonies admitted "lunatics" into hospitals such as The Pennsylvania Hospital opened in 1752 and cared for the insane among those with other illnesses.[22] At the Williamsburg Public Hospital for Persons of Insane and Disordered Mind the insane lived in cells separated from others—this time from the rest of the hospital under the other wards in less than healthy conditions that led to some deaths.[23] The public questioned care for the insane inside an institution during these early stages for such reasons.

Despite the introduction of hospitals and asylums, family members continued to care for the mentally disturbed as they had throughout the eighteenth century. Colonists, according to medical historian David Rothman, believed in the welfare of the community—the common good. Thus, care for the insane, like care for the poor or elderly, was a given that required no legislative intercession.[24] Such communal attention, however, did not translate into care or healing. As Albert Deutsch, social historian, points out family members who others labeled insane might be chained or locked up in the house or cellar.[25]

Asylums represented a humane innovation by private donors who recognized that the insane required specialized care and separate facilities but also served the interests of

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[22] Gerald Grob, *Mental Institutions in America; Social Policy to 1875* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2009) 19.
[23] Grob 19.
[24] David Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* Revised ed (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2002) 14. Mintz points out that colonial Americans has no systematic care for not only the mentally ill, but the disabled, poor, and sick as well (80). Arguably a reason for this would be due to a lack of systemized government.
[25] Albert Deutsch, *The Mentally Ill in America: A History of Their Care and Treatment from Colonial Times* 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia UP, 1949) 40.

the society and medical practitioners. Perceptions of duty and social order had been the drive force for colonial asylums.[26] At the same time that wealthier Americans had supported hospitals, this was also self-serving. If hospitals were located nearby, doctors had an institution for training. As medical historian Charles Rosenberg notes these hospitals focused on educating physicians.[27]

Private hospitals may have originally been built to house the paying client, but they also admitted people from different social classes. There were several reasons for this mixture of patients in the early 1800s; among these were urbanization, lack of long-term planning, and the influence of British and European asylum reform. Urban areas grew drastically in the first half of the nineteenth century.[28] When neighbors lived closer together they had a much more intimate knowledge of one another's behavior and could see "aberrant" and "seemingly bizarre behavior."[29] At the same time it was necessary that there were more formal means of caring for both the physically ill and the insane in a city. Community care for these people did not work in a larger and more densely populated area.[30] Founders of asylums, however, did not look at long-term needs. An early belief that small private hospitals would be sustained through paying patients while accepting those who could not pay as well did not work in the long run. There were far more men and women labeled insane than the founders were aware existed.[31] One reason

[26] Grob 35.
[27] Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America's Hospital System* (New York: Basic Books, 1987) 20.
[28] Statistics according to Grob: In 1790 only 3.35 percent of the country lived in the six existing cities that had populations of more than 8,000. In 1850 these numbers had increased to 85 cities that now made up 12.5 percent of the country's population. (36).
[29] Grob 37.
[30] Grob 37. Grob also discusses how the early corporate hospitals were not built to care for large numbers of people or for the chronically insane. Their goals were "therapeutic" not "custodial" (65).
[31] Grob 36. Rothman offers examples of this: in the Worcester Asylum in New York State where according to the asylums report on December 1, 1841 50 percent of the patients had been living in the institution for

for a larger patient population than anticipated was the increase in immigration during the early 1800s.[32] Grob states that because many immigrants arriving in the United States were lower class those who were sick or insane were more likely to require care within an institution, as they could not afford private care.[33] Admitting more immigrants into institutional care allowed these men and women to mingle with other patients of all social classes in part because of the reforms of Phillipe Pinel and William Tuke who removed restraints from their asylums.

Abolishing physical restraints in asylums across the Atlantic had a major impact on the asylum movement in America in the nineteenth century. Phillipe Pinel, a doctor in Paris, France in the late 1700s and early 1800s, removed the chains from the insane at Salpêtrière and Bicêtre Hospitals in 1793. Ideologies of the French Revolution, "liberty, equality, and fraternity," according to medical historian Roy Porter, inspired Pinel's breaking the chains of the asylums.[34] William Tuke, of the York Retreat built his institution based on this principal of non-restraint in 1796. Unlike Pinel, Tuke, a British Quaker, found basis for non-restraint in the practices of his religion.[35] Foucault, notes how the religious influence in the York Retreat was its own form of restraint. Patients were free of chains as long as they behaved according to asylum rules. If they broke the rules, they were again chained. Fear, then, kept order. Samuel Tuke stressed the value of

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over five years (273). In Concord, New Hampshire's state mental hospital's one-third of the patients were incurable in 1847 and by 1849 less than that were believed curable (274-275). At the Kentucky asylum in Lexington only one inmate was declared "definitely curable" in 1846 where 285 inmates were housed in 1845 (277).

[32] Rothman illustrates this in Worcester asylum with immigrants making up more than forty percent of the inmate population in 1851 (273).

[33] Grob 38.

[34] Roy Porter, *Madness: A Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002) 104-105.

[35] Porter 103-104.

fear in running the retreat.[36] Medical historian Robert Whitaker quoted Samuel Tuke, "'Fear,' he said, 'accompanied with pain and a sense of shame, has sometimes cured this disease.'"[37] Even as doctors removed the restraints from patients treatment was not necessarily humane. Internal fear was a motivating factor. Deutsch declared, "Kindness is a relative term."[38] Chains and cuffs might not bind patients, but one's conscious was now the gatekeeper.[39]

Fear proved to be a strong control and influenced asylums built in America in the early nineteenth-century. Following the example of Pinel and Tuke, a handful of asylums in the United States unchained inmates. Porter notes that it was the York Retreat that was the model for asylums such as the Frankford Asylum in Pennsylvania established in 1817, the Friends' Asylum outside of Philadelphia built in the same year, Boston's McLean Hospital founded in 1818, the Bloomingdale Asylum in New York built in 1821, and three years later the Hartford Retreat of Hartford, Connecticut.[40] Abolishing restraints was something most superintendents and doctors in nineteenth-century America heralded as curative. It was certainly a move toward a more enlightened treatment of those labeled insane. This did not, however, mean that all patients were allowed to roam free within hospitals walls.

Although these moral treatments advocated the use of social and religious influence on patients in insane asylums, this was not entirely true and doctors did not

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[36] Foucault 243-245. Foucault quotes Samuel Tuke's *Description of the Retreat, an Institution near York for Insane Persons of the Society of Friends* (York, 1813) 50.
[37] Robert Whitaker, *The Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine, and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill* (Cambridge: Perseus, 2002) 15.
[38] Deutsch 189.
[39] Foucault 267. Foucault also acknowledges that Pinel also threatened his patients with chains and other punishments. They transferred judgment of others onto themselves becoming their own judge—restrained mentally and full of fear.
[40] Porter 110.

abolish all methods of restraint. In Volume II of *The American Journal of Psychiatry* (1845-1846), which would later become the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Dr. Isaac Ray of the Maine Insane Asylum offered his opinion on the need for some restraint in asylums in his 1844 report. He noted that most considered removing restraints a "remarkable and valuable reform."[41] However, not enough research had been done into the matter. Ray argued that without "mechanical restraints" asylums would require more attendants and that restraints were preferable to an attendant's harsh treatment or abuse.[42] Controversy over non-restraint continued throughout the nineteenth century addressed at most meetings of the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane.[43] Superintendents and asylum doctors were not in agreement on the issue. There were conflicting views. Were physical restraints humane?

This question was one of ideologies in a new democracy and a growing abolition movement answered with a resounding no. According to historian Steven Mintz antebellum reformers saw American ideals in community service and "compassion."[44] Such values would reject the use of physical restraint. Inmates bound with chains also connected to the growing abolition movement of the early nineteenth century. Abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison turned to essential American beliefs of the Declaration of Independence guaranteeing liberty to all.[45] "All" included the insane. While asylums were necessary for housing the insane, limiting freedom, restraints within the walls violated basic values of the founding fathers. Ideals of liberation were also

[41] "Lunatic Asylums in the United States: Maine," *The American Journal of Insanity* 2 (1845-1846): 49-54.
[42] Ray is quoted in the *AJI* article "Lunatic Asylums in the United States: Maine" (51).
[43] According to Deutsch the first rule the AMSAII established in their initial meeting "Resolved, that it is the unanimous sense of this convention that the attempt to abandon entirely the use of all means of personal restraint is not sanctioned by the true interests of the insane." (215). The AMSAII would become the American Psychiatric Association.
[44] Mintz xxi
[45] Mintz 128

found within the Second Great Awakening. Protestants worked to see that chains binding inmates were broken and replaced with the God-given attributes of self-discipline.[46]

Even as there were those in early nineteenth-century society protesting the use of physical restraint, among them some asylum superintendents, there were doctors who used mechanical restraints. Restraints, humane or not, came out of good intentions. Often known for having the greatest influence on American psychiatry, is Benjamin Rush who believed in the benefit of restraints.[47] In a letter to John Redman Coxe on September 5, 1810 Rush referred to the straight waist-coat as "evil" and one that did more harm than good.[48] His answer to this was The Tranquilizer. To Rush, this was a humane solution. It calmed maniacal patients without the "evils" of the straight waist-coat.[49] The tranquilizer, like other restraints of the nineteenth century, came out of a desire to cure the insane. Rush's intentions may have been good, but result was not always humane. At times he referred to his patients as animals and firmly believed that fear and intimidation were powerful curative tools.[50]

[46] Gerald Grob, *The Mad Among Us: A History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill* (New York: Free Press, 1994) 30.
[47] Rush practiced and taught medicine at the Medical School of the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania). He was appointed following the Revolutionary War. His interest in mental disorders led to his invention of "The Tranquilizer" in 1810.
[48] Benjamin Rush, "Letter to John Redman Coxe," *Classics of American Psychiatry* (1975): 18.
[49] Rush went so far as to say that patients sometimes fell asleep in this device (19).
[50] Whitaker 15.

Rush's "Tranquilizer." From an engraving in The Philadelphia Medical Museum, new series, I (1811). From the copy in the possession of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

Figure 1. Drawing. Image of Benjamin Rush's Tranquilizer Chair reprinted from *Classics of American Psychiatry* edited by John Paul Brady.

Despite his sometimes misguided work, curing the insane was utmost in Rush's mind. He is believed to be the first to use occupational therapy. Rush saw value in patients working, occupying their minds through books and other activities, and socializing with other members of the asylum community.[51] This fit with the Protestant work ethic of an industrializing America. Historian Anne C. Rose refers to this work ethic as one Victorian Americans saw as grounding "social discipline" in the worker.[52] While labor was financially necessary, it also provided service to the community.[53] For those in insane asylums occupational therapy would ingrain in them a proper work ethic for integration back into society.

In an 1810 letter to the managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital Rush proposed erecting a separate facility for those "deprived of their reason."[54] Within these walls doctors and attendants would treat patients with dignity. Rush was a trained medical doctor firmly believing in the physical cause of madness found in the blood vessels. Others disagreed with him. As he noted in his *Medical Inquiries and Observations on the Diseases of the Mind* (1810*)*, others argued the spleen, the intestines, or the mind as a cause of insanity.[55] Such opposition did not deter Rush from his desire to cure the insane.

Economics was another opposing force for Rush. In a letter to the Pennsylvania Hospital Managers in 1810 Rush proposed seven improvements for the institution

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[51] Brady 5.
[52] Anne C. Rose, *Victorian America and the Civil War*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 73.
[53] Rose 72.
[54] Benjamin Rush, "Letter to the Managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital," *Classics of American Psychiatry* (1975): 19.
[55] Charles E. Goshen, M.D., ed., *Documentary History of Psychiatry: A Source Book on Historical Principles* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1967) 269-272.

regarding the case of the insane.[56] Even as he asked for these modifications he realized his requests were "impracticable" because of funds. Despite this he humanized the patients telling the managers that even these "degraded" men and women felt "neglect" and "injury."[57] Patient "comfort" was inextricably linked with the hospital's reputation. Rush stressed that restoring an insane person to his/her right mind brought "great pleasure."[58] As psychiatrist John Paul Brady mentions in his introductory notes on Rush, this early American doctor's work was a precursor to the moral treatment of the nineteenth century.

Treating patients without restraints became known as moral treatment and lent itself to a different type of control. Nineteenth-century asylums in America transformed from places of physical restraint into those of mental control that Pinel and Tuke oversaw across the ocean years before. Yet medical treatment in the United States was far less progressive than that of England or Europe. According to Grob, American asylum superintendents were much more likely to see insanity in terms of behavior rather than biology.[59] Good habits of hygiene, eating properly, being polite were all considered signs that a patient was responding to the moral cure. It would also signify that they had an understanding or acceptance of middle-class values. Rose argues that although the middle class was subtly questioning homogenous ideals of their communities, most middle-class members of society in America relied on "predictable" economic status, order, and

[56] Rush's improvements consisted of constructing a separate facility for "patients in the high and distracted state of madness," separate floors for men and women, opportunity for patient "labor, exercise, and amusement," occasional interaction between the sexes, no visitors without physician permission, comfortable furniture in the rooms of "persons who pay a liberal price for their board," and toilet-like "close-stools" (282-283).
[57] Goshen 284.
[58] Benjamin Rush, "Letter to the Managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital," *Classics of American Psychiatry* (1975): 22.
[59] Grob 153.

discipline.[60] Moral treatment was based on educating and/or restoring this to the lives of inmates particularly in terms of order and discipline. It did not take someone with a medical background to treat patients this way. Instead it required a conviction in the righteousness of the middle class.

The fact that most early asylums were run by lay-persons made the moral treatment popular. Superintendents were not medical doctors. Thus, looking to outward behavior as the measure of sanity was practical. Without a need for physiological treatment, there was little need for a doctor in an asylum. As this threatened the medical profession, doctors began to embrace the moral treatment as an aspect of medical care.

Doctors also looked at behavior for clues of insanity. They saw the manifestation of insanity in how a person behaved, kept him/herself groomed, etc. In 1848 psychiatrist Edward Jarvis explained to the Massachusetts Medical Society that a leading cause of insanity was the refusal of people to live properly.[61] Although there were doctors who studied the scientific causes of insanity they were few and far between. Deutsch credited Luther V. Bell, Amariah Brigham, Isaac Ray, John P. Gray, and Pliny Earle as some who sought medical causes and cures for mental illness. He made note that this was not all the fault of the superintendents who were overwhelmed with day-to- day operational concerns "over which they had little or no control."[62] Focus was less on medicine than on administration, taking superintendents away from the intended work of curing patients in asylums.

[60] Rose 8.
[61] Grob quotes Jarvis: "The harmonious processes of the human body would function efficiently if people followed proper diets, breathed pure air, exercised properly, and maintained a clean environment." (63)
[62] Deutsch 275.

Such prevalence of the moral treatment became evident in asylum policies across the nation. Literary scholar Benjamin Reiss notes that patients in the New York State Lunatic Asylum at Utica who wanted to write for the patient newsletter had to behave themselves. Those who behaved in deviant ways were not allowed the privilege of writing for *The Opal*.[63] This illustrates the internal control inmates required for gaining privileges as well as avoiding punishment. Historian Nancy Cott states that self-control was crucial to appropriate behavior and stressed as something mothers must instill in their children. Without self-control children could not grow into responsible adults.[64] If self discipline was vital in living as a proper American able to contribute to the community, then inmates who sought to do the same within asylum walls had to control themselves. While Reiss notes that the newsletter claimed editorial freedom he also offers a quote from an 1850 issue of *The New York Post* in which the author recognized *The Opal*'s writers were aware of their precarious position. The patient contributors knew "too much to put their madness in print."[65] As this evidence suggests, patients manacled their minds. They had to control their words in print. When they did this they were privy to better treatment, perhaps release. Moral treatment meant control. A well-managed institution, however, relied on more than inmates' internalized discipline.

Much like the patient him/herself the outward appearance of an asylum reflected the interior. Moral management included architecture. The AMSAII, in 1853, included construction proposals in its "On the Organization of Hospitals for the Insane." Sociologist George W. Dowdall notes that proposals of the AMSAII were almost always

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[63] Benjamin Reiss, *Theaters of Madness: Insane Asylums and Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2008) 34.
[64] Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977) 92-94
[65] Reiss 33.

followed to the letter.[66] Therefore, it is no surprise that many nineteenth-century asylums mirrored one another in appearance. Thomas Story Kirkbride was the foremost expert on insane asylum architecture in the mid-1800s. Kirkbride served as superintendent of the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane for forty years.[67] In 1854 he wrote *On the Construction, Organization, and General Arrangements of Hospitals for the Insane*. This book set the guidelines for what would be known as the "Kirkbride Plan." Most asylums built following the publication of Kirkbride's book abided by his plan.

[66] George W. Dowdall, The *Eclipse of the State Mental Hospital: Policy, Stigma, and Organization* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1996) 31.
[67] Grob 144

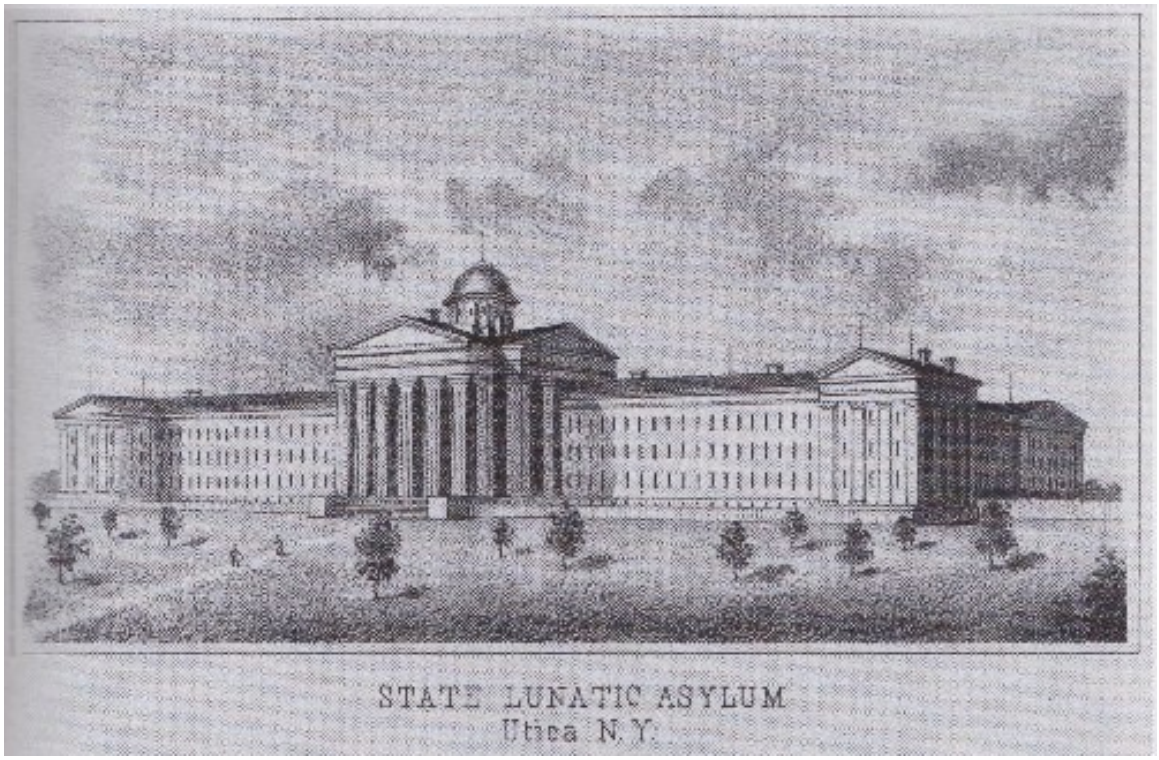

Figure 2. Drawing. Rendering of the State Lunatic Asylum in Utica, New York reprinted from *Architectures of Madness* by Carla Yanni.

Kirkbride wrote that his plan promoted a well-organized asylum. Simultaneously, if built correctly the architecture of the asylum was part of the patients' treatment.[68] A properly constructed asylum influenced the minds' of the patients in calming ways. Asylums themselves were part of the patients' treatment. Although the AMSAII was in agreement over the Kirkbride Plan as the best possible architecture for an insane asylum in the mid-nineteenth century, as the century progressed this linear construction began to fall out of favor even as Kirkbride continued its promotion.[69]

Architecture was one element of a patient's treatment while cure, i.e., integration back into society, was the ultimate goal whether through moral or medical treatment. Initial reports of cure rates resulting from moral treatment were promising. From 50% to 80% of patients at early asylums were reportedly cured and released in the 1820s and 1830s.[70] Doctors debated cure rates. While Samuel Woodward held fast to his remarkable statistics of cure rates, fellow physician Pliny Earle questioned these even as the high cure rates boosted public support for asylums.[71]

Grob argues that some evidence of high success levels in early asylums is due to the original structure of the asylum system. Small numbers of patients and close relationships with the superintendents were just two characteristics that may have been important factors in caring and curing inmates.[72] As time progressed asylums grew in

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[68] Thomas Story Kirkbride, *On the Construction, Organization, and General Management of Hospitals for the Insane* (Philadelphia, 1854) 6.
[69] Carla Yanni, *The Architecture of Madness: Insane Asylums in the United States* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007) 142.
[70] Whitaker offers the following data: from 1818-1830 59% of 732 patients admitted to McLean Hospital were deemed cured, between 1821 and 1844 60% of 1,841 patients admitted at Bloomingdale Asylum in New York were released under the same guise, 50% of admissions to Friends Asylum were "regularly" reported cured, and Worcester State Lunatic Asylum released over 80% of those who were admitted with less than one year of illness prior to illness as cured within the asylum's first seven years (27).
[71] Grob 182-183.
[72] Grob 186.

population and the acceptance of chronic cases. Doctors were soon distant from patient care because logistically they could not see or know all of the inmates affecting quality of care. According to the AMSAII in 1851 an ideal asylum had between 200 and 250 patients. These numbers, at a minimum tripled over the next twenty years with some asylums housing more than one thousand inmates.[73] Such discrepancy between what doctors saw as ideal and what society saw as necessary in removing the insane from the community was clearly at odds and affected the asylum system as a whole.

Overcrowding called the very ideas behind moral treatment into question and who was best suited to run asylums. Even in the midst of the popularity of the moral treatment, doctors worked to incorporate medical and moral treatments. One reason for this was survival. Lay superintendents might outright refuse to use physical remedies. Some went so far as to keep doctors from serving on asylum boards.[74] When the AMSAII was founded in 1844 they passed a resolution declaring all asylums should have a physician as a superintendent.[75] Doctors put themselves in charge of the care of the insane pushing out laypersons. This changed the care of the mentally ill from one that relied heavily on behavior modification to one that included medical treatment. Physical treatment in the form of drugs, restraint, baths, etc. complimented moral treatment in calming the mind.[76] Physicians made themselves indispensable in caring for the insane.

Through their necessary role in running insane asylums doctors put themselves in a tight spot. When the hospitals grew in patient population close observation and one-on-one treatment became impossible. Pressures from the state on public hospitals were

[73] Grob 190.
[74] Whitaker 27-28
[75] Whitaker 29.
[76] Grob 167-168.

economic and social. State officials wanted to keep cost low and the community wanted the insane locked away. These two issues were sometimes at odds with each other. As more patients were admitted, especially those chronically insane, costs logically rose. In order to keep costs down, wages for physicians and attendants were lowered. Moral treatment was viewed impractical from the economic standpoint.[77] Psychiatrists were forced into working as administrators and managers more so than doctors.[78] Changes in the asylum system did not alter the majority belief that these institutions were a requirement of nineteenth-century America. They may not have always been ideal, but they were needed to keep social order. Mintz discusses Americans' fear that social order was breaking down in the early to mid-nineteenth century.[79] Reformers reacted to this concern with attempts to restore "caring and compassion."[80] Social order was crucial to maintaining the America of the late 1700s and reform movements were dedicated to this.

Asylum Reform: Change Through Action

Asylum reformers were among those seeking a better life for others. Famous asylum reformer Dorothea Dix saw a legitimate need for asylums in the United States in the nineteenth century while recognizing their shortfalls. Overcrowding, lack of doctor-patient contact, among other problems became the focus of her reform work. According to biographer Margaret Muckenhoupt, Dix firmly worked to secure safe havens in asylums for those insane persons "'in *cages, closets, cellars, stalls pens! Chained, naked,*

[77] Whitaker 35.
[78] Grob 219.
[79] Mintz 3.
[80] Mintz 11.

beaten with rods, and *lashed* into obedience!'"[81] She travelled the country visiting workhouses, poor houses, jails, and private homes. At one home in Illinois Dix reported that a man was kept in his sister's house because the woman believed his family could care for him better than an asylum could. This care, however, consisted of living in an eight by eight foot pen built so as to let in snow and rain. He was subject to the elements, restraint, and filth. In Dix's words his "*piteous groans, and frantic cries, would move to pity the hardest heart*."[82] Such instances moved Dix to action.

Dix's reform work, while diligent, shifted over time in order to accomplish her goals. She was successful in advocating for asylum reform. Her ideas, however, were not popular among everyone, including doctors in asylums. Among doctors who disagreed with some of Dix's ideas was Amariah Brigham of the Utica asylum in the 1840s. Dix stressed the value of moral treatment especially in the case of incurable patients. Many of the doctors disagreed on abandoning medical treatments as well as the concept that there was a large population of incurable patients. Brigham stated as much in the *American Journal of Insanity*.[83] New York rejected Dix's proposal for opening an asylum for the chronic insane. As Dix would find out, having the support of asylum superintendents was necessary. Her 1845 memorials to New Jersey and Pennsylvania acknowledged that a

[81] From Dix's *Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts* (1843) qtd. in Margaret Muckehnhoupt, *Dorothea Dix: Advocate for Mental Health* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003) 53-54.
[82] From Dix's *Memorial to the Legislature of Illinois* (1847) qtd. in Deutsch. (167-168).
[83] Muckenhoupt 62. In Article IV, "Asylums Exclusively for the Uncurable Insane," of the first issue of the *Asylum Journal of Insanity* qtd. in the anthology *Classics of American Psychiatry* Brigham provided four distinct reasons for opposition to separate asylums such as Dix proposed. Among these were conflicting views. He noted that there was no way to determine who was curable and who incurable. At the same time he makes numerous referrals to the "incurable insane." He suggested that there was this class of patient. Brigham did not seem to wholly refute Dix's belief that some insane people could not be cured. John Paul Brady, M.D., ed., *Classics of American Psychiatry* (St. Louis: Warren H. Green, 1975) 68-69.

cure for insanity came from both moral treatment and a physician's medical care.[84] She adopted the rhetoric of the AMSAII proclaiming value in both. Dix influenced significant reform in twenty states, and saw numerous hospitals founded in response to her work. Dix was unrelenting in her struggle for asylum reform. Despite the facts that she was not always liked nor were her suggestions universally popular, Dix's influence on asylum reform was significant.

Changes, like those Dix proposed, were more easily implemented than those proposed from inside asylum walls. Outsiders saw the problems with overcrowding and poor conditions, but did not have the inmates' views of mistreatment and abuse on multiple levels—from violence at the hands of attendants to sexual assault. Inside protestors spoke out about these issues even at the risk of punishment or reincarceration. Additionally, inmates who spoke out often focused on problems of wrongful confinement and commitment laws. Placing the sane in asylums through flawed or illegal methods brought on protest from inmates. Women were among some of the most outspoken.

Women on the Inside

Men dominated the professional world that controlled a woman labeled insane. In the 1800s, and earlier, fathers, husbands, and brothers could commit women for little or no reason and keep them in the asylum for years. Depending on the state, hospitals required one or more declarations of insanity for institutionalization. Declarations came from judges and doctors—male professionals. Women were at the mercy of their male

[84] Muckenhoupt 64. In later years Dix would alter her opinion and fight against the idea that there were those who could not be cured. After working in nursing she returned to work in asylum reform in the 1860s with the belief that asylums work to cure patients rather than merely house those labeled chronic cases. Simultaneously, she remained grounded in her support of moral treatment. 111-112.

"caretakers" for freedom.[85] It wasn't until late in the 1800s that women worked as physicians supervising in mental hospitals. Thus it was often men who sought a woman's confinement, men who oversaw their care, and men who determined when they were sane.

There were female patients, including Elizabeth Packard, Clarissa Lathrop, and Lemira Pennell, who also worked to improve the treatment of the mentally ill. Female patients were among those who most loudly spoke out about wrongful confinement in American asylums. Where doctors saw them as insane for a host of reasons, women could see abuses from commitment to treatment. In her Foreword to Joseph L. Geller and Maxine Harris' collection of women's madness narratives, *Women of the Asylum*, Phyllis Chesler writes that while mental illness exists, there is also evidence in the anthology that insanity could "*also* be caused or exacerbated by injustice and cruelty, within the family, within society, and in asylums; and the personal freedom, radical legal reform, and political struggle are enduringly crucial to individual mental and societal moral health."[86] Laws surrounding the institutionalization of women in the nineteenth century were fraught with misogynistic ideology. Women were legally perceived as unable to make decisions for themselves; they were regarded as children in this way.[87]

There was tension, even dislike, between female patients and doctors that came out in patient narratives as early as the 1840s. Elizabeth T. Stone spent two years (1840-1842) in the McLean Asylum in Boston. Her brother had her committed for a difference in religious beliefs according to her narrative *A Sketch of the Life of Elizabeth T. Stone*.

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[85] Grob 136. Grob notes that women were not employed as superintendent in the mid-nineteenth century.
[86] Jeffrey L. Geller and Maxine Harris, eds., *Women of the Asylum*: *Voices from Behind the Walls, 1840-1945* (New York: Anchor, 1994) xxv.
[87] Geller 21. Geller and Harris make note of Lucy Stone's statement at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1852 that the same legal rights were given to married women, insane persons, and idiots.

Her experience with the attendants, one Mary Brigham was mentioned by name, was less than congenial. Stone described Brigham as uncaring and dismissive of patient concerns.[88] Stone went on to blame the asylum system, men in particular, calling the asylums "worse than slavery."[89] This image of asylums clearly went against what superintendents and doctors of the 1840s depicted. Superintendents wrote of benevolent care and desires to cure the insane. In the first volume of the *American Journal of Insanity* (1844) Brigham wrote, " let no Asylum be established but for the curable, and to this the incurable and the rich and the poor should be admitted; let all have the same kind of care."[90] Patients were not convinced of this motive.

Another mid-nineteenth-century patient, Phebe B. Davis, spoke to this distrust of doctors in her *Two Years and Three Months in the New York Lunatic Asylum* (1855). She wrote, "Most of the Drs. that are employed in lunatic asylums do much more to aggravate the disease than they do to cure it."[91] Davis believed that the doctors at the hospital caused more harm than did good. She went so far as to mention names—Dr. Benedict, Dr. Gray, Dr. Cook, and Dr. Porter.[92] The first two doctors were well-known and respected in the field but Davis challenged this popularity offering her personal insights on their work. Davis discussed other patients' lives and what she believed was abuse or neglect. Most notably she believed in the inmates, crazy or not. She referred to the doctors' dismissal of complaints from patients. Her response to this was "that a fact was

[88] As Stone recounted it Brigham ignored her request to see the doctor after her first night in the asylum and responded to her complaints with the words "well, that's nothing" (Geller 38).
[89] Geller 39.
[90] Amariah Brigham, "Asylums Exclusively for the Incurable Insane," *Classics of American Psychiatry* (1975): 69.
[91] Phebe B. Davis, Excerpt from *Two Years and Three Months in the New York Lunatic Asylum* (1855). *Women of the Asylum: Voices From Behind the Walls, 1840-1945* (New York: Anchor, 1994) 47-57.
[92] Davis 47.

no less a fact because it was told by a crazy person."[93] Davis protested abuse on all levels in this way. Her text, like Stone's, is testament to the disconnect between female patients and doctors in the nineteenth-century insane asylum.

Married, single, and widowed women protested their confinement and asylum treatment in print. Women in all three categories came to see their plights in similar and different ways. A marital union between a woman and a man was a double-edged sword for women. Married women, because they existed in the prescribed norms of women's roles were supposedly less likely to be labeled insane. At the same time their husbands had complete control over their freedom and legal rights. Packard protested this lack of married women's power in her work. Single women of the middle class did not have a husband controlling them; however, they were often viewed as a "social problem" in the 1800s. It is no surprise that the narratives of widowed Pennell and single Lathrop appear during the nineteenth century. Single women were referred to as "'redundant,' 'superfluous,' and 'odd.'"[94] They did not fit into the order of nineteenth-century society, because they were meant to marry, have children, and care for the home. They were to be "angels in the house." Single women defied this norm. Rather than "true insanity" their crime, as such, was challenging social constructions of women.

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Conflicting Images of the Insane

Stories of abuse, neglect, and general mistreatment of those labeled insane most often became public through patient writing. Women, as well as men, wrote about their experiences in insane asylums throughout the nineteenth century in America. From these

[93] Davis 51
[94] Showalter 61.

came patient perspectives that were not always in line with those of the doctors or the public. Writing was not the only means of communicating about life behind the asylum walls. Patients provided images of insanity that were most often protesting treatment in asylums. Images were a piece of patient, doctor, and public representation of madness. Through these images one sees conflicting views of what insanity might look like to people living in the first half of the nineteenth century.

One example of this was on the cover page of Isaac H. Hunt's *Astounding Disclosures! Three Years in a Mad House!* (1851). An image of presumably, Hunt, held down by three men and being forced to drink a substance while another looks on fits well with the words "By a Victim" included on the cover page, Even without the added authorial reference, the image makes clear that Hunt was victimized, in his opinion, while in the Maine Insane Hospital. He calls his treatment while in the asylum, "barbarous, inhuman and cruel."[95] This image corroborates his wording within the text, offering a patient picture of how inmates were treated.

[95] Isaac H. Hunt, *Astounding Disclosures! Three Years in a Mad House*. (1851) 1.

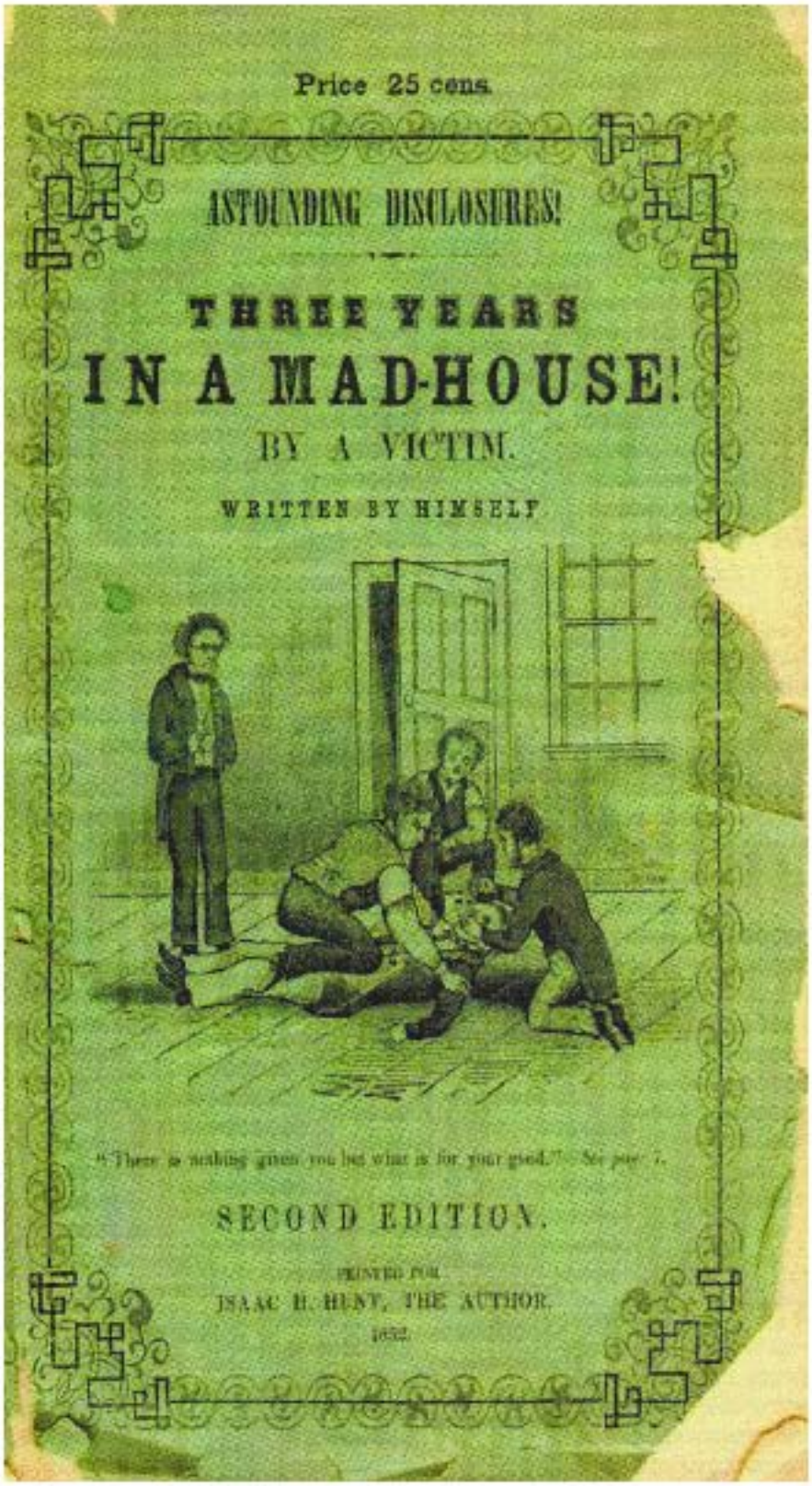

Figure 3. Photograph. The cover of Isaac Hunt's asylum narrative. Reprinted from The Disability History Museum. Copyright Straight Ahead Picture.

Hunt's image of abuse contrasts with the images presented in the medical texts. From the 1806 medical book *Essays on the Anatomy of Expression in Painting* came a vision of the insane as animalistic in every way in "Madness, Or a Man Bound with Chains."

Figure 4. Painting. "Madness, or a Man Bound with Chains" by Charles Bell. Reprinted from *Essays on the Anatomy of Expression Painting*. Image located at The Disability Museum.

This naked madman is chained to a wall with a tormented facial expression that appears to include a yell or scream. Nothing about this man is redeeming or pleasant. He is frightening. His large muscles further add to the concept of the mad as dangerous. This man is strong and if not chained would be out of control. Rather than the patient manhandled as Hunt portrays, this is the inmate who would manhandle if given the opportunity.

In opposition to the contentious images patients and doctors illustrated, there were those created by members of the community that expressed something different from either of the former. A poem written for children in the mid-nineteenth century offered a story accompanied by images depicting madwomen. This woman is pitiable, not animalistic or abused. In Robert Southey's pamphlet, *Mary, the Maid of the Inn*, a man tells the poetic story of "the poor maniac" with "composure of settled distress."[96] Mary is a woman gone mad over the death of her husband. She is portrayed in word and image as someone for the public to care for not shun. In fact, in the cover image others may stare at her, but she doesn't have wild eyes or despondent features. She comes across as neither melancholy or manic.

[96] Robert Southey, *Mary, The Maid of the Inn*. T.W. Strong (1846) lines 1 and 5.

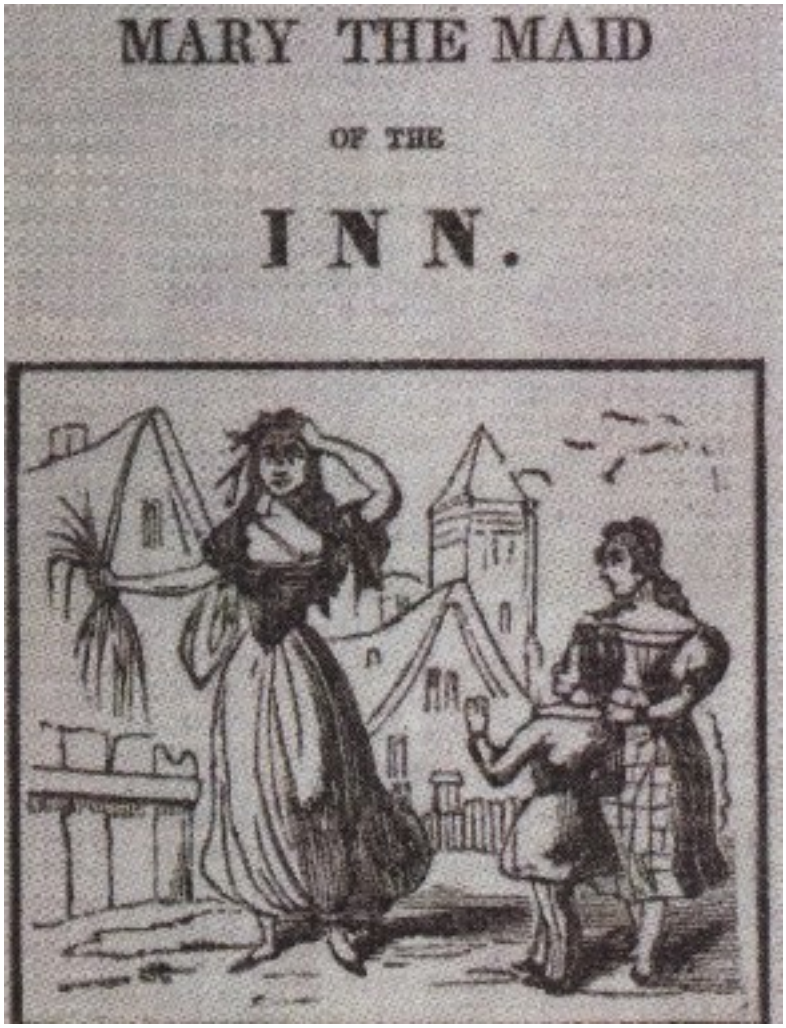

Figure 5. Cover image from *Mary, The Maid of the Inn*. Reprinted from The Disability History Museum.

Children were not necessarily shielded from the images of insanity, but those they received were most often of "harmless" women. This can also be seen in Francis Channing Woodworth's "Crazy Ann" included in her *The Boy's Story Book* (1851). Although it did not include images the story is one wherein a father recounts to his daughter how grief broke the heart of Ann driving her mad. While the community called the woman "Crazy Ann" the father told his child that he "pitied her with all [his] heart."[97] Ann is a woman who is not bad but insane. She requires sympathy above all else. This was the advice that Woodworth imparted to the children reading her book of stories. Those labeled mad should be treated humanely rather than teased or tortured—a far different view than provided in some images of the time.

Conclusion

While the AMSAII did much for regulating care, not all superintendents saw eye to eye. Further, not all affected by asylums believed them places of cure. Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop discussed abuses and mistreatments in their narratives not discussed in the professional writings of famous doctors like Brigham, Gray, and Kirkbride. Differences in ideals and perception fueled the writings of nineteenth-century patients who believed in risking freedom for claims of sanity and humanity in the hopes that others would hear their cry and take action.

Asylums in nineteenth-century America were spaces filled with tension. Patient, doctor, trustee, and public were not in agreement about what asylums were, should be, could be, and more. Patients often saw themselves as abused and wrongfully confined.

[97] Francis Channing Woodworth, The *Boy's Storybook* (1851) 1. The father goes on to inform the girl that "Sickness brings on insanity sometimes. Grief, disappointment, sudden fright, also produce it. You speak as if good people become bad, when they are crazy." 1.

Doctors worked towards curing the insane with varied means and methods. Not all agreed on these. Trustees focused on the economics of the care in conflict with doctors needs at times. And, the public turned to seeing the insane as monstrous or sad.

As asylums grew over the first part of the 1800s the profession of psychiatry transformed and with this came disagreements in care. When the Age of Enlightenment broke the chains of the asylum patients, moral treatment arose. Such treatment required a type of care that could not be maintained as patient population rose. Doctors in the United States like Isaac Ray saw the importance of restraints in patient care and the AMSAII took a uniform stand on the "sometime" use of restraints in asylums. Reformers such as Dix did not agree with such a stance and fought for changes especially regarding the overpopulation of asylums that occurred in the mid-nineteenth century. Her reforms improved asylum life, although conditions were not ideal for many as women like Packard would point out. Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard entered the asylum when few were in complete agreement about the insane and their care.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MULTIPLE LANGUAGES OF ELIZABETH PARSONS WARE PACKARD IN *MODERN PERSECUTION OR INSANE ASYLUMS UNVEILED*

Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard declared, "I was put into the Asylum without my choice or consent, I was thus removed without my consent, and contrary to my choice. In either case my identity was ignored, in that my right of choice was not recognized in either case."[98] She was robbed of her identity in her 1873 protest narrative *Modern Persecution or Insane Asylums Unveiled* Vol I. She wrote her story of life in the Jacksonville, Illinois Insane Asylum in the early 1860s. Her narrative does not, however, read like a typical autobiography or even an asylum narrative. Instead it combines genres reaching readers comprised of men and women of varied backgrounds. Packard wanted her text to change laws in Illinois and only indirectly, by rallying politicians, judges, reformers, mothers, wives, and civic-minded citizens, could she do this.[99] Thus, she moved effortlessly between the genres of sermon, conduct manual, letter, images, sensational novel, and captivity narrative. In these multiple genres, Packard could assert her identity as a True Woman. This was a strong move for a woman writing in the mid-late nineteenth century. She grounded her writing in piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness.[100] At the same time she subversively challenged notions of women's legal rights and confinement laws. *Modern Persecution or Insane Asylums Unveiled* Vol I offers readers a glimpse into the historical rhetorical practices of female reformers as True Women.

How does Packard situate her writing within the larger context of women's lives and roles in society? How does she play with the notion of True Womanhood? What does writing in

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[98] Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard, *Modern Persecution or Insane Asylums Unveiled,* Vol. II (1875; New York: Arno, 1973) 393.
[99] Although women did not have the franchise, they did have influence over men's voting habits.
[100] These are the characteristics that define the True Woman according to Barbara Welter. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" *American Quarterly*, Summer 1966, 18:151-174.

multiple genres in an asylum narrative contribute to the understanding of women's nineteenth-century rhetorical practices? How does Packard manipulate multiple genres to subversively challenge patriarchal laws? I argue that by using selective multiple genres Packard pursued the classical rhetorical purpose of using all available means in order to reform asylum laws. In doing so she constructed herself as a moral middle-class woman with strong Christian values. She placed herself within the proper sphere of women's roles while pushing against laws that oppressed women. As historian Linda V. Carlisle points out in her dissertation, *Elizabeth Packard and Boundaries of Gender, Religion, and Sanity in Nineteenth-Century America* (2004), Packard's methods seem to have worked as she saw the passage of bills that changed confinement laws in several states.[101]

Scholars, like Carlisle, who have studied Packard have recognized her powerful use of rhetoric. Wood has pointed out how Packard used the conventions of the nineteenth-century sentimental novel and the slave narrative to create a compelling story and prove her sanity. Hubert gives a brief discussion of the importance of Packard's autobiography as reform work. Grob called Packard's writings "the most spectacular revelations."[102] They are "spectacular" not only because they helped change the laws in numerous states, but also because Packard was one of the first women in American history to protest her treatment in the asylum in print. I build on the works of these scholars by addressing how it was Packard achieved her goals through the use of a savvy multi-genred text. I argue that Packard relied on a dynamic interaction between

[101] Carlisle provided evidence that Packard's campaigns in Illinois, Massachusetts, Maine, New York, and several territories directly caused investigations into commitment laws that resulted in changes in such laws. Linda V. Carlisle, "Elizabeth Packard and Boundaries of Gender, Religion, and Sanity in Nineteenth-Century America," diss., Southern Illinois University, 2004. Thomas Cooley also argued that Packard's efforts were directly responsible for the change in state confinement laws across the United States 200. Thomas Cooley, *The Ivory Leg in the Cabinet: Madness, Race and Gender in Victorian America* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2001).
[102] Grob 263.

multiple genres in order to challenge the status quo while maintaining her image as a proper middle-class woman.

Scholars of women's rhetoric such as Carol Mattingly, Shirley Wilson Logan, and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell explore how some women broke down barriers of gender and race through language in the nineteenth century. At the same, they were doing this as proper women. Such women in nineteenth-century America fought to speak and write publicly, but this "fight" was often done through the guise of True Womanhood. Reform movements allowed women a safe space for questioning the patriarchal systems of society. Packard adopted this method, speaking out for asylum reform. She walked a fine line between propriety and rebellion. Women's historian Bonnie S. Anderson explains that a woman's power as a force for good in her home came from the notion that she was weak and dependent.[103] Packard played with this concept encouraging men to embrace her cause as the protector of women. Her rhetoric was grounded in religion and submissiveness. Throughout her text she argued that men must treat women with respect and dignity. Confining women without proper procedure, as she saw it, violated these societal gender roles. Packard relied on True Womanhood and used genres that would highlight a woman's accepted role. First, I look at Packard's life and its grounding in the ideals of True Womanhood followed by the way in which her multi-genre text reflected this background.

Early Days and the Intellectual Curiosity of Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard

Betsey Parsons Ware, as she was named at birth, was born December 28, 1816 in Ware, Massachusetts to Lucy Parsons and Reverend Samuel Ware. She was the fifth-born child, but the

[103] Bonnie S. Anderson, *Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Movement, 1830-1860* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 44.

first to survive. When she reached her teenage years she changed her name to Elizabeth.[104] She was sent to the Amherst Female Seminary where she received an education in the basics as well as "the classics, algebra, and French." According to her biographer, Barbara Sapinsley, Elizabeth was proud to say she received an education like her brothers and "she appreciated it more than they did."[105] In fact, she went on to teach children.[106] It was most likely in her schooling at Amherst that Packard developed her skills in persuasion. Through education and encouragement, girls might develop a strong sense of self, enabling them to go out into the world and fight for change through rhetoric and action.

Packard's educational attainments, however, would be blamed as one of the causes for her contraction of brain fever. At age nineteen, Packard was diagnosed with brain fever.[107] Her symptoms ranged from headaches to convulsions to mental confusion. When the standard treatments of purges and bleedings did not cure Packard, her parents sent her to Worcester State Hospital—the first psychiatric institution in Massachusetts. Sapinsley makes a point that Worcester was for poor lunatics and Packard was neither poor nor lunatic. However, the hospital was close to home and the director was well respected.[108] Packard was admitted to the Worcester State Hospital on January 27, 1836.[109] In the first patient entry to her record at Worcester, Carlisle reveals that there were no notes regarding brain fever. Instead it stated that Packard was

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[104] Packard's reasons for changing her name are not made clear in Barbara Sapinsley's biography and the name change is not mentioned in Carlisle's text.

[105]Sapinsley, Barbara. *The Private War of Mrs. Packard*. New York: Paragon, 1991. 23. Sapinsley's sources for her autobiography came directly from the Packard family. These included Packard's books, Theophilus' diary and journal, son Samuel's journal, and family anecdotal material. In addition, Sapinsley did her own archival research.

[106] Sapinsley 23.

[107] According to Robley Dunglison's 1851 *Medical Lexicon: A Dictionary of Medical Science* brain fever was synonymous with phrenitis caused by inflammation of the brain. "A disease characterized by violent pyrexia, pain in the head, redness of the face and eyes, intolerance of light and sound, watchfulness and delirium, either furious or muttering." Robley Dunglison, *Medical Lexicon: A Dictionary of Medical Science* 8th ed. (Philadelphia, 1851).

[108] Sapinsley 24.

[109] Carlisle 32. Sapinsley claimed that Packard was admitted on February 6, 1836. Confusion for this may come from the fact that the first entry into Packard's patient record was recorded on the latter date.

prone to excitement and suffered from several physical symptoms.[110] Superintendent Samuel B. Woodward wrote on February 16, 1836 that Packard was not rational on all subjects.[111] Such a claim would lay the groundwork for her husband's claim that his wife was insane twenty-four years later.

Packard was released six weeks after her admission.[112] Her condition was considered "greatly improved."[113] This experience fueled her skepticism of medicine. She blamed the early treatment of her brain fever for her stay in the hospital. This began a "lasting antipathy" for medicine and the medical profession.[114] Her distrust of the medical profession and medical treatments would arise in her later writing.

Three years after her release from the hospital, Packard married Reverend Theophilus Packard, Jr., a man fifteen years her senior.[115] He was not her first suitor. She was an attractive woman and several men had courted her, including Henry Ward Beecher, who would later become a famous minister. Packard turned them all down. Sapinsley noted that Packard once wrote, "I shall rule myself. And if I ever get a husband (which article I never yet had the good fortune to get but I am sure I shall sometime), I shall rule myself to obey my husband because 'twill be my pleasure to do so."[116] Packard believed in self-rule not the rule of a man over a

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[110] Carlisle 33.
[111] Carlisle 33.
[112] Sapinsley 25.
[113] Carlisle 34. Neither Carlisle nor Sapinsley provide detailed information on the exact events that lead up to Packard's symptoms of brain fever.
[114] Sapinsley 26. Charles Rosenberg also noted that there were those in antebellum America who mistrusted American medicine in favor of homeopathy. "Homeopathic and hydropathic guides to preserving health began to appear in the 1830s and 1840s and flourished through the antebellum years. Both systems assumed an oppositional role in defining their claims vis-à-vis regular medicine—with advocates of hydropathy and homeopathy emphasizing the unnatural and psychologically debilitating aspects of regular medical practice, with its emphasis on cathartic drugs and—until mid-century—routine bleeding." Charles E. Rosenberg, ed., *Right Living: An Anglo-American Tradition of Self-Help Medicine and Hygiene* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2003) 9.
[115] Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard, *Modern Persecution or Insane Asylums Unveiled*, Vol I. (New York: Pelletreau, 1873) 33.
[116] Sapinsley 36. There is not a footnote telling where Packard wrote this or in what context.

woman. Her reason for obeying a man would be out of her own volition, not as a bowing down to his. More than this, Packard believed in thinking for herself and did so in all matters, including those of religion.[117]

Theophilus did not embrace Packard's independent thinking in part because she did not believe in the doctrine of total depravity. Her hope that her husband would grow into the intellectual shoes of her father was dashed as married life progressed.[118] Eighteen years into their marriage the Packards moved to Manteno, Illinois when Theophilus was offered a position in the Presbyterian church.[119] Thinking, speaking, and writing what she believed publicly may have been approved and supported by Packard's intellectual New England family, but it was not appreciated in the Illinois Calvinist home where she moved with Theophilus.

Within the first few months in Manteno, disagreements between Elizabeth and Theophilus escalated. Theophilus had been denying his wife's voice and opinions on religion for years; however, in 1860 he invited her to speak publicly on the topic. Packard was invited to join the church's Bible-class and speak about her views on religion. Classes allowed for open dialogue such that Elizabeth was permitted to express her religious beliefs in ways she had been denied in her home for years. Packard agreed and joined the class of six men that soon grew to a class of forty-six men and women.[120] Packard spoke of this class with great enthusiasm saying,

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[117] Carlisle 31. Packard was participating in the larger intellectual movement going on at the time. It was during her time in Amherst that her family took in lodgers from Amherst College and she met Henry Ward Beecher whose views on religion would influence her own thinking throughout her life.
[118] Sapinsley 46-47.
[119] Manteo, Illinois in Kankakee County was a budding town in the 1850s and 1860s. In 1853 its population was about 8,000 people with 1,000 legal voters. It was at this time that Manteno was chosen as the county seat. It was 1869 before Manteno was "duly incorporated. In 1850 Manteno divided itself into nine school districts. There was a Catholic church, a Methodist Church and a Presbyterian Church by the end of the 1860s. Madelyn Bourell Merwin, ed., *Area History of Manteno, Illinois: 1800s to 1900s* (Dallas: Curtis Media, 1993).
[120] Packard simply says the class grew from six men to forty-six "including the most influential members of the community" (35). Sapinsley, however, notes that the forty-six members of the class included men and women (60).

"Indeed, I never can recollect a time when my mind grew into a knowledge of religious truths faster, than under the influence of these free and animated discussions."[121]

Theophilus' approval of his wife's position in the Bible-class came to a close after a meeting with Deacon Smith. The Bible-class leader altered Theophilus' views on his wife's opinions. The minister's view on a woman's rhetorical place was not at odds with that held in popular opinion at the time. Women who stepped into the public space faced a tough fight and, often, a reticent audience.[122] Packard risked her marriage when she took to the "pulpit." Although not formally preaching before a congregation Packard was teaching a Bible class. Here she publicly spoke her views on religion and spirituality. This was not something women did in Calvinist churches, as rhetoric scholar Roxanne Mountford points out. Calvinist sermons relied on masculinity.[123] Clearly, Packard ignored this. Packard gave her written opinions on the subject to the class "so as to prevent misrepresentation" she said.[124] Despite this, Theophilus would continually present her religious views and insanity in a false light.

Packard's husband would be the most stalwart opposition to her speaking out. Theophilus insisted to his wife that she quit the class on her own accord without explaining to the class that it was at the behest of her husband and Deacon Smith. When Packard refused to quit on these terms, she was "thrust" from her husband in anger. For Packard, this was the beginning of the end of her freedom: "From that fatal time, all good influences seemed to have forsaken him…. From that point, I have never had a protector in my husband. He has only been my

[121] Packard 35.
[122] Nan Johnson, *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2002) 3.
[123] Mountford offers evidence of this from an 1856 address minister Richard S. Storrs, Jr. gave at the Porter Rhetorical Society of Andover Theological Seminary. Roxanne Mountford, *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching In American Protestant Spaces* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2003) 51.
[124] Packard xiii.

persecutor!"[125] Theophilus saw her obstinance to him as a sign of insanity. The more she decried the diagnosis the more he pursued it in what Sapinsley called a "Catch-22" situation for Packard.[126] When two of her children fell ill to a fever, Packard left the Bible-class to care for them.

Quitting the Bible-class was no longer enough for the Reverend, according to Packard; he wanted to see his wife in an asylum. Packard argued that her husband turned on her and "replied he, in a most excited, angry tone of voice. 'You shall go into an Asylum!'"[127] For assistance and assurance, Packard turned to a neighbor and lawyer, Mr. Comstock, who told her that a trial complete with a jury was required to commit her to an insane asylum. Sadly, he was mistaken. According to the Illinois State law, as long as Theophilus requested her committal and the superintendent of the asylum judged her insane Packard could be placed in an insane asylum.[128] Illinois law established that Theophilus was justified in his actions.

These actions included taking Packard from her home and children and committing her to the Jacksonville State Asylum for three years. On the morning of June 18, 1860, Theophilus, two physicians, and the Sheriff Burgess entered Packard's room as she was preparing to take a bath. She hid herself in the bed "for shelter and protection against an exposure in a state of entire nudity."[129] While Packard lay in bed, the two doctors felt her pulse and proclaimed that she was insane. "This was the only medical examination I had," Packard explained. "This was the only trial of any kind that I was allowed to have, to prove the charge of insanity brought against me by

[125] Packard 38.
[126] Sapinsley 68.
[127] Packard 41.
[128] Sapinsley quotes the law here "Married women and infants who, in the judgment of the medical superintendent of the state asylum at Jacksonville, are evidently insane or distracted, may be entered or detained in the hospital at the request of the husband of the woman or the guardian of the infant, without the evidence of insanity required in other cases." 65-66.
[129] Packard 51.

my husband to be a false charge. I had no chance for self-defence whatever."[130] She was accosted in her home unprepared for what was about to happen to her.

Theophilus had Packard removed from her home and confined to the Jacksonville asylum against her will. When Theophilus asked if she would willingly move, she replied "'No, Mr. Packard, I shall not help myself into an Asylum. It is *you* who are putting me there. I do not go willingly, nor with my own consent—I am being forced into it against my protests to the contrary."[131] Packard wanted to be sure everyone knew that she was opposed to the action taken against her. She was carried each step of the way by men who helped Theophilus. Never did she take one voluntary step towards her imprisonment.

Construction of the Text

Packard resisted her confinement and actively spoke out against it in multiple writings following her institutionalization.[132] Her release on June 18, 1863 was the beginning of her protest against wrongful confinement. Among her writings was the two-volume work *Modern Persecution*. Her first volume, *Modern Persecution or Insane Asylums Unveiled* was published in 1873. Volume II, *Modern Persecution, or Insane Asylums Unveiled, as Demonstrated by the Report of the Investigating Committee of the Legislature of Illinois*, followed in 1875. Volume I of *Modern Persecutions or Insane Asylums Unveiled* was four hundred-two pages long and broken into sixty chapters. Within these chapters were the narratives of two other women who lived in the asylum with Packard. Additionally it included eight sketches, a dedication, and a

[130] Packard 51.
[131] Packard 56.
[132] Although Packard clandestinely wrote of her experience while in the asylum, she did not publish these until released.

Preface. Packard deployed a plethora of genres in establishing her ethos and working towards reformative action. Her ethos was grounded in the notion of True Womanhood.

Throughout her first volume protesting asylum treatment Packard astutely wrote in multiple genres. Each one helped establish her as a woman of proper middle-class values. Her audience was anyone who was willing to purchase her book in advance of its publication. This was how she raised enough money to pay for the printing costs of her story. According to Sapinsley, she targeted men and women in hotels, inns, rooming houses, and aboard trains.[133] Her idea worked, and she was able to print and sell her publications in towns where she campaigned for reform. Quickly she found that printing her texts and selling them in connection with efforts at reforming laws worked well.[134] She was able to bring publicity to her efforts in the legislature through selling her books simultaneously to the general public.

Her goal in writing the book was to reform state laws.[135] This meant she needed to influence powerful men, but also the women who spoke in the ears of those men. Her audience was well read and they would know the genres of conduct manuals, legal documents, letters, photojournalism, etc. She played on this, drawing her readers in with the use of multiple genres. Miller argues that genre arises out of similar situations. What a text should accomplish often establishes its genre. She writes, "inaugurals, eulogies, courtroom speeches, and the like have conventional forms because they arise in situations with similar structures and elements and because rhetors respond in similar ways, having learned from precedent what is appropriate and what effects their actions are likely to have on other people."[136] Thus writers know from

[133] Sapinsley 122.
[134] Sapinsley 186.
[135] Packard bluntly states this in her Introduction: "The object of the First Volume is to delineate the internal management of Insane Asylums on their present basis, for the purpose of education the public mind into the imperative necessity of a radical change in the treatment of the insane. And this effort is to be followed by an appeal to the State Legislature for laws to meet and remedy the evils herein portrayed" (xxxii).
[136] Miller 152.

experience, either from reading or writing, that the form they choose, the genre, is apropos to a situation because it will create a particular reaction in the audience. This reaction may be one of support, sorrow, conviction, outrage, or any number of a range of emotions that lead then to action. Packard, as an educated woman with skills in reading and writing, compiled these genres into one text. She declared, "this entire narrative affords a striking illustration of the legal disabilities of the insane and married women."[137] What is important here is the use of the word "entire." It is the complete work that gives a full portrayal of the state of affairs in asylums and wrongful confinement, especially that of married women.

Packard turned to multiple genres that she believed would garner trust in her words. Her audience would rely on her words and build support for her cause. This was the reaction and action for which she hoped in writing her text.[138] She used multiple genres for attracting as many readers as possible, therefore, boosting the numbers in support of her reform work. Turning to well-known and familiar genres allowed Packard to connect with readers while multiple genres crossed gender, educational, and religious lines inviting readers of all backgrounds into her cause. Appealing to the heterogeneous society with multiple genres could sway votes. Public opinion would pressure the legislature more than one woman or one book no matter how persuasive either was. According to Sapinsley, Packard devoted her reading during this time to texts focused on "persuasion and strategy."[139] It seems that this paid off.

Packard could move out of the private space into the public space of writing so long as she maintained her role as a proper woman. Protesting treatment of the insane and married women could easily become controversial and heated. Packard stayed clear from this as she sought out multiple genres that would uphold her identity as a True Woman. Safe genres such as

[137] Packard xxxii.
[138] Wood argued that the purpose of Packard's text was to "persuade her audience to take political action" (35).
[139] Sapinsley 111.

conduct manuals were part of this technique. She could offer advice on behavior to men as long as she did it appropriately.

Insane Images: Art as Rhetoric

A nineteenth-century middle-class woman would be expected to appreciate artistic endeavors. Packard could then play with this in her text. Her protest appeared throughout the text in words and images. Picturing the madwoman was not difficult for nineteenth-century readers, but Packard did not want this to be the image her public had of her. A woman with disheveled hair and clothing or a lost expression could be seen in numerous places. Packard seemed to have been aware of this. She knew that images of insane women were present in society. Surely these images of a hysterical woman, a religious maniac, or others would be in the minds of some of her readers. Thus she included her own illustrations to counteract the popular images in the media. Within the first volume of her narrative are eight pictures—each of these with a specific purpose.

Images as a whole were used in newspapers in an effort to affect readers more deeply than the use of print alone could. Images were present in advertising, medicine, sheet music, art, and newspapers.[140] Packard's images are of the type that early photojournalism used of woodcuts and engravings.[141] And like images of her time, they combine language and image, which proved "vital" to her rhetorical success.[142] Historian of photojournalism, Michael L. Carlebach discusses how the nineteenth-century audience saw images as objective and infallible in their portrayals.[143] Including this genre of information dissemination was clever on Packard's part. She was tapping

[140] Lynn Gamwell, "Images of Madness: A Portfolio of Nineteenth-Century Women," *Annals of New York Academy of Sciences* 789 (1996): 79-81.
[141] Michael L. Carlebach, *The Origins of Photojournalism in America* (Washington: Smithsonian, 1992) 1.
[142] Carlebach 2.
[143] Carlebach 2.

into popular culture while at the same time using a genre upon which doctors relied. Images were part of physiognomy. Drawings and photographs of "the insane" helped doctors in their case studies of patients and the appearance, quite literally, of insanity.[144] Thus images were a part of the medical construction of insanity and the news of the day.

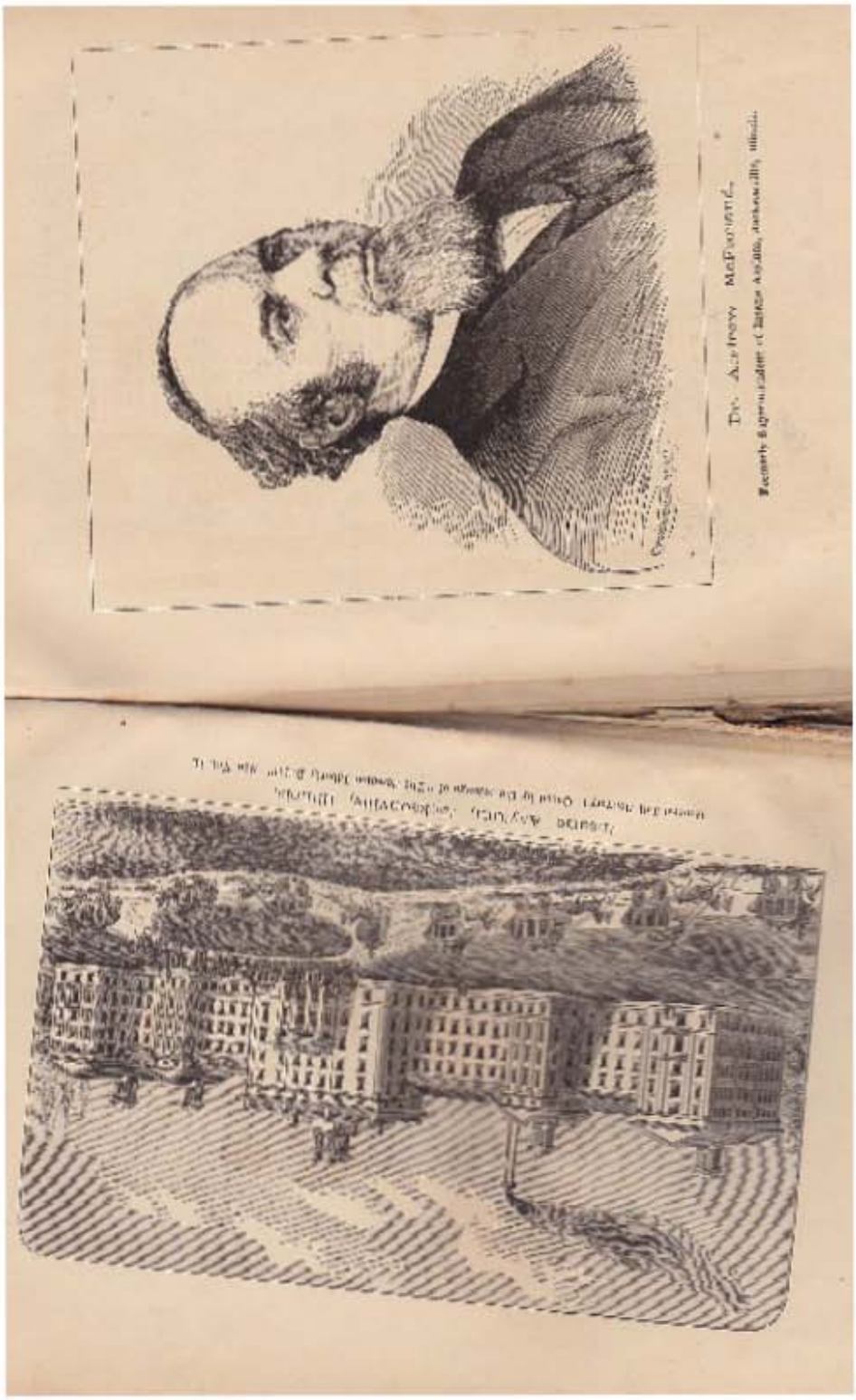
In these images she made sure she looked "sane" and that the captions evoked sympathy for inmates of the asylum. This combination of text and image created a complete illustration for her reader of life inside of the asylum as Packard experienced it. Throughout the imagery one sees her as a True Woman with a focus on her children and role as a mother and her proper behavior in public even when she felt she was mistreated.

Her first two illustrations were of The Insane Asylum at Jacksonville, Illinois and Dr. McFarland. The image of the asylum was of the grandiose building and a dozen horse drawn carriages driving to and away from the asylum. Below the image sits the caption "General jail delivery! Cured by the passage of 'The Personal Liberty Bill!' See Vol. II. Page 218." She referred to the asylum as a jail, not leaving the picture to speak for itself. One should not simply look at the grand building in awe, but connect the asylum with a prison—exactly what Packard wanted the reader to do throughout the narrative. Including how wrongful confinement had been stopped with a law she helped get passed also encouraged her reader to want to know how a woman placed in an insane asylum ended up influencing Illinois legislation. She both entreated her reader to open the text while applauding herself and the work she did.

Packard offered up the asylum and Dr. McFarland as the main players in her narrative by including their images first. Her use of illustration direct the reader to focus on what was wrong with the system, the asylum itself, and the man running it. Again, the caption under the portrait

[144] Berkenkotter, Carol. *Patient Tales: Case Histories and the Uses of Narrative in Psychiatry*. Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2008. 54.

of Dr. McFarland, described him as “Formerly Superintendent.” Packard noted to the reader that the doctor was removed from his position of almighty power.



Figures 6 and 7. Etchings of Andrew McFarland, Superintendent at the Asylum and a rendering of the asylum. Reprinted from *Modern Persecutions* by Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard.

Once into the text there were six additional illustrations accompanied by quotes from the narrative. “Kidnapping Mrs. Packard” was the first of these. Most important was the title of the piece. She was being taken against her will. Despite the name of the picture, Packard was not being thrown into the train with clothing and hair askew. She was seated atop two men’s arms in a ladylike fashion with her clothing and bonnet neatly arrayed. A crowd of people stood behind her as she was carried onto the train. A woman in the crowd cried out, “Is there no man in this crowd to protect this woman?” Others protested for Packard, but she was the image of propriety. Included in this sketch were two insets of Packard’s sons. Both show their desire to free their mother and their disagreement that she belongs in an asylum. A protesting crowd and two sons were those making noise not Packard herself. She is portrayed as a respectable middle-class woman and mother. The reader would hold this image of Packard.

Figure 8. Etching. "Kidnapping Mrs. Packard." Reprinted from *Modern Persecutions*

Pictures four and five are listed backwards in the table of contents but this in no way alters their affect on the reader. “How Can I Live Without My Children!” was an image of Packard crying while a seemingly indifferent Theophilus looked on. In the four corners of the picture were insets. They were titled “Abducting my Babe,” “Abducting my Daughter,” “My Isaac’s parting kiss,” and “Abducting my George.” In each scene Packard appeared to be a devoted mother. Captions alone did not tell the true story of her family being taken from her arms. Despite her loss, she remained the image of domesticity only brought to tears by the thought of losing her children. She plays with pathos here evoking sympathetic response. A mother torn from her children’s sides would be seen as a horrible lot in life in the 1800s when a woman’s identity was tied to her role as mother. Even in this emotive imagery Packard was careful in her self-representation. She was not a hysterical woman, but a mother robbed of the objects of her affection.

Figure 9. Etching. "How Can I Live Without My Children." Reprinted from *Modern Persecutions.*

"George we have no Mother!" was the fifth sketch in the narrative. Although the sketch was not true to the story, it provided an image of forlorn children. In the text her son Isaac said this to his brother George. In the sketch, however, it appeared that Packard's daughter spoke this to George. Either way the image was meant to offer up the terror done to her to children by her confinement. It pushed a woman to tears, but it did the same to the children. In fact, Packard's imprisonment in the asylum comes across as her death. In actuality, her children still have a mother, she was merely confined behind asylum walls; however, in the caption their mother was no more. If she was unable to care for her children, it was as if she was dead to them and this breaks their hearts as well. Packard wanted her reader to see how children suffered when mothers are taken from their homes and locked in asylums—an emotional response to this was perhaps certain. Packard used the traditional role of motherhood and tugged at heartstrings. True Womanhood provided her with power in these illustrations of forlorn children.

Figure 10. Etching. "George, We Have No Mother." Reprinted from *Modern Persecutions*.

Packard was the devoted and well-loved mother while she depicted attendants in the asylum as the opposite. In the most graphic of her illustrations an attendant beat a patient. Packard sarcastically titled this "Popular Mode of Curing Insanity!" Gone are the ladies of the earlier images. Here was a brutish looking woman grasping the hair of a patient on her knees. The attendant prepared to hit the inmate with one hand raised high in a fist. Lizzie Bonner was the attendant who was portrayed as a maniac herself. Packard inverted the idea of who was insane in the asylum. Here it was the attendant, not the inmate. Within the image were four insets of different types of abuse wrought on the patient. In the caption it read that the abuse was done on suspicion that the patient took Bonner's keys. It was merely suspicion that elicited this horrific treatment. Packard wanted the reader to be aware of this.

Figure 11. Etching. "Popular Mode of Curing Insanity!" Reprinted from *Modern Persecutions*

Finally, the last image was of Packard being carried out of the asylum in the same ladylike fashion with which she was put on the train to the asylum. Without the caption below and the reference to the page numbers she included this picture might mislead the reader. It is crucial that one knows the context of the illustration. It was at one of the doctor's requests that Packard was carried from the asylum and delivered into the hands of her husband. She protested this "delivery" claiming "a right to my own identity."[145] In addition having men carry her from her room against her will also confirmed her as a "'nonentity.'"[146] Even as she resents this process she also maintains her dignity. In the picture she is seated properly and calmly offering readers a solid image of True Womanhood.

[145] Packard 389.
[146] Packard 389.

Figure 12. Etching. "Enforcing the 'Nonentity' Principle of Common Law for Married Women." Reprinted from *Modern Persecutions*

Images were valuable and unique in expressing Packard's ideas. Others who preceded Packard such as Hunt, Stone, and Davis did not rely heavily on images, if at all, in their asylum narratives. Packard cleverly included illustrations with captions appealing to emotions and connecting the reader visually to her story. She also stays true to the depiction of herself as a True Woman. Using visual rhetoric she showed, quite literally, her audience that she was a proper woman. Packard showed that she was a woman of propriety. From this perspective she created an authority to give others advice on how to behave even in the face of adversity.

Propriety and Reform: Conduct Manual Rhetoric

Conduct manuals provided middle-class women with instruction on idyllic behavior in the nineteenth century. Conduct books were likely to offer an array of advice on everything from married life to what books one should read. Packard's use of conduct manual rhetorical construction was a safe genre choice. Packard usurped the language of the conduct manual providing her reader with writing that sustained accepted moral and gender codes of the time.[147] As Nan Johnson acknowledges, "conduct manuals argued a conservative gender agenda."[148] Packard maintained this traditional, or "conservative" tone in her use of the genre. Throughout her text she used the genre of the conduct manual to offer her reader a familiar playground for her words.[149] However, she also subverted this genre. Conduct manuals for women reminded them that they belonged in the home. These manuals stressed that women's rhetorical power was restricted to the domestic sphere.[150] Packard took the genre and used it for speaking outside of

[147] Rose states that "the ethos of moral aesthetics" would give readers a sense of familiarity and comfort (38).
[148] Nan Johnson, "Reigning in the Court of Silence: Women and Rhetorical Space in Postbellum America," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 2000, 33:221-242. 222.
[149] Carlisle acknowledged that Packard drew upon the "feminine" genres of novels and "advice books of nineteenth-century women writers" (71).
[150] Johnson cites a passage from *The Ladies' Repository* (1868) that argued this vehemently (237-238).

the home in a rather unique yet safe way. "Home" as Packard came to know it was the asylum. Moral treatment included the affirmation of the asylum as a replication of the middle-class home with the superintendent as the father, his wife the mother, and patients the children. Infantilized patients could be robbed of any power they might have in this way. Packard worked against this in her constant reminder to the readers that she was a wife and mother. She was a grown woman with influence inside the proper sphere.

Packard obeyed the rules of conduct manuals restricting her rhetoric to the domestic sphere of the asylum/home. Packard firmly advocated that women and men had distinct gendered roles. Packard held onto the notion that men should protect women as seen in her letters to Dr. McFarland. She believed in a "balance of power between" men and women, but also held to the concept of paternalism in society.[151] Asking men to assist women as a means of treating them better both held onto traditional values while moving beyond them. As Jane E. Rose notes, conduct manuals were distinct from etiquette manuals in their reformative nature.[152] This came through clearly in the final chapter of the book when Packard appealed to the government for protection of women under the laws. Packard wrote that men had power over women, but that such power should not lead to despotism.[153] Her argument did not include equal rights of women to men. She sought change using the rhetoric of Republican ideals while maintaining a submissive stance. Manipulating the form to her purpose, Packard gave the reader something familiar and appealing, encouraging reform through her advice.

[151] Cooley 202.
[152] Jane E. Rose points out that there was irony in women writing conduct manuals that were arguing for separate spheres while stepping outside that space through public writing. Jane E. Rose, "Conduct Books for Women, 1830-1860: A Rationale for Women's Conduct and Domestic Role in America," *Nineteenth-Century Women Learn to Write* (1995): 37-58. 39.
[153] Packard 399.

Reform, for Packard, involved exposing mistreatment of patients in the asylum. Packard recommended the following to her reader, "There is no necessity for abusing a patient. I have seen both systems tried, abuse and kindness; and kindness is by far the easiest and safest course."[154] This advice came in chapter thirty-seven, "Abusing Mrs. Stanley." Mrs. Stanley was described as a mother "delicately reared" and "quick tempered." After insisting that she was sick and needed to rest, an attendant laid "violent hands" upon her. Though Mrs. Stanley apologized for fighting back, cold water was poured over head. Packard suggested to the attendant that she forgive Mrs. Stanley stating, "'do forgive her! for you will sometime want forgiveness yourself.'" Packard provided her readers with a moral stance of Christian ideals through her advice in the story she retold. As she suggested to the attendant how to behave, so she revealed her own proper beliefs to her readers. This connects to her more general call to treat others with kindness alluding to the "Golden Rule" of treating others as one wants to be treated. Packard spoke out against the asylum yet did so within the language of piety acceptable for a woman's voice.

One way Packard used her words as a conduct manual might was in this vein of religion. Religion appeared in numerous conduct manuals of the nineteenth century. Through Christian values, the Beecher sisters, Catherine and Harriet Beecher Stowe, elevated the status of woman to one of "chief minister" within the family in their conduct manual, *The American Woman's Home: or, Principles of Domestic Science; Being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful, and Christian Homes* (1869).[155] Christianity was a major aspect of this conduct manual—the first two chapters relying on it. Christian living was part of a

[154] Packard 256.
[155] Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home: or, Principles of Domestic Science; Being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful, and Christian Homes* (New York: Arno, 1971) 19.

good middle-class life. Religion was an all-pervasive theme in Packard's text, thus she could not escape giving advice through the lens of devotion, as conduct manuals often did. Like the good Christian woman she sought to be, and represented herself as, she offered others the opportunity to follow the path of righteousness. She wrote, "When we see no way of getting out of a sad dilemma, except that of wrong doing, we are directed to 'Wait, wait, on the Lord,' that is, wait until Providence opens a way for us."[156] She let readers know that she was in a state of sadness, but with patience and turning to God she was able to find her way out and she proposed this as a help to others. Piety prevailed in her home—the asylum.

This reliance on religion and offering it as a help to others continued in Packard's chapter "Battle with Despotism." She was forced onto a ward where an attendant told her "I do not think there is a patient in this hall who can answer a rational question in a rational manner."[157] Despite this setback, Packard set up her room as nicely as she could and concluded her chapter with optimism. She stated, "So true it is, that good comes out of seeming evil. The darkest providences are often the stepping-stone to prospective good."[158] This served as guidance to the reader that even when things looked dark there might be great good standing just ahead. Keeping a positive outlook was of utmost importance for Packard. She reminded her reader that despite her desperate situation she did not fall into despair or melancholia over it. This fits with the images she included in the text depicting her as a proper woman. She remained calm and positive in the face of horror asserting her sanity necessary for having a reliable ethos.

Her conduct manual rhetoric relied on her position as a True Woman upholding her place in the domestic sphere. For Packard, this space was her asylum home. She could use her position as a mother and Christian for influencing others in their societal roles. Such roles, however,

[156] Packard 181.
[157] Packard 248.
[158] Packard 249.

could be pushed into action. It was proper for asylums to run as humane institutions such as a true home should with men protecting women though not abusing them. The government must uphold this or it was supporting despotism within a democratic nation. This meant change had to happen—Packard's ultimate goal.

"I do profess to take the works and word of God, or facts and revelation as our only infallible guide in our search for truth": The Metaphorical Pulpit

Conduct manuals gave advice to readers, and Packard used the genre in that way. Sermons were yet another genre, one Packard knew well, that had the purpose of changing behavior. She believed her text to be similar to God's word: "The record of the adamantine pen of God himself will in his own way and time be revealed in complete detail. This record can never be obliterated….I am determined, by God's help, now to write my own history in chapters indelible and indestructible in my own honest deeds."[159] *Modern Persecution* was the word she chose to preach. Much like the word of God, she believed that her writing could not be destroyed as it was the "truth" just as that spoken from the pulpit. Packard astutely addressed and drew in her audience with the popular form of the sermon. She adopted a male form of writing/speaking in doing this. Despite the fact that women made up the majority of congregants in nineteenth-century Protestant churches, men still held onto the positions of authority in most churches. Roxanne Mountford notes that the nineteenth century saw a strong push for "preacher" to become synonymous with "manliness." She states that a preacher's authority was absolute and "minister" was associated with "man."[160] Packard knew this as the wife of a strict Presbyterian minister. She had already attempted to make her views known once in the church through the

[159] Packard 187.
[160] Mountford 51.

Bible study group and was not only admonished for it but also confined in an asylum. She took a risk using the sermon in her narrative, but it is one that paid off. Packard was able to call on God and use religious rhetoric in convincing her reader about the wrongs in asylums and confinement laws. Didactic in its essence, the sermon was a motivator for its audience. Mountford offered the stance of Austin Phelps, author of several nineteenth-century manuals on preaching. Phelps believed that sermons were "above all a form of argument, argument based in logic and deduced from denominational doctrines, or 'truths.'"[161] Packard made her "truths' clear to the reader in the opening of her text. Turning to the genre of the sermon was a means of solidifying these truths in an argument that would compel her reader to action.

Two sermons stand out as possible models for Packard. One of these is a sermon by Unitarian minister William Ellery Channing and the other is from the celebrated Henry Ward Beecher. Because Packard's own religious views were more in line with the Unitarian views on God and religion it seemed appropriate to illustrate how this genre used by a Unitarian minister worked. Beecher was not only a reformer, like Packard, but highly respected and well known in the United States in the nineteenth-century. He was the editor-in-chief, for a time, of the *Independent,* a newspaper Packard read while in the asylum. Beecher had also been a former suitor of Packard. Additionally, his printed sermons were in mass circulation.[162] In Vol. II of her autobiography Packard puts Beecher on a pedestal quoting his sermon "Seeing Eye to Eye." She argues that Beecher "rises one step above his contemporaries."[163] His sermon as a generic example for Packard's writing would be an obvious choice.[164]

[161] Mountford 59.
[162] Channing 81.
[163] Packard Vol II (126).
[164] Carlisle 31. Carlisle noted "The personal theology that Packard later developed drew in part from the combined influences of her Congregationalist upbringing and Beecher's exuberant teaching".

During her stay at the Jacksonville Asylum, Packard read various newspapers and books. Among these were the writings of Dr. Channing.[165] Channing's sermon "Spiritual Freedom" preached on May 26, 1830 provides a framework for understanding Packard's reproof of Dr. McFarland. The rhetoric of Channing and Packard share an abundance of similarities. Channing's sermon included warnings to his listener/reader when he offered, "He only is free who, through self-conflict and moral resolution, sustained by trust in God, subdues the passions which have debased him, and, escaping the thralldom of low objects, binds himself to pure and lofty ones."[166] Packard used the same ideas as Channing to preach to Dr. McFarland about the wrongs of his ways. She wrote, "Dr. McFarland, it is my honest opinion that the principles upon which you treat the inmates of this institution, are contrary to reason, to justice, to humanity."[167] To Packard, Dr. McFarland's rule of the asylum is the "scourge of mankind" and she let her reader know this.

With an attempt to compel her reader to act, Packard sermonized to her/him not only in her letter to Dr. McFarland but from the opening of her narrative to its close. The religious treatise that she presented in the Sunday School class was her first entry into the genre. She stated, "since upon these opinions, there expressed, rests the foundation of the whole subsequent drama."[168] Her treatise, however, reads like a sermon given from the pulpit. It put Packard in a position to offer advice to others and evoke action from them. She saw the practical use in the sermon.[169] She also had a familiarity with writing in this way. Thus it made sense for her to

[165] Carlisle 219.
[166] Channing 25.
[167] Packard Vol I (120).
[168] Packard xiii.
[169] In Patricia Bizzell's essay "Religion and Rhetoric: Reason, Emotion, and the Sensory Religious Persuasion" she notes that in early religious studies theologians, such as Augustine, combined "rhetoric and truth, emotion and reason." Packard's sermons did this in offering moral reprimands while calling for action. Bizzell quotes Debora Shuger noting, "'the orator moves by giving reason.'" This was precisely what Packard did over and over again. Patricia Bizzell, "Religion and Rhetoric: Reason, Emotion, and the Sensory Religious Persuasion," *Sizing up*

include this genre of sermon in her text. In a "clandestine letter" to the trustees of the Jacksonville Asylum written in 1861, Packard returned to the sermon having written, "When will my countrymen fear God, more than they do the oppressor? Gentleman, action, investigation, is demanded of towards the middle of her text in a "clandestine letter" to the trustees of the Jacksonville Asylum Packard returned to the sermon, "When will my countrymen fear God, more than they do the oppressor? Gentleman, action, investigation, is demanded of *you*, by this appeal, in order that your souls be found guiltless in this matter. Dare to do your duty, and God will bless you."[170] Unlike her treatise, this was a religious warning to the men who could make decisions about her fate and that of others like her. It was their godly duty to protect the men and women in insane asylums. She moved into the role of preacher here. Her letter is a written document telling the trustees that they must act according to God's law. She says that it is "demanded" of them. If they do not act on the advice of this letter, their souls will be guilty.

Turning to men with political power was a tactic Packard used throughout her work. Her final chapter was not to the government. Packard continued with her sermon even here. She began her chapter stating, "God's laws are above all other laws and therefore human instincts are above all human enactments….The law of sympathy, which God has established in out natures, as one of its noblest elements, suffers strangulation under this Asylum System."[171] Packard constructed the asylum system as one going against the nature of God's laws. As such, it was not only unjust and criminal, but also unchristian. She called life in an asylum a "soul strangulating

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Rhetoric (2008): 40-51. 42.Bizzell, Patricia. "Religion and Rhetoric: Reason, Emotion, and the Sensory Religious Persuasion." *Sizing up Rhetoric*. Long Grove: Waveland, 2008. 40-51. 42.

[170] Packard 185.

[171] Packard 397.

process."[172] Robbing humankind of their souls was indeed a crime against God in the eyes of Packard and, most likely, her reader as well

Packard threatened the doctor with her religion and much more; however, it is the threat of God that implicated the sermon in her writing. She stated, "You must receive according to your deeds, like all God's other accountable agents. I feel called of God, and I shall obey this call, to expose your character by exposing your actions, to the light of 1861, unless you repent."[173] She called on Dr. McFarland to change his ways. She warned him that if he did not do right and behave justly she would let the world know what he had done—she did just that in her publication of this private letter. This was precisely what Packard asked Dr. McFarland to do throughout her letter to him. In adopting this tone, she was most certainly sermonizing to the superintendent. She chastised him for his power hungry nature begging him to repent and seek a higher road—the road of compassion and humanity.

In making use of the sermon in her narrative, Packard adopted a sense of power placing her above Dr. McFarland both morally and metaphorically. She was using her role as the True Woman with a high moral sense. In playing the role of the spiritual guide and leader she puts herself in an authoritarian position within the home of the asylum—as proper space for her rhetoric. Packard took the sermon into her private space while at the same time making it public through publishing it in her book. She transgressed her position as the proper middle-class woman; however, the lines of private and public are blurry here. It was a private letter in sermonic style—an acceptable means of reproach to one she saw as acting immorally. Making it public though maintaining the genre of the letter complicates the notion that it is public. Thus

[172] Packard 397.
[173] Packard 123.

this maneuver of including her preaching as a letter played with the position of women's appropriate sphere.

Packard's use of the sermon pushed boundaries giving her the ability to safely adopt a "public" voice in the guise of a private one. Her page became a pulpit. Metaphorically she put herself in a space above McFarland morally. Pulpits elevated the speaker of sermons. As Mountford explains regarding the pulpit in the Protestant Church, the two became synonymous. "Pulpit" equaled "Church" as an institution.[174] While Packard was not literally standing on a pulpit, she was giving a sermon to McFarland. Therefore, she stood above him not only as a pious woman with authority in the home but also as a representative of the church. Additionally, as someone who took the sermon and made it her own, she adopted the mantle of the church making herself synonymous with the Protestant religion itself. Through putting sermons within her text Packard not only gave herself authority over McFarland but also created an agency that her husband had attempted to steal from her when he condemned her religious views. Her use of the sermon then reconnected to her Introduction where she offered her reader her religious views. Seeing these two aspects of the narrative as a whole it becomes clear that Packard focused on her role as good Christian middle-class woman and subversively moved it outside of the home into the public.

"No Surrender": Novelistic Techniques of Resistance and Reform

While Packard wrote in didactic genres, she was also, of course, writing her story. Hers was a history of her experience. Wood notes this in her work arguing that in writing in the vein

[174] Roxanne Mountford, "On Gender and Rhetorical Space," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* Winter 2001, 31:41-71. *JStor*. Web. 20 Jan. 2011. 43.

of captivity narrative Packard grounded her text in a strong autobiographical tradition.[175] For Wood, Packard's use of captivity narratives also served to maintain her connection with religion and spirituality. According to Wood, *Modern Persecution* was a text constructed to convince the reader of the author's spiritual nature. I take this a step further advocating that Packard's use of the captivity narrative creates another image of the proper pious Victorian woman. Packard saw herself as held captive in the asylum and portrayed herself as such. In this way Packard did several savvy things. First, she made use of a genre popular in the seventeenth-century with Puritans and with slaves and abolitionists in the nineteenth century. She alluded to the ideology of religious freedom and the abolition movement, popular at the time when she was confined. This was another way of connecting herself and her story to issues of the day in order to draw the reader into her story. Simultaneously, she was tied to True Womanhood.

Packard could connect her writing to the events of her time because she kept herself informed during her confinement. Packard's confinement coincided with the Civil War. She worked to have newspapers brought into the asylum so she might read about the affairs of her country at war. She wrote, "I felt it a great privation to be deprived of the news of the war."[176] Despite being stolen from the outside world ,she longed to keep contact with it. Through persistence and sometimes secrecy, Packard received the St. Louis daily paper and the *Independent* weekly to keep in touch with current events. She would have been well aware of the rhetoric of freedom as one of the battlegrounds of the Civil War. She astutely included this rhetoric with allusions to slavery throughout her narrative.

She referred to the labor of inmates as "slave labor" saying of Dr. McFarland, her captor, "This salary is thus earned for him by his slave. His own action, or rather his inaction, shows that

[175] Wood 27.
[176] Packard 250.

he is almost totally indifferent to the interests of his prisoners, only so far as his interests can be promoted by an assumed regard for theirs."[177] Dr. McFarland was a slave master here only caring for his "slaves" in so far as they benefited him. Packard likened herself and her fellow "prisoners" to slaves in order to enter into the discussions of the day.[178]

Freedom of the slaves was on the minds of Americans as Reconstruction continued in the South and the country struggled to understand what Emancipation would mean to the nation. Packard concluded that her confinement went beyond the cruelty of slavery. She wrote, "Yet under our present system, we are regarded and treated as their slaves, or as convicts in a Penitentiary, condemned to work or risk the penalty of disobedience….'This is one of the greatest systems of oppression and cruelty to human beings, the world ever witnessed.'"[179] Like slaves, the inmates must work or suffer punishment; however, life in the asylum was worse than slavery to Packard. It served as an institution of extreme tyranny and wrongs to humanity. If slavery was illegal in the nation, certainly something that was harsher than that must be a blemish on the rights of Americans—men or women. By the time she published her narrative, slavery had been abolished, and this tactic would most likely call to mind the idea that slavery was, in fact, a violation of the Constitution and the rights of humanity. This connection to the ideology of the United States portrays a woman with strong republican values. These are the values mothers must pass down to their sons in order to maintain a great nation. Recalling freedom and liberty in her text gives her power as a mother.

Authority as a republican mother was important but religious conviction even more so and Packard's captivity narrative rhetoric provided evidence of this. Captivity narratives of the

[177] Packard 204.
[178] Wood 61. Wood made the claim that Packard also evoked the image of the slave master through her description of a husband's absolute control of his wife.
[179] Packard 269.

seventeenth century often included "warnings" about "taking God for granted."[180] Packard, despite her progressive ideals on religion that got her placed in the asylum in the first place, harkened back to this early tradition of writing. She reminded her reader to rely on God when in trouble and seek comfort in religion. In one of the most famous captivity narratives, Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God,* Rowlandson wrote, "It is not my tongue, or pen can express the sorrows of my heart and bitterness of my spirit, that I had at this departure: but God was with me, in a wonderfull manner, carrying me along, and bearing up my spirit, that it did not quite fail."[181] Packard sought such comfort when she cried, "I often think this hell is not so unmitigated in its torments as the hell of lost spirits is represented to be, by their resting not, day nor night. Could not these prison torments be suspended by sleep, they must soon become intolerable for physical nature to sustain. God grant me deliverance from endless, unmitigated torment!"[182] She was truly the captive here living in a place worse than hell for she could not find rest in the asylum. She turned to God for sustenance and peace from the agitation and pain of life behind bars. It was in religion that she would find peace as Rowlandson did. This was a way in which Packard could protest through a sense of might and right while maintaining her proper voice.

Teaching Through Sensation: Nineteenth-Century Novelistic Tools

While nineteenth-century conduct manuals, sermons, and captivity narratives were respectable works offering, advice and wisdom, sensational novels represented the other end of the spectrum. After all, the very setting for Volume I of *Modern Persecution* was an insane

[180] Introduction. Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* Ed. Neal Salisbury, (Boston: Bedford, 1997) 6.
[181] Rowlandson 73.
[182] Packard 211.

asylum—a setting found in the sensational novels of serialized novelists like Wilkie Collins, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and Charles Reade. Sensational fiction, however, was not merely about character and setting, villains and asylums. While sensational novels relied on "improper" behavior of men and women, these portrayals were capable of teaching readers how not to behave. As English scholar Jennifer Phegley notes, sensation fiction relied on compelling storylines of middle-class society where characters were involved in secret illegal acts such as murder.[183] Phegley writes that such stories in nineteenth-century fiction were a valuable tool in educating readers about morals and proper behavior. As Phegley discusses, "women can learn from the scandalous situations of others without being compelled to copy them."[184] Sensational fiction can illustrate the dangers and consequences of improper behavior. Through novelistic techniques, Packard created moral advice for her audience. At the same time she did so with the use of sensation as writers of the time might do. Packard constructed a work that reads like a novel at times. She created a work of sensational fiction.

Indeed, in order to grab the audience's attention in sensational fiction a writer must rely on exciting language. There was an element of the nineteenth-century sensational novel in chapter titles like "Evil Forebodings," "My Abduction," "Clandestine Letters," and "My Life Imperilled." Such titles suggest foul play and provoke the reader in wanting to know more. Packard, like other characters in the nineteenth-century sensational novel, was wrongly imprisoned in an insane asylum. The difference for her was that she remained strong, perhaps even gained moral courage and fortitude while imprisoned. Packard had more fight in her when she was released three years after her commitment than when she was confined. This went against the novels of the time like Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859), in which those

[183] Jennifer Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader: Victorian Family Literary Magazines and the Cultural Health of the Nation* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2004) 111.
[184] Phegley 131.

who were wrongly confined suffered immense mental anguish and were never the same person as before their asylum stay. Both of Collins' women in *The Woman in White,* Anne Catherick and Laura Fairlie, came out of the asylum weakened in the mind and physically meeker than when they entered the gated walls. Asylums are associated with destabilizing the spirit and mind. Packard came out stronger and more determined than when she was forced in against her will.[185] She showed herself to be a woman incapable of showing mental weakness even in the face of adversity—asserting her sanity.

If Packard was the heroine averting insanity and the evils of the asylum, then Dr. McFarland was the villain in her tale. He is much like Collins' Count Fosco. Just as Count Fosco of *The Woman in White* was a two-faced manipulative fraud, so was the asylum superintendent for Packard. In her reproof to Dr. McFarland she declared," Dr. McFarland, it is my honest opinion that the principles upon which you treat the inmates of this institution, are contrary to reason, to justice, to humanity."[186] He was an irrational, unjust, inhumane man put in a position to care for and treat people deemed insane. She continued in this vein writing, "You seem to regard insanity as a crime—a capital crime—to be punished with death, by slow torture."[187] Here Packard went further than offering her reader a villain; in fact, he was executioner. Not only did McFarland run a madhouse but also one where torture led to death and the means by which he intended to treat all his patients. With a monster managing the asylum, Packard provoked intrigue and excitement for the reader while teaching a moral lesson. Sensational novels could illustrate for readers how they should stay on the straight and narrow path in life.

[185] However, Packard gave plenty of examples in her narrative of women whose souls were destroyed as a direct result of life in the asylum.
[186] Packard 120.
[187] Packard 121.

Packard asserted her role as a proper woman in offering moral advice through novelistic techniques. Her advice, however, is not to the layperson here but to the lawmakers and the superintendents of the asylums across the nation. She invites her reader into the book with exciting chapter titles, a curious setting, and forces of good (Packard) and evil (McFarland) fighting each other. Once in the narrative Packard's rhetoric might sway their views of confinement and treatment of the insane. They would see abuses and control much like that found in popular novels of the Victorian time period. Packard made it clear in her text that misuse of power in the asylums was immoral through her literary devices.

Packard used genres of conduct manuals, sermons, captivity narratives, and sensational fiction that gave her power as a woman while maintaining a safe space for her voice. In each genre she was pious and moral illustrating abuses in the asylum and seeking action from her audience in return. Packard elicited the image of the good woman, wife, and patient through the genre of the conduct manual that sought to teach others proper codes of conduct. With the sermon Packard found a position of authority that was both morally powerful and yet grounded in religious rhetoric becoming to a woman. As author of sensationalism Packard could draw in the reader with exciting language and a mysterious plot. She set this up so that she could then illustrate how it was that the villain—McFarland—was the example of immorality and evil and she the moralist. Packard included these genres and established credibility while seeking change.

"Writing will be of no use, whatever": Conclusion

Dr. McFarland's wife told Packard, "writing will be of no use, whatever."[188] Packard took it upon herself to challenge the status quo. She managed this through multiple genres. Writing was, despite Mrs. McFarland's claim, of great use as it called her reader to action. In this

[188] Packard 129.

way she sought reformative action for changing the ways women such as herself were treated in asylums. Sapinsley claims that Packard earned more than $50,000 through her writing. Packard sought legal change in thirty-one states and saw change come to fruition in over half of those states.[189] Mrs. McFarland could not have been more wrong. For Packard, writing was power.

Reform came through diverse rhetorical strategies in Packard's text. Regardless of the genre she used Packard remained the good mother, moral wife, and well-behaved patient. Her voice was one of propriety that would carry influence and honesty in the nineteenth century. At the same time, her strategies would draw a wide readership. She was striving to change laws in Illinois, and throughout the United States. She chose genres that were popular and well known to her reader as well as those proven successful in persuading readers, like images. She spoke to men and women of all literate backgrounds in applying multiple genres in her writing. She was savvy in choosing genres that were not only popular but effective means of persuasion. Conduct manuals and sermons were meant to affect change in the reader. Captivity narratives served as sites of negotiation between reader and author. Packard went beyond writing in "safe" genres including those that were considered masculine. Most of all she knew that the printed word had power and she relied on this.

Packard's supporters were not the only ones taking action regarding her case. Medical practitioners in the field of psychiatry spoke out against Packard's position on confinement laws. Dr. McFarland resigned his position at Jacksonville over the controversy. Apparently, he then sought a seat in the Illinois State Legislature.[190] An 1871 editorial from *The American Journal of Insanity* defended McFarland and ridiculed Packard. McFarland would be an "ornament" to the legislature and he was "perfectly competent to give a proper and wise direction to legislation on

[189] Sapinsley 199.
[190] This is according to an editorial in the *American Journal of Insanity* in 1871.

the subject of hospitals for the insane and other State Charities."[191] McFarland comes across as a man of noble stature. Packard, on the other hand, is called "a fascinating crazy woman."[192] Within the community of the AMSAII Packard was seen as not merely un-credible but as the insane woman—an image she fought to debunk through her writing.

Despite what others had to say about Packard, in 1866 she was witness to the Illinois legal reform she had worked diligently to see passed. The Personal Liberty Bill passed granting women legal identity. Packard assured her legislative audience that it was through man's protection for women that such a law was needed and as such she wanted to present this law to a legislature of men for they were the natural protectors of women.[193] Passage of this bill may serve as proof that Packard's autobiographical text converted readers and compelled them into action. Prior to the Illinois bill protecting women's rights, Packard worked to influence the passage of laws changing confinement practices in Massachusetts in 1865. It was the sale of her multi-genre narrative to which she accounted this triumph. She wrote, "I have sold one hundred and thirty-nine books in the Navy Yard within the last day and a half, conversing personally with gentlemen in their counting-rooms on this subject, and they are carefully watching your decision on this question."[194] She put her narrative to work convincing businessmen, voters, of the wrongs of confinement laws and then used their influence for pushing lawmakers into action. Packard relied on her autobiographical work as her mouthpiece. Through her writing she told her story while funding her cause for reform. Reliance on the written word was her primary tool and her achieved goals took root in states across the country.

[191] *American Journal of Insanity* 1871 qtd. in Goshen 666.
[192] Goshen 666.
[193] Packard Vol II (194).
[194] Packard 197.

Packard's work would serve as a model for later authors of madness narratives—women such as Lemira Clarissa Pennell and Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop. Both writers turned to multiple genres in their highly varied texts protesting their confinement and treatment in American insane asylums. Packard was the trailblazer. Her work created a genre—one that used multiple genres for a specific purpose. For Packard this purpose was gaining a large readership. In doing this, she saw that she could gain more supporters for her cause—changing confinement laws in the United States. Popular genres of the mid-nineteenth century were Packard's tools and the printed page her medium. She crafted a work of complexity and persuasion. Readers became supporters to her cause allowing her to affect change through her writing.

CHAPTER THREE

SCRAPS HERE AND THERE: LEMIRA CLARISSA PENNELL'S *"PRECEDENTS" AND EXPLANATIONS: MEMORIAL SCRAP BOOK A BOOK OF PERSONALITIES*

"Now can any person think of my imprisonment in that hell of torment, and not feel a thrill of indignation that such things are possible in this nineteenth century."

Lemira Clarissa Pennell wrote this in her 1883 account of her time in the Maine Insane Hospital in 1880. She spent ten weeks there beginning in April of that year.[195] Pennell's work titled *"Precedents" and Explanations: Memorial Scrap Book A Book of Personalities* does not read like other madness narratives. In her own words, it "is not a continued story, beginning at the year of grace, one or two, and carried like a novel which only reveals the secret at the finis, things are told in sections; boiled down all of it."[196] Unlike the more linear narrative of Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard, Pennell's narrative is entirely nonlinear. While both texts are multi-genre, Pennell's works, quite literally, as a scrapbook. It includes various texts collected from multiple sources as well as materials Pennell authored, and all of these components are artfully assembled to make a larger point. Pennell's work is difficult to follow at times and requires some outside knowledge of her confinement and circumstances surrounding it, which I will offer shortly.[197] This non-linear construction supports the genre norm of a scrapbook—an inherently multi-genre creation. It did not follow a pattern, but kept its goal in sight. Issues of sanitary reform, asylum reform, and various genres supporting her causes appear here and there in what seem to be no particular order. In doing this, Pennell invited readers who may not have had interest in reading three hundred fifty pages of narrative to share in the knowledge of what was

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[195] Geller 107.
[196] Lemira Clarissa Pennell, "*Precedents" and Explanations: Memorial Scrap Book A Book of Personalities* (Boston, 1883) 15.
[197] As much as the outside knowledge of Pennell's life assists in understanding her confinement, little biographical information is available. Most of what can be found is from Pennell's other writings.

happening in asylums in the late nineteenth century. Instead, she set up a short text that offered glimpses here and there into the reasons behind her "wrongful" confinement and the abuses of asylum treatment. Her multi-genre scrapbook revealed how a woman could use non-traditional strategies for raising awareness of social issues in nineteenth-century America.

Social issues Packard discussed on asylum reform continued in the nineteenth century. Pennell not only addressed these in her text, but others as well. In this chapter, I argue that in moving herself from object to subject in her text Pennell's multi-genre scrapbook serves as an artifact representing the ways in which women moved between the ideals of True Womanhood and the New Woman. Her disjointed writing may be seen as a troublesome rhetorical construction of identity in a time of flux. I seek to answer the following questions: How do scrapbooks as a genre of multiple genres work in creating an author's identity? What does this genre tell readers about how women viewed their rhetorical power in the later half of the nineteenth century? How does Pennell alter perceptions of her agency through rhetoric? How does Pennell's scrapbook reveal a move between rhetorical strategies of True Women and the New Woman?

Piecing it Together: Scrapbooks as Genre

Scrapbooks are the offspring of commonplace books. Bricolage was a key element to the commonplace book. Both were most often composed of others' works whether scraps or text. Susan Miller, English scholar, suggests that commonplace books were composed from material that the "copyist," or author of the commonplace book, believed "warranted preservation."[198] Historian Earle Havens categorizes narratives like Pennell's as a "hybrid

[198] Susan Miller, *Assuming the Positions: Cultural Pedagogy and the Politics of Commonplace Writing* (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1998) 41.

commonplace/scrapbook" containing both pasted scraps from other sources and a manuscript.[199] Pennell included her own narrative, poems, and letters in her book creating a text that worked as a scrapbook revealing her life experience. In her versions of a commonplace book, Brenda Brueggemann notes that "commonplace books (also known as 'commonplaces') were used by readers, writers, students—both famous and common—as collections, much like a modern scrapbook, for remembering pithy sayings or aphorisms, key concepts, facts, or events that one had learned, read, encountered."[200] Pennell may have created a scrapbook that would mirror those before her time. However, like scrapbooks of the nineteenth century, Pennell collected scraps of articles, letters, conversations, etc. so she could construct a patient's view of the asylum system.

In the 1800s, scrapbooks were a popular mode of keeping record of events in one's lifetime whether related to one's life or the world in general. This fits with E.W. Gurley's 1880 instructional book *Scrap-Books and How to Make Them*. Gurley described scrapbooks as "mosaics."[201] In addition, their uses include educating and providing both compilers and audiences with "a fund of information."[202] Ellen Gruber Garvey discusses how scrapbooks were kept for numerous reasons, one of which was to pass the information on to others including those in reform movements.[203] Pennell's construction of this autobiographical work as a scrapbook containing newspaper articles and others' letters showed her reader that this was not merely the story of one woman, but a reform text revealing wrongs of a system that used confinement for social control. Pennell preserves a moment in time that might have been otherwise lost. Buckler

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[199] Earle Havens, *Commonplace Books: A History of Manuscripts and Printed Books from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* (UP of New England, 2001) 90.
[200] Brenda Jo Brueggemann, *Deaf Subjects: Between Identities and Places* (New York: New York UP, 2009) 3-4.
[201] E.W. Gurley, *Scrap-Books and How to Make Them*. (New York: The Author's Publishing Co., 1880) 6.
[202] Gurley 11.
[203] Ellen Gruber Garvey, "'The Power of Recirculation'": Scrapbooks and the Reception of the Nineteenth-Century Press," *New Directions in American Reception Study* (2008): 335-370. 335.

et al noted, "scrapbooks, then, are a material manifestation of memory—the memory of the compiler and the memory of the cultural moment in which they were made."[204] Pennell published her *Memorial Scrap Book* at a time in asylum history when doctors, trustees, and society began questioning the effectiveness of moral treatment. Pennell put together a patient's view of this transitory period offering readers an alternative view of the medical and public perceptions of asylums and treatment.

Scrapbooks, according to historian Jessica Helfand, were a way for a woman to assemble "a more open-ended and forgiving canvas upon which to record her own first-person history" moving away from "conventions" of Victorian times and eliminating the rules of constructing the self in a text.[205] Scrapbooks provided their makers with the opportunities to "preserve marks of [one's] inner identity and [the] best self within a scrapbook" as Carol Bowers states in her discussion of a Wyoming prostitute.[206] In the nineteenth century some might not have seen Pennell as so different from a prostitute. Both women were deviant—they did not fit into the proper social norms of middle-class behavior. And thus it is not surprising that they would choose to use "an autobiographical form but with a twist."[207] According to Patricia P. Buckler and C. Kay Leeper, "The antebellum woman's scrapbook is an autobiographical statement where text and artifact meet."[208] This assertion that a woman's scrapbook is both a story of her life and a place of material culture works in explaining Pennell's rhetorical choice of writing a scrapbook. She displayed her own experience alongside a record of the times. It offered a look into the world of insane asylums, sanitary reform, and one woman's struggle with nineteenth-

[204] Susan Tucker, Katherine Ott, and Patricia P. Buckler, *The Scrapbook in American Life* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2006) 3.
[205] Jessica Helfand, *Scrapbooks: An American History* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2008) 2.
[206] Tucker 2. Bowers' article is described in the Introduction. Carol Bowers, "The Secret Scrapbook of a 'Soiled Dove,'" (2006): 155-173.
[207] Tucker 2.
[208] Patricia P. Buckler and C. Kay Leeper, "An Antebellum Woman's Scrapbook As Autobiographical Composition," *Journal of American Culture* 14:1 (1991): 1-8. 1

century medical and civil institutions. This fits into the notion that recording one's life in what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls an indigenous mode, or what modern readers might consider non-traditional autobiographical texts, may be "intensely social and interactive."[209]

Creating a scrapbook also allowed Pennell to pick and choose what others were saying about her. This was another characteristic of nineteenth-century scrapbooks as Buckler and Leeper state. It allowed for "self-determination."[210] In choosing what material went into a scrapbook a woman also created agency. She was in control of what text and images were presented to the audience. Pennell took material and genres that made her object and reversed the process making her the subject and putting her in control of the public rhetoric of the story of Lemira Clarissa Pennell. By including a multitude of text types, Pennell gave herself a voice that pushed against her as the woman who others wrote about to the woman who wrote her own experience. Her scrapbook gives her back authorial power and moves her from object to subject.

She put the chapters together into one text and published it as a whole. This served as a way of "turn[ing] fracture into harmony creat[ing] unity out of differences."[211] Just as scrapbooks are put together with parts, her *Scrap Book* was constructed of pieces placed side by side for creating a text of multiple chapters and genres that brought together seemingly "fractur[ed]" parts addressing sanitary reform, wrongful confinement, and criticism of religion.

Pennell's Introduction to the text and the body of the text are comprised of multiple genres. She included letters, newspaper articles, and scraps from previously published works. Pennell chose letters that addressed her confinement in the hospital and the poor house. Letters were most often exchanged between Pennell and professional men. She showed that she had the

[209] Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, "Authoring Lives," *Journal of Folklore Research* (May-Aug 1989) 26: 123-149. 139.
[210] Buckler 1.
[211] Tucker 16.

know-how to communicate with these authority figures despite her label and confinement. Not all letters she exchanged are included in the narrative. It is clear from the text that correspondence is missing. Pennell astutely chose letters she could manipulate for her purposes of reform action.

Newspaper articles addressed her sanitary reform work and called for her release from the Maine Insane Hospital. Like the letters, Pennell made decisions about which clippings would appear in the narrative. In this way she constructed her identity through the press as one of a sane woman. Although others author these newspaper articles, Pennell reconstitutes them as her own through "pasting" them into her book. As such, she turns herself from the object of the articles into the subject. Pennell titled subsections with legal terminology as a means of letting her reader know that she was, indeed, familiar with the genres of legal texts and legal matters. She even argued her own case in print and offered legal documents into evidence. This inclusion of multiple types of texts provided her text with more proof that she was sane and gave credence to the title *Memorial Scrap Book*.

This is exactly what Pennell's narrative does. She becomes the first person of all the texts she used even when these various genres originally construct her as an object. In claiming them as her own, she owns her past that others strove to take away from her in print as well as behind locked doors. In looking at the work from beginning to end, a reader can see how the varied parts come together in putting Pennell's voice above that of those who sought to tell her story. While she included the writing of others, whether letters, newspaper articles, or legal documents, these pieces become her own. Her original place in such texts as an object of scrutiny, commentary, labeling, or ridiculing is replaced by her role as the subject through re-authoring each text.

Pennell pulled selected text from earlier publications that met her purpose and that she believed proved her points on sanitary reform, wrongful confinement, and religious misconduct. They were not always chronological or complete. Truly, Pennell took her earlier works and put them into her bank of scraps. In choosing what went into this account, Pennell was no longer the object of the press, medical examination, or letters. She was the author of her story and agent of her rhetoric. Pennell possessed power through language but what is known of her later life illustrates that she lacked this in daily life.

A Life Unknown: Pennell's Biographical Puzzle Pieces

Lemira Clarissa Pennell's childhood is unknown except that she was born near Gardiner, Maine.[212] According to *Vital Records of Augusta, Maine, to the Year 1892* Lemira C. Ormsby married Francis Pennell of Portland on November 5, 1843.[213] She had two children and found herself widowed sometime in the 1860s. According to historian Elizabeth Sheehan, Pennell died in 1893 in the Augusta Mental Health Institute.[214] Pennell did not write about her final institutionalization but did write about earlier confinement both in an insane asylum and a poor-house. Despite the small amount of biographical information about Pennell's early life and the reception of her texts, her writing remains a vital insight into women's treatment in asylums, asylum life, and a woman's effort at reforming social institutions.

[212] Elizabeth Sheehan, "Love, Travel, and Rumor: New Finding on the Life of the Reverend N.W.T. Root, a Principal Actor in Portland's Nineteenth-Century Drama 'The Perils of Lemira Pennell,'" *Maine History* 42:3 (October 2005): 187-190. 188.
[213] Maine Historical Society. *Vital Records of Augusta, Maine, to the Year 1892* (P of Merrill and Webber, 1933).
[214] Sheehan 188.

On April 9, 1880 police detained Pennell and took her to an insane asylum in Maine. She was released "after ten weeks of horror" and declared "not improved."[215] She was then readmitted to the asylum for another five months "and again discharged by the unanimous vote of the full board of trustees, because nothing was the matter with me at that time, or while I had been there."[216] From here Pennell was given into the hands of Mr. Baker, affiliated with the Portland poor-house. She spent nineteen days in the poor-house "confined with idiot, criminal, and lunatic paupers of all colors and nationalities."[217] Pennell was not one who believed in equality among classes or races. She clearly resented her confinement among those she deemed of lower status in society. She was a woman of education and knowledge, and life among those who did not have this was difficult for her.

Pennell's first publication in 1879, *Sanitary Matters at Large and Elsewhere,* dealt exclusively with sanitary reform. In 1883 Pennell published a preview to her *Memorial Scrap Book* titled "An Explanation to the Public as to why Mrs. L.C. Pennell was confined in the Insane Hospital and the Portland Poorhouse." Shortly thereafter came her *Memorial Scrap Book* followed by *This Red Book* in 1886. Lastly, she published *High Church and Low Church vs "Morality!!" A Sequel to the sixth edition of "This Red Book."* Most works were written in traditional format. Rather than including parts and pieces, a multitude of genres, each one followed a chronological approach with a single genre. These were distinctly different from her *Memorial Scrap Book* that took a non-direct approach to telling her story of life in a Maine lunatic asylum in the 1880s. Her rhetorical choices here were intentional. She believed that her

[215] Lemira Clarissa Pennell, *This Red Book is partly a reprint of what was published in 1183, and later. And earlier letters from prominent men. Instructions to Dr. Harlow, from Springfield, his letters from the hospital, and much else* (Boston, 1886) 9.
[216] Pennell does not offer the date of readmittance or the date of release. Geller explains only that Pennell was held in the Maine Insane Hospital in Augusta for ten weeks beginning in April 1880. 107.
[217] Pennell *This Red Book* 10.

pamphlet *Sanitary Matters at Large*, later published as *Sickness v. Smells*, was the cause for her incarceration. As such her next work on reform was less confrontational pieced together in the style of what was primarily a woman's genre—the scrapbook. When *Memorial Scrap Book* did not receive the attention she may have hoped for in writing and publishing it, she returned to the traditional method of writing about her health reform efforts and her experience in the asylum. Whether a return to this traditional method resulted in her later institutionalization is unknown.[218]

Pennell declared in the *Memorial Scrap Book* that she was confined because of her efforts toward sanitary reform. Looking at her texts on sanitary reform is crucial in understanding her reasoning behind this accusation. Whether or not she is accurate in her claims cannot be proved; however, in going after private corporations, government departments, doctors, and wealthy landlords Pennell certainly made herself a target for retribution. While she certainly mentioned specific names of doctors, city officials, and church leaders in the *Memorial Scrap Book*, she was less aggressive in her tone. She even declared, "It makes me very cautious what I say now."[219] This came after a doctor told her that her "mental unsoundness" was directly connected to her sarcasm.[220] Knowing this it seemed that Pennell used the words of not only herself but bits and pieces of others' support of her sanity turning away from a direct rhetorical approach used in earlier texts.

Direct Approaches and Dangerous Critiques: *Sanitary Matters at Large and Elsewhere*

Pennell wrote her first publication *Sanitary Matters at Large and Elsewhere* in 1879 and re-published her pamphlet as *Sickness vs. Smells, and Vice Versa* in 1889. Her original reform

[218] Pennell died in an insane asylum; however, there is little if any information about why and when she was confined.
[219] Pennell *Memorial* 45.
[220] Pennell 45.

piece on sanitary reform included letters from well-respected men: a reverend, a professor, the superintendent of the Lewiston, Massachusetts' schools, and members of the Massachusetts' state board of health. She both began and closed with these as support for her claims. They all came with titles of sorts and represented the professional world. In introducing them Pennell's exact words were printed in all capitalized letters reading, "TESTIMONY OF EMINENT MEN." These men were literally testifying to the need for sanitary reform and praising Pennell's work in this arena. They gave Pennell a much-needed ethos as an unknown woman and layperson calling for sanitary reform.

There was a preface and seven sections to the sixteen-page pamphlet. Each section had a title such as "Sanitary Work.—The Cause of Diptheria" and "Doctor's Wives." Pennell saw this pamphlet as one of two that would inspire readers "to recognize the close relations existing between *diseases* and the *causes* of disease."[221] According to historian Nancy Tomes, this was central for the medical profession during this time. Although Pennell saw herself as a sanitary reformer, she did not necessarily rely on "'sanitary science.'"[222] Pennell's views on sanitary reform were situated somewhere between the older notion of sanitary science and those of germ theory. Thus, she was controversial in her reform ideas. She was not a medical professional, yet professed to the science behind sanitary reform.

In her ideas, whether scientific or otherwise, Pennell was neither meek nor restrained. She did not censor herself in *Sanitary Matters at Large*. She went after those she felt responsible for poor sanitary conditions that caused disease and death. Her first culprit was the world of industry, which she connected to city government. Their factories produced noxious odors and

[221] Lemira Clarissa Pennell, *Sanitary Matters at Large and Elsewhere*, (Lewiston: Geo. A. Callahan, 1879) 2.
[222] Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998) 27. Tomes noted that sanitary science rested on the idea that diseases came from filth. This was the predominant idea within the American community in 1880 when Dr. William H. Mays presented a paper on germ theory. This theory rested on the idea that disease came from germs rather than appearing "spontaneously" (26-27).

waste. She made connections in line with Pasteur's work published in 1861 revealing the idea that "dust and dirt" could help explain epidemics.[223] Pennell's idea was not mere abstraction. However, business owners didn't seem to take kindly to such suggestions of disease causation and would threaten to "take our factories to some other place" if required to change their practices.[224] Thus, their financial contribution to the city as taxpayer and employer outweighed the health concerns in Pennell's eyes. Pennell openly stated, "But *who* are the violators of sanitary laws mostly? *Almost mostly*, it is the city's own self, and *its* heaviest taxpayers."[225] Pennell had no remorse for calling out the private companies and the city that she believed cared only for its own economic gain.

She also accused rich landlords of "hid[ing] behind an agent" in an effort to keep from making necessary sanitation improvements in rental property.[226] Pennell believed that landlords, because they often lived far from their rental property and hired agents for day-to-day affairs, would make promises for improvements and then neglect them. She wrote, "*Without* such improvements in ventilation, drainage, and sundry other matters, which at the first were needful for health and comfort, a tenant is but too often compelled to wait months and years."[227] Such waiting only added to the possibility of contracting or furthering disease in the tenant's body. Unclean air had been proven to cause sickness by Dr. Joseph Lister's germ theory.[228] Whether Pennell was aware of such discoveries in medicine is unclear; however, germ theory was quickly coming into public awareness even as doctors were skeptical of it in the United States.[229] That a layperson, such as Pennell, would champion a theory unconfirmed in the medical establishment

[223] Tomes 31.
[224] Pennell *Sanitary* 3.
[225] Pennell 4-5.
[226] Pennell 5.
[227] Pennell 5.
[228] Tomes 33. Lister in the 1870s found that carbolic acid had an affect on reducing "the air's infective properties."
[229] Tomes 38.

was another reason she believed she was confined: "Dr Small said, 'It will be very humiliating to the medical profession if *you* get legislation in health reform.'"[230] Pennell took this to mean that her commentary and lack of a medical degree would embarrass men like Dr. Small. Perhaps it was also because she was a woman.

This status, however, did not keep Pennell from going after doctors. Her first attack on the medical profession accused "the doctor" of greed and lack of concern for sanitary matters.[231] In the section Pennell titled "Doctor's Wives," she created an imaginary conversation between a doctor and his wife. Again, the doctor was portrayed as greedy and only cares for making money rather than the health of his own family. His wife, on the other hand, challenged the doctor's ideas. Pennell offered a final line to this oppositional position stating, "If she does this, hurrah for the Doctor's Wife."[232] Pennell not only supported this disobedience, but celebrated it in her writing.

Continuing with this tone of defiance against the medical profession, Pennell wrote another imagined dialogue. This time it was between her and a doctor. She went after the doctor's views and lack of concern for sanitary conditions and connections to illness. Twice she told the doctor that she not finished on the subject and had more to say—she went on doing just that. After the doctor insulted her with advice to "'take some double extracted tincture of valerian when you retire,"' Pennell responded, "'Oh, but I shant rest, doctor, you'll hear from me again.'"[233] She would not be silenced nor would she let a doctor mock her and the vigilance she had in her reform efforts.

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[230] Pennell 7.
[231] Pennell 4. Pennell puts "the doctor" in quotation marks implying that there is some question if these men were worthy of the title and professional responsibility.
[232] Pennell 14.
[233] Pennell 16.

Despite the risks involved in spreading her ideas of sanitary reform, Pennell persisted. Her suggestion for improving health problems was to change to the laws so that "the rights of lessors and lessess will be equalized"[234] This was not necessarily something the wealthy wanted or would advocate. Closing the class gap in regards to sanitary reform may have been something Pennell saw as necessary, but something the middle and upper classes would not support. Nonetheless, Pennell openly made the connection between sanitary reform, legal reform, class reform, and medical reform—a bold move on the part of a nineteenth-century widow.

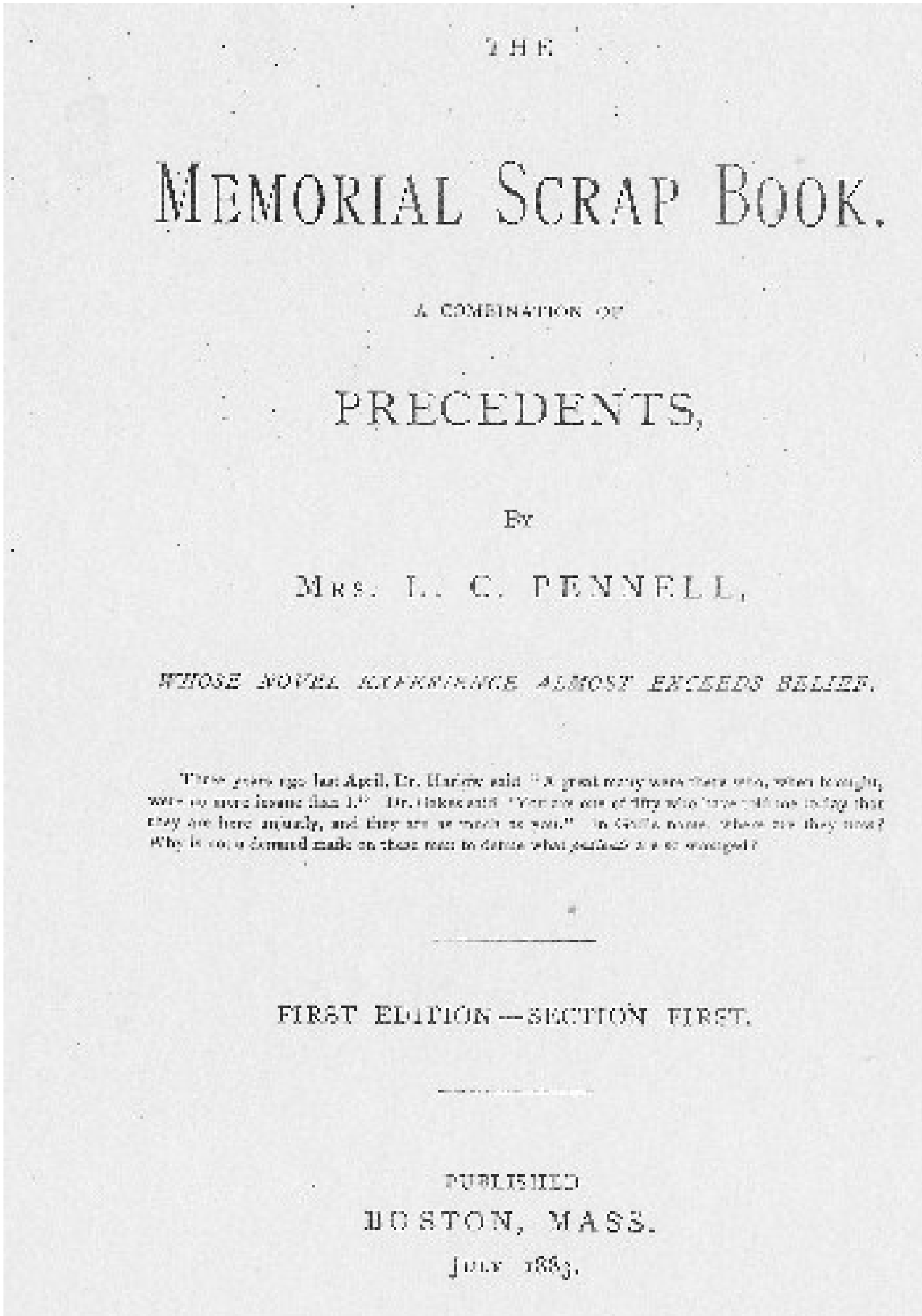
While Pennell was taking on social institutions with great power she failed to include hard evidence supporting her cause in the pamphlet. She offered her reader information on diptheria and its cause in two sections of her text, but does not provide medical facts. She made the claim that "fevers, diptheria, or other epidemics…are always due to unsanitary conditions."[235] This grand claim had nothing backing it up. Later in the writing, she gave an example of how "careful ventilation" was a positive and healthy thing but had no data for support.[236] Pennell was strong and direct in *Sanitary Matters* but lacked facts in her claims and examples. Pennell was not afraid of taking on professional patriarchal institutions with or without evidence. This sixteen-page work called for sanitary reform, stricter medical licensing laws, prescription drug reform, and medical reform.

Scraps & Glue: Construction of the *Memorial Scrap Book*

The *Memorial Scrap Book* was only forty-eight pages in length. It was sold at the cost of 20 cents, which was printed on the cover of the text. It was presumably self-published in Boston in 1883. It is clear from the title page that Pennell will include earlier works—these are "The

[234] Pennell 9.
[235] Pennell 7.
[236] Pennell 15.

Precedents." She would go on to explain these and how they worked in her confinement as well elaborate on her experiences. Pennell had "First Edition – Section First" printed on the title page. Here this is the implication that there will be more to follow this text relating to her confinement and treatment in the asylum. She was committed to making her story public through multiple publications.



THE

MEMORIAL SCRAP BOOK.

A COMBINATION OF

PRECEDENTS,

BY

MRS. L. C. PENNELL,

WHOSE NOVEL EXPERIENCE ALMOST EXCEEDS BELIEF.

Three years ago last April, Dr. Harlow said "A great many were there who, when brought, were no more insane than I." Dr. [illegible] said "You are one of fifty who have told me to-day that they are here unjustly, and they are as much as you." In God's name, where are they now? Why is not a demand made on these men to define what [illegible] are so wronged?

FIRST EDITION — SECTION FIRST.

PUBLISHED
BOSTON, MASS.
JULY 1883.

Figure 13. Cover of the *Memorial Scrap Book*.

Pennell began her text with a Preface. This preface was not about the text her reader would soon embark upon. Rather, it served to remind her reader that she was imprisoned for her beliefs in sanitary reform. She offered her reader outside support from experts explaining that her reform was logical and necessary concerning the health of the public. She wrote, "As a preface it seems proper to give a few quotations from the pens of those who have listened to the essay 'Sickness versus Smells,' a synopsis of which will now be printed for the *first* time."[237] Pennell quoted from "Sickness versus Smells"[238] in the *Memorial Scrap Book*. This took courage. For it was this essay/pamphlet that she saw as the reason she was confined. Including it in her autobiographical scrapbook was a risk. While she chose this gutsy rhetorical strategy for introducing her sanitary reform into her narrative, she knew that her words were not enough to convince a reader of the importance and relevance of her writing. She also offered support from two doctors, the principal of a normal school in Maine, a Congregational clergyman, and newspapers. This was done through quotes incorporated into her Preface and Introduction. Pennell, at times, turned to male figures of authority for support of her ideas; however, she controlled what pieces she chose in order to portray herself as the rational sanitary reformer she saw in the mirror. Again, this moves her from a position of object to subject.

Following the five-page Introduction, the *Memorial Scrap Book* was broken up into two main sections "Another Precedent" and "Insane Hospital Conditions and Poor-House Correspondence." Each of these was then broken up into smaller sections sometimes lasting pages, other times only a short paragraph. Each subsection served a purpose in telling a story, while not maintaining a chronology or even connections at times. Pennell's narrative is scattered

[237] Pennell *Memorial* 2.
[238] Pennell referred to *Sickness vs. Smells* throughout *The Memorial Scrap Book* using it interchangeably with *Sanitary Matters at Large and Elsewhere*.

yet complete in its re-telling of Pennell's experience from her perspective. She told this story of life inside the asylum intertwined with that of church scandal and sanitary reform.

Scandal and Scraps: A Multi-Genre Approach for Agency

Pennell fully believed that she was confined to an insane asylum for her assertive actions in writing her text. In her Introduction to the *Memorial Scrap Book* she noted that Dr. Cummings "Read [*Sanitary Matters at Large and Elsewhere*] and based on that his medical opinion.[239] Pennell wanted to make it clear to her reader that there was proof of her sanitary reform work as the cause of her confinement. Police took Pennell to the Maine Insane Hospital three months after she wrote her pamphlet. She included the following words on the title page of the *Memorial Scrap Book* in reference to her sanitary reform work, "It is now printed for the first time, albeit its fame agitated the M.D.'s."[240] She was well aware what happened when she took a direct confrontational approach to her reform ideas. In her mind, it resulted in incarceration. Thus, she turned to less direct rhetorical strategies in the *Memorial Scrap Book*.

Prior to a full publication of her *Memorial Scrap Book*, Pennell put out *An Explanation to the Public as to Why Mrs. L.C. Pennell Was Confined in the Insane Hospital and the Portland Poorhouse.* While the publication date is not included on the document, she included on the cover a request for orders of the *Memorial Scrap Book*. As well, Pennell's language is an enticement to readers for ordering the forthcoming book. She wrote, " In the MEMORIAL SCRAP BOOK will be given letters in proof of this" referring to her "wrongful commitment."[241]

[239] Pennell 7.
[240] Lemira Clarissa Pennell, "*Sickness vs. Smells" and Vice Versa* (Boston, 1889) 1.
[241] Lemira Clarissa Pennell, *An Explanation to the Public as to Why Mrs. L.C. Pennell was Confined in the Insane Hospital and the Portland Poorhouse*

The copy of this Introduction is not exact to the one later published in the complete *Memorial Scrap Book*. She made revisions and edits to her original version of the Introduction.

Pennell also included in this spoiler "A Chapter of the Memorial Scrap Book" that explained the church scandal she would discuss at the end of the final published full text of the *Memorial Scrap Book*. In this earlier rendition, she explains in detail what happened with N.W.T. Root in 1871. Root served as Rector of Pennell's church, St.Paul's Church in Portland, Maine. Using quotes from the conversation that she had with Root it becomes clear why Pennell protested how the church treated her and her children as well as the church's defiance to reprimand Root in any way. When she turned to this part of her life in the *Memorial Scrap Book* the reason for her ex-communication and her disgust with the church is completely unclear as she left out the interaction she had with Root in which he discussed his affairs with young women and those of Bishop Neely as well. Letters in the *Memorial Scrap Book* between Pennell and Bishop Neely have no context when read alone. It seemed that Pennell expected her reader to have a familiarity with the event—perhaps from reading *An Explanation*.

Although the events that took place are obtuse in the *Memorial Scrap Book* she did offer them more clearly in *An Explanation*. Pennell brought up a controversy that took place in the Episcopal Church regarding her, N.W.T Root, and Bishop Neely. She described, "In Advent Season, 1871, N.W.T. Root, rector of St. Paul's Church, Portland, called on Mrs. Pennell, and talked and behaved shamefully; told how vile his habits were and always had been, as was the rule with clergymen and sisters; 'Was not afraid the Bishop would throw stones at him—they knew each other too well. Bishop Neely had young girls for his own use.'"[242] Pennell was appalled by such revelation of disgusting behavior on the part of a clergyman that she told women of the church who conveyed the information to their husbands. Rather than having Root

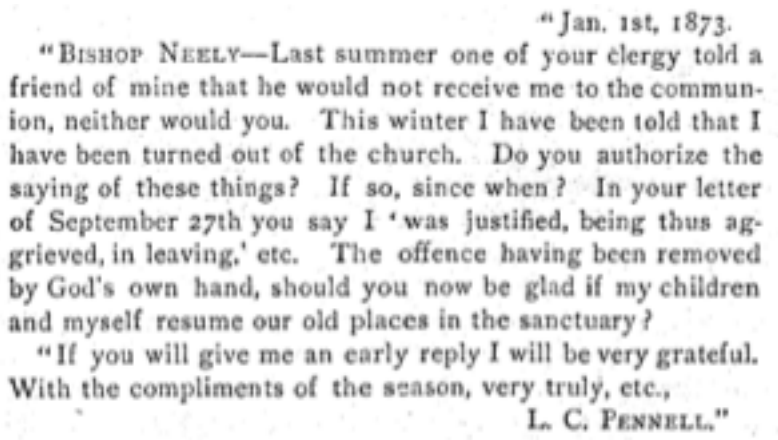
[242] Pennell 5.

removed from the church, the church explained to Pennell that "'the case cannot be investigated and not break up the Diocese. You must take back what you said.'"[243] When Pennell refused to do this she wrote, "They threatened infamy and ruin to myself and my children."[244] Herein Pennell asserted her convictions to truth and the church's desire to cover up a clergyman's sinful behavior. She used strong language and did not back down from her beliefs. In her mind, the church was wrong and she was right. When she turned to this topic in *The Memorial Scrap Book*, she took a much less assertive approach.

There was no direct quoting of the rector, and she left out her exact accusations. This makes it difficult to understand the events that took place in this controversy. Pennell's exclusion of these important details, however, plays a part in her indirect approach with the text. Obscuring what took place may have helped Pennell avoid confrontation with church officials. Her fear of medical authorities for what she perceived as their role in her confinement would support a desire to avoid a direct attack on a powerful social institution. She would most likely have been aware that some readers of the *Memorial Scrap Book* would have religious beliefs. Going after the Episcopal church with claims of misconduct and a cover up could alienate her reader. She had little proof of what took place. Rather than assert herself in a strong oppositional position against the church, she picked out pieces of the controversy.

Pennell included the letters to and from the Bishops in her *Memorial Scrap Book*.

[243] Pennell 6.
[244] Pennell 6.



"Jan. 1st, 1873.

"BISHOP NEELY—Last summer one of your clergy told a friend of mine that he would not receive me to the communion, neither would you. This winter I have been told that I have been turned out of the church. Do you authorize the saying of these things? If so, since when? In your letter of September 27th you say I 'was justified, being thus aggrieved, in leaving,' etc. The offence having been removed by God's own hand, should you now be glad if my children and myself resume our old places in the sanctuary?

"If you will give me an early reply I will be very grateful. With the compliments of the season, very truly, etc.,

L. C. PENNELL."

FIGURE 14. A Letter to Bishop Neely. Reprinted from *The Memorial Scrap Book*

These were her only evidence that wrong had occurred. She did, in fact, in her subsection "Significant Scraps," allude that the church was involved in her confinement. She wrote:

> When the church wardens, one of whom afterwards died in the insane hospital, first called at my house to threaten me with ruin to myself and children, I said, "There is not one thing in the world which can be said against us, which is true, so you can't hurt us." They said, "We will make charges which will hurt you as much as if they were true, and will save the Bishop." I had no idea of what style of warfare the contest demanded.[245]

Here Pennell did not blatantly accuse the church of participating in her confinement. Yet there was some allusion to it and also to the fact that the churchmen were not as "sane" as one would believe. That one of the men involved in the accusations and threats against her was later locked in an asylum reversed the image of Pennell as insane and rather the authorities as insane.

Pennell knew that the letters included regarding the church scandal were the evidence she needed to prove she was sane. She wrote, "A few letters here are as well designed to explain the mystery as any way that I can devise, and the original copies will show that I do not labor under a hallucination now, or then."[246] Pennell believed that the letters were crucial in exonerating her of madness. Eight letters in regards to the church situation were passed back and forth and given public view in the *Memorial Scrap Book*. Although the circumstances of the church scandal are not clear in the text, it was something Pennell saw as important to her case against the male institutions of nineteenth-century society. When the church was circulating rumors about her behavior and faith, they objectified Pennell. She refused to allow this as she made public the letters between herself and the Bishops. She offered, "A few letters here are as well designed to

[245] Pennell *Memorial* 43-44.
[246] Pennell 35.

explain the mystery as any way that I can devise and the original copies will show that I do not labor under a hallucination now, or then."[247] Including letters would show her reader that the church's perceptions of her as insane and unworthy of communion were unfounded. Instead she transformed the church into the object of scrutiny while she bared their private letters for the public to see. Public declaration of the church scandal illustrated her love for the church and this love was shown through her poetry as well as letters.

Her feelings about the religious controversy that kept her out of the church she had once embraced gave her a motive for writing poetry. Again, she chose an emotional genre for expressing herself as she did when building herself as the devoted mother contradicting the ongoing statements of authorities that her children wanted her in the asylum. Poetry became an outlet for her when the narrative genre could not adequately convey her thoughts. In fact, she believed she was the first to do so accurately in declaring, "I have been able to say as it seems to me no one else ever could:--."[248] What may serve as the most important element of this poem is that it came within a letter to Rt. Rev. Bishop Paddock. Her letter itself is multi-genre. Through it she sought to claim to a man of power in the church that she was one who "God has charged his angel legions/Watch and ward o'er me to keep,/When I starve in hostile regions,/When in pestilence I sleep."[249] This is much like one of David's Psalms. Pennell paralleled herself with a biblical figure who prevailed even in the "valley of the shadow of death." Her reference within the letter to the Bishop served to make her subject to the Bishop first and the reader second. These churchmen could not turn her into an object of scorn because God would hold her up as a subject to be loved by the angels. Here, again, Pennell altered her place in the debate with the

[247] Pennell 25.
[248] Pennell 36.
[249] Pennell 36.

churchmen. Where these men turned her into an object of scorn, she used the Bible and religious rhetoric as a means of making herself the subject with God on her side.

This notion of religion was a way in which Pennell embraced the image of the True Woman grounded in piety. She held onto her purity while a man of the church behaved immorally. Further, there was no reprimand for his behavior. Instead Pennell was the one punished. This parallels Pennell's views of her confinement. She worked for sanitary reform—a noble cause in her sight. Such reform work landed her in an asylum and gained her the label of insanity. Pennell faced consequences for doing what she saw as good. When she took to publicly attacking the social institutions of the church she moved from the position of the True Woman and asserts her agency in ways more in line with the independent New Woman. She straddled the line of changing times in an effort to tell her story and seek both sanitary and asylum reform.

Beginning In Media Res: Pennell's Introduction

From the very opening of the text, scrapbooking is at work. Pennell's Introduction began with a quote from the *Portland Transcript* of April 24, 1880 story "A Remarkable Case," "We probably have been 'bored' about as much as any one by her; but we do not believe her any more insane than the average of people, especially those who think they have a mission…it seems to us that she should not be confined as a lunatic."[250] Pennell wanted her reader to know from the start of her narrative that there were those on the outside of the asylum who not only thought she was falsely confined, but were willing to express this publicly. She did not refute the notion that the author described her as boring. What she did do was alert her reader that she, like any reformer with "a mission," was an "average" person. She was, according to the *Portland Transcript*, unfairly "confined as a lunatic." Pennell took someone else's words that treated her

[250] Pennell 4.

as an object. She then "pasted" them into her own work claiming an authority over the article. She asserted her agency in the inclusion of this piece.

Next, *The Waterville Mail* was quoted at length in its article in support of Pennell's work on sanitation and smells as well as the unnecessary imprisonment. Regarding her work on sanitary reform it said, "her opinions on the subject so far as she gave utterance to them here, were in accord with the teachings of the best authorities."[251] While the newspaper was unsure how much formal training Pennell had in "sanitary science," it noted that her work agreed with that of experts in the field. It went on to explain, "If mad there was method in her madness, and her manner was quiet, gentle and ladylike."[252] The author argued that placing Pennell in an insane asylum would only serve to "drive her to insanity"[253] and that the public should be made aware "by what authority and on what evidence of insanity Mrs. Pennell was sent to a lunatic asylum."[254] Not only did the journalist feel that the confinement was inflicted without cause, but that the doctors and the institution had an obligation to the public to explain why Pennell was housed there against her will. Thus, she began her text using multiple voices for enhancing her credibility. Since she believed that her confinement was due to her sanitary reform, it was crucial for her to have outside support of this reform work. Not only did she seek support, but she sought it from those who were believed to report the truth to the public.

Pennell offered a hospital trustee's piece in the *Gardiner Journal* alongside these other snippets in which he declared, "It is a hard case but we do not see what can be done."[255] He laid blame on Pennell's children and her reliance on them for support. Herein Pennell highlighted the reality that the hospital trustees did not actually know what to do in this case. They were not

[251] Pennell 4.
[252] Pennell 4-5.
[253] Pennell 5.
[254] Pennell 5.
[255] Pennell 5.

experts but "guessing" at how to handle the situation. Newspaper articles in support of Pennell's release from the asylum took a firm stance—authors claimed Pennell's sanity with authority. Pennell illustrated the incompetence of the trustees in placing these articles side by side as she was able to do through the multi-genre format of a scrapbook.

One can see the clear affirmation of her sanity in the response to the trustee's piece. The *Gardiner Journal* wrote, "the Hospital was not made for an asylum for harmless monomaniacs, even though they be an expense and annoyance to their children….and if we permit such a person as Mrs. Pennell to be placed and *kept* in an insane asylum, we do not know who will be safe."[256] *The Kennebec Journal* noted, "In our opinion Mrs. Pennell is an unmitigated nuisance," yet it also offered that the institutionalization of Pennell was the government, trustees, and doctors abusing their power.[257] Again, she chose to include negative language. This phrase, "unmitigated nuisance" will return later in the narrative when she reclaims it as a positive.

She thanked the newspapers for their "good words."[258] She truly thought that these articles saved her from being re-incarcerated in the asylum as doctors hoped to do after releasing her. An inclusion of others' voices early on in the narrative supplied Pennell with ammunition for refuting claims that she was insane. If others, the media especially, believed her sane she could claim this for herself without strong objection. Outside support declaring her sane, though perhaps obnoxious, boosted her credibility with the reader even if doctors labeled her outside the boundaries of sanity.

Continuing in her Introduction, Pennell turned away from outside pieces to her own wording. This narration moved away from the traditional scrapbook format. Instead of piecing together a text that the reader would interpret on his/her own, Pennell included a narration. She

[256] Pennell 5.
[257] Pennell 6.
[258] Pennell 6.

told readers that she was not thoroughly examined by the doctors who "certified" her insane; instead she was certified because of her reform work. This returned to her ability to construct herself as subject rather than object. She used her own explanation and declared it as truth. After inserting the newspaper articles into her text as it opened, Pennell had already set herself up as someone searching for this truth of her sanity. Her reader, then, can move easily into believing Pennell as honest author. She stated, "I had never met the M.D.'s who *certified* but once, months before, and they were not pleased with my proposed work in sanitary interests" (7). Pennell continued in talking about the lies of the trustees that her children had her placed in custody. This was written in the opening of the text as a means of inviting the reader to hear more about this as the tale unfolded "There is much to tell" and "that this will be a treat for the readers of *Memorial Scrap Book*" (7). After giving her reader thorough evidence from others that she should not have been placed in the asylum, she wanted to be sure there was more to entice her reader.

Included in this enticement was her letter to Mr. Baker, the overseer of the poor. It is worth noting that she moved away from her narrative style. Baker's letter provided the first mention in her text of the "conspiracy" to keep Pennell in confinement—if not in the asylum then in the poorhouse. She wanted her reader to see that she opposed this control early on in the text. Letters to Baker also appear later in the narrative, but this early inclusion was strategic. Pennell saw that the men running these institutions desired her silence at the price of her incarceration. She demanded facts in her letter to Baker asking, "'Will you please inform me at whose insistence, whether Dr. Harlow or the trustees, the City of Portland was notified to remove me from the Insane Hospital.'"[259] Pennell's use of this letter as a piece of her scrapbook acknowledged that she was not "notified" of what was to happen to her. Doctors and Mr. Baker treated her as a non-entity. She could show that they created her as object—without an identity.

[259] Pennell 7.

Pennell included this letter as an example of how the system saw her in order that she could refute it for her reader. Her authorship of the *Memorial Scrap Book* is her refusal to be invisible. Instead, she went public telling others about her treatment. She would have a voice even if the institutions confining her worked at denying her one.

Notably, Pennell's first letter to Baker is not printed in a letter format unlike Baker's letter in response, which is set apart from the rest of the text. Instead Pennell's letter is incorporated into the text. Her letters are part of her story, while it may seem that Baker's letters as set apart represent a voice outside of her own—one that must be viewed as distinctly different and oppositional. Placement of the text offers a possible view into what Pennell sought to accomplish. If men like Baker were "the other," they must be set outside of the text in a way. In this way, Pennell can confirm her voice as the norm. It is incorporated into the story—her story that she controls.

Sanitary and Sane: "Another Precedent"

Pennell's first section of the text following the Introduction was titled "Another Precedent." Its purposes were two-fold. First, it gave her reader another look into her work on sanitary reform in an effort to strengthen her cause. Second, it offered evidence that, in fact, she was not insane, that her ideas on sanitary reform were well founded, and that she was falsely imprisoned. In her first five subheadings to this section, she created what seemed a pamphlet. She explained at the close of her exposition on sanitary reform, "I had all my arrangements made to issue once a month a little sheet similar to the foregoing."[260] For this "pamphlet" she would not charge a penny, being given the paper for printing, and she alluded to free printing. The railroad gave her free passes for traveling and spreading the cause of sanitary reform. Others

[260] Pennell 11.

offered her free room and board.[261] Again she turned to how others supported her work in much the same way that she included the newspaper articles in her opening. Unlike scrapbooks that might include train tickets or hotel photos, Pennell instead gave description of these. Scrapping the items themselves into her text would not have told her reader that all this was offered to her free of charge, she felt it was valuable for readers to know what was behind these offers and it was her work in sanitary reform—work that others supported. Most of these supporters were "officials" or professionals backing Pennell's sanitary reform work as "needed work."[262] Whereas Dr. Small and Dr. Cummings had rebuked her for her reform work and lack of expertise, here Pennell gave her reader examples of support. She was not an object of ridicule or scorn in this section, but one with the knowledge to impart advice to others.

Pennell continually returned to the idea that she was confined strictly as a means of social control. Dr. Cummings and Dr. Small based their label of insanity on Pennell's sanitary reform writing. Pennell offered, "Yet [*Sickness vs. Smells*] is the same which Dr. Cummings swore he 'bought, read, and based on it his medical opinion that I needed the restraint of an insane hospital.' Dr. Small concurred in that opinion."[263] She wrote that one of the trustees offered her release if she would "'give up [her] *sanitary views* and work, settle down as other folks did."[264] Clearly, there was an element of social control involved in Pennell's confinement. At the same time, she offered her continued advice to her readers on the necessity for clean air in order to prevent sickness and epidemics. She did not kowtow to the whims of the trustees or the doctors but felt she was championing a worthy cause.

[261] Pennell 11-12.
[262] Pennell 11. She quoted the R.R. officials in this passage.
[263] Pennell 2.
[264] Pennell 19.

Pennell took a direct approach here. In being assertive she used language more readily available to men than women; however, she did so under the guise of a scrapbook—an indirect approach. This "pamphlet" was broken up into seven sections. She made direct attacks on legislators, hotel owners, plumbers, and doctors. Sections further blurred the direct and pointed tone of her writing here. Much like in *Sanitary Matters at Large and Elsewhere,* Pennell momentarily went directly after the establishments, mostly male, that she believed were responsible for the disregard of the causes of illness that she outlined in her writing. This was inserted into a chapter that dealt with other issues as well, including asylum reform. In this way Pennell minimized possible resistance to her strong claims as it was part of a larger section of pieces of reform issues and personal experience. It did not stand out as a demand for change; rather it was a piece of a whole.

She continued to go after the establishments persecuting her in a somewhat direct manner in "Another Precedent." When she turned the tables on those who had sought out her confinement, she took charge of her situation rhetorically. Although she could not free herself, she could use language to alter the public perception of her and refute that spoken against her. She even went so far as to title one of her subchapters "An 'Unmitigated Nuisance.'" She included this passage in her scraps of newspaper articles because it spoke to the abuses of the asylum system in confining her.[265] In using this description of herself she takes the offensive and appropriates a negative phrase. She would now be a nuisance not in sanitary reform alone but in asylum reform—like the former, something she says is necessary in society for the good of all. Pennell declared that in pointing out to doctors that patients were suffering she was an "'unmitigated nuisance.[266]'" She referred to a starving patient, an abused inmate, mildewed

[265] Pennell 6.
[266] Pennell 13.

towels, and a patient stripped naked. And then she said, "I know what I am saying and *dare* say it. Now where can another nuisance be found like Mrs. L.C. Pennell?"[267] She is proud of her status as a nuisance and turned the insult into a term of power.

From pest to reformer, Pennell adeptly used language. In this vein, Pennell turned to the third person. She referred to herself not as "I" or "me" but as "Mrs. L.C. Pennell," "Mrs. Pennell," and "she." She stated, "She must go back to the Hospital, the doctors say she's crazy."[268] Several paragraphs into the subchapter she returns to first-person narration; however, this rhetorical switch in perspective allowed her to insert conversation between the men who wanted her confined as though the discussion was occurring in real time. Upon returning to first person she stated, "This little story was told to *me* by an officer of the institution."[269] Although she said this, she did not set up the "story" as having been told to her. Instead her reader is unclear as to who is speaking in the two short paragraphs. Pennell established herself as two narrators here. She illustrated how others made her an object so that she could turn and bring about herself as subject prepared to objectify these men. She wrote, "And I said, 'Dr. Harlow is too supreme. I will call him an old fool, and old devil as long as he calls me crazy, and I can hold out longer than he can.'"[270] She proved to her reader that if she was an object to the doctors and the courts, they would be an object for her.

She explained that patients in the asylum, namely herself, needed to reprimand doctors for mistreatment and abuse of patients, despite the absolute authority the men held. Even when this caused an "'unmitigated nuisance'" it was the obligation of the inmate. In an imagined conversation with Dr. Harlow she wrote, "'Yes, sir, I am very well, but don't waste your time on

[267] Pennell 14.
[268] Pennell 13.
[269] Pennell 13.
[270] Pennell 13.

me; go look at your starving victims on either side of me. There's Mrs. Collins, and she's dying from starvation….Now have you seen the *bruises* on Mrs. Harmon's face and arms? No? Well you go and look, and see if they don't show as plain as my insanity.'"[271] By embedding the narration in the text, Pennell took control of a conversation that she probably could not have had in real life. Not only is Pennell no longer object in this rhetorical move, but neither are the other inmates. Mrs. Harmon is someone for whom Pennell had concern—she was real and offered a humanity that Pennell showed throughout her text that most inmates were not given in the asylum system in her eyes.

From here she went on to talk more about sanitary reform. There was a section of quotes from a nameless doctor interrupted by Pennell's own words explaining the importance of this doctor's stance on "quack medicines."[272] Pennell's support or condemnation of this medicine is not what matters most in understanding her text. More important is her inclusion of these bits and pieces of the doctor's words and where she places them in the text. Set apart from the subchapter with a line and several spaces, it has no subchapter title. It followed Pennell's quote that told her reader this text would be "literally a scrap book."[273] This brief passage referring back to "Sickness vs. Smells" does not follow from the previous section—it lacked a clear transition. It is here that Pennell confirmed her scrapbook concept. Just as a scrapbook does not always provide clear transition from one clipping, picture, letter, etc. to the next, neither is Pennell bound to do this when her text is not a linear narrative—"not a continued story."[274]At the same time, her move into the section following "Another Precedent" furthers her complaints about wrongful confinement and mistreatment in asylums.

[271] Pennell 13-14.
[272] Pennell 15.
[273] Pennell 15.
[274] Pennell 15.

The "*guest* in the Hospital": "Insane Hospital Conditions and Poor-House Correspondence"

While "Another Precedent" focused more on Pennell's ideas on sanitary reform, her last twenty-nine pages looked at her asylum reform. Among the issues she discussed is that of the role of the state. Rather than attack an individual, Pennell took an indirect approach personifying the city of Portland. Portland was a conglomeration of men whose laws persecuted Pennell—laws for which she had little, if any, retribution. Later in the text she again makes Portland human stating, "Can Portland refuse to blush in *shame*? It would require a vivid imagination to conceive the horror of that experience as the *guest* of Portland."[275] In some ways this personification of the city made images of Portland unnecessary in her scrapbook. She made the city an object of scrutiny just as the reader of a private scrapbook might view a picture or postcard of a landmark or landscape. For Pennell, Portland was not to be glorified or exalted as might be expected in a scrapbook. Instead, she allowed readers to see it as part of a larger conspiracy working against her. When she argued that she was in the asylum on "illegal papers"[276] and that the trustees, doctors, and Baker were in cahoots against her, she again looked to her city and the state as well. She saw them as jailers stating, "a letter was written from Springfield not to let me out of the Hospital, to keep me in a straight-jacket if need be, and the City of Portland and the State of Maine obeyed orders to *keep*."[277] It is as if these two places are hospital attendants ordered to keep Pennell confined.

While she sought to illustrate that multiple entities worked against her, including Portland and Maine as a whole, Pennell also wanted her reader to know that she was not at the mercy of

[275] Pennell 27.
[276] Pennell 19.
[277] Pennell 21.

others. She was in charge of herself as any sane woman was. She stated, "I was not *then*, more than I am now, Baker's charge. And he is still anxious to lock me up as ever; *his* 'convictions as to my present disordered mental condition remain unchanged.'"[278] She referenced another letter here providing her audience with tangible proof of how Baker viewed her; however, she refuted his opinion noting that she was her own "self-supporting" charge.[279] She also asked her reader "By what authority does Baker say that I should *certainly* have been put into an asylum if I had staid in Massachusetts. *Who* told him so?"[280] Pennell constructed Baker here as a layperson, not an expert—not someone with a claim on her or her future.

None of the letters included in the text were to her family or friends. Pennell asserted, "of all my relatives, my mother only wrote to me."[281] Instead of letters of support and encouragement from loved ones, Pennell published those that dealt with her confinement. She took a business-like approach in this way eliminating emotional attachment. If she solidified her identity as subject rather than an object in the asylum system, she had to rely on a rational approach refuting attacks against her. Letters offered her the opportunity to do this. She was the direct recipient of some letters and the author of others. Pennell reaffirmed her multi-genre approach in placing letters in the text itself. It was the actual words of herself and her correspondents. Through the use of these outside texts Pennell "craft[ed] a highly personalized narrative."[282] Rather than being mere narrative, letters provided insight into what Pennell read and wrote while confined. They pull a reader into the asylum experience itself.

With the inclusion of a letter from her daughter, prior to confinement, Pennell offered a tangible piece of her close relationship with her daughter.

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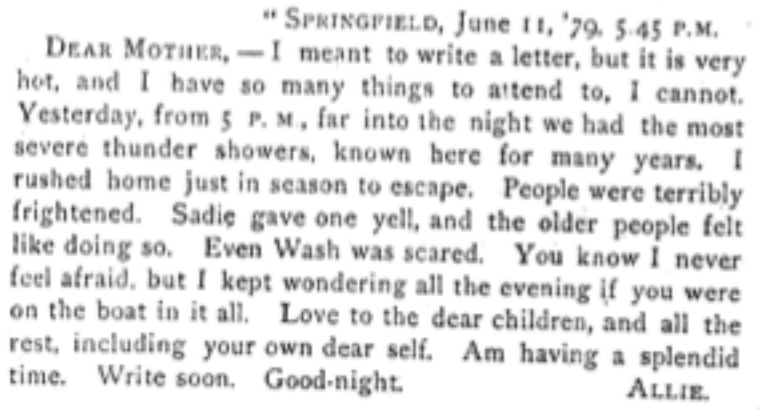
[278] Pennell 8.
[279] Pennell 8.
[280] Pennell 21-22.
[281] Pennell 24.
[282] Helfand 2.



"SPRINGFIELD, June 11, '79. 5.45 P.M.

DEAR MOTHER, — I meant to write a letter, but it is very hot, and I have so many things to attend to, I cannot. Yesterday, from 5 P. M., far into the night we had the most severe thunder showers, known here for many years. I rushed home just in season to escape. People were terribly frightened. Sadie gave one yell, and the older people felt like doing so. Even Wash was scared. You know I never feel afraid, but I kept wondering all the evening if you were on the boat in it all. Love to the dear children, and all the rest, including your own dear self. Am having a splendid time. Write soon. Good-night.

ALLIE.

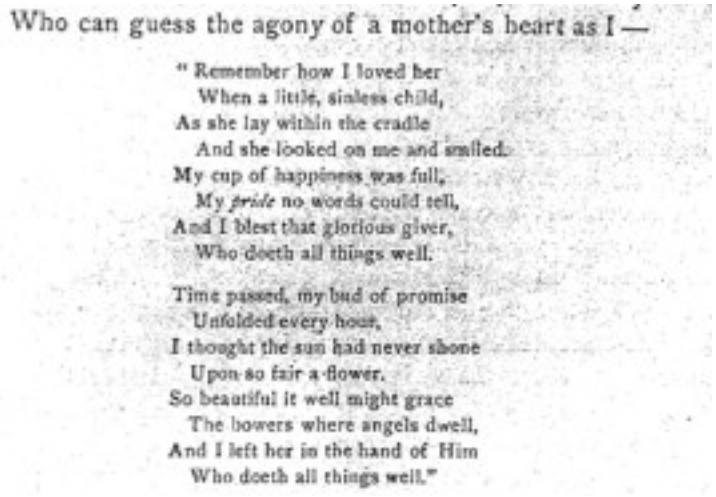
Figure 15. Letter to Pennell from her daughter. Reprinted from *The Memorial Scrap Book.*

This undermined the notion that her daughter would be part of a conspiracy to confine her in any institution. The two were close and as Pennell stated, "there was rarely a week that I did not hear by letters, cards or papers."[283] In fact, her daughter was so intent on having a close relationship with her mother that Pennell quoted one of her letters saying, "I always forget something I intended to tell you; shall have to keep a journal for you."[284] Allie, Pennell's daughter, so wanted to maintain a strong correspondence in which nothing was left out that she, Allie, thought to keep a journal in order to record more events and ideas than she could do in a letter or card.

Pennell was a good mother here, one whose child loved her and chose to have a strong correspondence with her mother. Rather than allowing the authorities' voices on her motherhood to create her as an object, she offered her daughter's own words through letters she included in her *Scrap Book* to signify construction of her own identity. She noted that the asylum controlled the mail she received and conspired to keep her out of touch with her daughter, presumably trying to convince Pennell that her daughter had turned against her. Pennell refused to believe this.

One of the challenges Pennell faced was taking back her image of a good mother. Throughout her confinement the doctors and administrators strove to represent Pennell as a bad mother. She would not be an objectified woman shirking her duties. Instead Pennell reclaimed her motherhood. She contradicted the bad mother image when she told her reader of the "agony" she felt when she was denied her daughter's letters in the asylum. It was "the agony of a mother's heart" that compelled her to produce a work of poetry that she included in her text.

[283] Pennell 32.
[284] Pennell 32-33.



Who can guess the agony of a mother's heart as I —

" Remember how I loved her
When a little, sinless child,
As she lay within the cradle
And she looked on me and smiled.
My cup of happiness was full,
My *pride* no words could tell,
And I blest that glorious giver,
Who doeth all things well.

Time passed, my bud of promise
Unfolded every hour,
I thought the sun had never shone
Upon so fair a flower.
So beautiful it well might grace
The bowers where angels dwell,
And I left her in the hand of Him
Who doeth all things well."

Figure 16. A Poem. Reprinted from *The Memorial Scrap Book*

Her poem itself is a story of a mother's love for her child from infancy "within the cradle" to adulthood "my bud of promise/Unfolded every hour."[285] She believed then that she was "robbed of such a treasure entrusted to my sole care by God's own hand."[286] Pennell told her reader with great emotional rhetoric including the use of poem that her role of a mother was dear to her—dearer than all else. Also her motherhood was something God given. Her jailers could not take this away from her no matter what they said to her or about her. Pennell said this when she included the poem in the text as response to their means to control her image.

She did the same when she offered her perspective on her children's involvement in the affairs of her life. One of the ongoing issues in the text that Pennell refuted and the doctors asserted was the role of her children in her confinement. Doctors repeated time and again that Pennell's children were, in part, responsible for her institutionalization both in the asylum and the poorhouse. She mentioned this in bits and pieces earlier in the text; however, in "Insane Hospital Conditions and Poor-House Correspondence" she took this head on. She declared, "It is well and widely known that my children were charged with the responsibility of my commitment to the insane hospital. Any intelligent mind, wishing to know the legal proceedings which *may* be applied to themselves, can see if they will, that it could not be legally ascribed to them."[287] Pennell assured her reader that her children played no role in confining her. At the same time, she reminded her reader that they, too, might find themselves in this position. She connected to her reader while asserting her connection to her children. This was vital for gaining the trust of her mid-nineteenth-century reader. She had to be a good mother. Pennell offered this view of her relationship with her daughter, "From babyhood up, she had *never* gone to sleep, to play, to school, visit or office, without a kiss for and from mama, and the same caress on returning, as

[285] Pennell 33.
[286] Pennell 33.
[287] Pennell 32.

friends who knew us, will remember."[288] Rather than letting the doctors, Mr. Baker, or any other authority figure portray her relationship with her children as one of discord, she turned the tables depicting herself as a good mother.

Conclusion

From object of ridicule, scorn, labeling, and gossip Lemira Clarissa Pennell became a subject with self-empowerment through her writing. Her autobiographical text became a way in which to take back the identity others were constructing for her. She did this through an indirect approach using the genre of the scrapbook. Rather than directly criticize the institutions of the asylum, the poorhouse, state and city officials, and the church, Pennell pieced together various genres creating a whole narrative. Through this she became the author of her story, a story others wanted to tell from their own perspective.

Through her use of the genre of scrapbook she also took control of her story taking it out of the hands of men. Writing in multiple genres she made herself the subject of the story rather than allowing herself to serve as the object. She chose what the public heard of her case. Prior to publishing this, it was men who told her story. They were the ones putting forth whatever side of the story they wanted to tell. Pennell was able to snip and paste into her story elements that allowed her to turn the table on her submissive positions. Instead, she was the dominant voice putting men in their place through the physical act of cutting up their stories and putting them where she chose. However, Pennell worked in the genre of a scrapbook cutting and pasting from multiple genres in order to reach an audience and convince them of the importance of her reform movements. The "private" scrapbook was made public and published for all to see offering a collage meant for informing and educating in areas of sanitation and confinement abuses.

[288] Pennell 32.

In asserting her autonomy, Pennell situated herself between the works of Packard and Lathrop. She wanted to show others what was happening regarding sanitation issues, asylums, and her church while claiming her sanity. She did this through using multiple genres like Packard did. At the same time she relies on traditional image of womanhood portraying herself as a good mother and pious woman. Through her rhetorical movements of transforming herself from subject to object with absolute agency of her identity, she moves towards the later half of the nineteenth century and Lathrop's writing. Pennell's *Memorial Scrap Book* worked in both ways in its incorporation of scraps here and there.

CHAPTER FOUR

IT'S ALL ABOUT FACTS: CLARISSA CALDWELL LATHROP'S *A SECRET INSTITUTION*

One aim, one purpose actuated all my endeavors,--that was to help the poor victims of the Utica Asylum, and the desire to improve the social and mental conditions of the insane. For this I gladly labored night and day, and every dollar I could save was consecrated to this sacred cause.[289]

Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop wrote these lines in her 1890 asylum narrative *A Secret Institution*. Lathrop would later go on to found the Lunacy Law Reform League.[290] Her time in the New York State Lunatic Asylum at Utica made her a reformer. She explored the wrongful asylum practices in her three hundred thirty-nine-page account. There are similarities between Lathrop's, Pennell's, and Packard's texts. Lathrop's writing followed a more linear structure and chronological pattern than Pennell's. At the same time it incorporated multiple genres in its rhetorical structure like both her predecessors. Lathrop included traditional autobiography, poetry, a map, letters, menus, and legal documents. It was also closer in length to Packard's. Twenty chapters outline the journey Lathrop took from freedom to confinement.

Her chronological construction seems strategic. However, Lathrop would have been well aware that telling what happened to her and the events leading up to her confinement was not enough. Anticipating the objections of an audience who would have deemed a woman who had been confined in an asylum as unreliable, Lathrop turned to facts as her most powerful rhetorical tool. Throughout the text Lathrop used the word "facts" as a means of establishing herself as a reliable narrator, one who knew the real truth while others obscured or denied it. Multiple genres helped her illustrate evidence that existed in letters, her understanding of literature, and legal

[289] Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop, A *Secret Institution* (New York, 1890) 326.
[290] Mary S. Logan, *The Part Taken by Women in American History* (New York: Arno P, 1972) 598.

documents. Lathrop's use of fact came at the same time that asylums were turning away from the moral treatment. Reliance on moral therapy was replaced with a belief that insanity was found in the body itself—it was biological. According to historian Mary Logan, John Gray, the superintendent at the Utica Asylum hired a pathologist "to carry on systematic research" in 1868.[291] Tangible evidence became the focus of psychological and psychiatric practices. Finding this "evidence/facts" was a man's job. Women were not superintendents or doctors in asylums at this time. Patient narratives of asylum experiences were read with skepticism. Lathrop was astute in usurping the empirical realm reserved for men and professionals.

In this chapter, I illustrate how Lathrop's use of multiple genres allowed her to deploy facts in particularly powerful ways as she made her case against wrongful confinement and asserted her sanity. This helps determine what makes Lathrop's text worthy of study more than one hundred years following its publication. What was it that led Lathrop to rely on facts in multiple genres? How does Lathrop use "subjective" and "objective" texts for establishing the facts of her story? How do multiple genres compiled in one text create a complete picture for the reader?

It is useful to have some background on just why facts and Lathrop's reliance on facts was effective. Research on the history of fact provides this. Historian Mary Poovey argues, "facts can never be isolated from contexts….what counts as a fact can never escape the idea that knowledge that matters is systematic, not simply a catalog of observed but unrelated particulars."[292] Lathrop's facts and use of them are entirely systematic. She used them within the context of her situation—that of confinement and the belief her family held that she was delusional. Lathrop created a text that fought against those who maintained that she was

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[291] Deutsch 283.
[292] Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998) 1.

incapable of factual evidence. Facts and their use for supporting causes was a large part of the Progressive Era in the United States and Lathrop's text plays with this notion. Like Poovey, historian Barbara J. Shapiro also notes that the fact was historically constructed beginning in the sixteenth century; however, Shapiro turns to the legal field as a model. Shapiro claims, "The concept of 'fact' took shape…in the legal arena and was then carried into other intellectual endeavors until it became part and parcel of the generally held habits."[293] From professional to everyday, the fact found a place as a rhetorical strategy for persuasion. Throughout the nineteenth century, psychiatry and medicine, like the law, were also becoming more professionalized, based in science and study of the mind rather than study of social morality. Lathrop argued against the power that medical men held in asylums—a power that can be directly connected to the patriarchal control of late nineteenth-century insane asylums. In this way, she both took up the discourses of men while subverting them and pushing against patriarchal institutional constraints.

Not only did her use of facts challenge the patriarchy of the asylum, but her manipulation of genre assisted in this. What might have been a straight autobiography included letters, legal documents, poetry, a menu, and more. In each of these Lathrop stressed facts. She consistently based her assertion of sanity on fact as she sought to prove any opponents of this wrong. Building her autobiographical text around "truth" offered a preemptive rebuttal to the doubting reader. Throughout her narrative Lathrop referred to facts and how those against her misrepresented them while she worked to prove her argument solely by the hard truth. Truth was found not only in retelling her story through traditional means, but also through using images,

[293] Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell, 2000) 8. While Shapiro's work focused on Britain and did not include the nineteenth century it remains relevant to Lathrop's use of facts. America's legal system was based upon British Common Law, and is, therefore, a basis for why Lathrop would turn to legal documents in her narrative.

menus, and poetry much like Pennell's *Scrap Book*. In relying on fact for her argument, Lathrop asserted herself as a reliable narrator who claimed authority over her text, her experience, and her future

Lathrop took part in a larger discourse of women's reform efforts and rhetorical practices. Women's rhetorical strategies in nineteenth-century reform movements, while filled with tension between a woman's domestic identity and her public calls for social change, often adopted a reliance on facts as support of a cause. Mattingly discusses this in her analysis of temperance rhetoric, *Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric* (1998). She notes that these reformers "offer[ed] testimonial evidence."[294] Through this rhetorical strategy of providing facts to the audience, female rhetoricians preempted an attack on their reliability. As women, they were "naturally" considered less grounded in logic. Turning to "evidence" from witnesses and documents established credibility. Facts, for temperance women, came from respected texts such as the Bible and from historical references—facts that could be verified.[295] Lathrop followed in this tradition putting together different genres that offered her reader substantial evidence supporting her claim of sanity. In telling her story, Lathrop discussed her devotion to making changes in the asylum system. Yet this was not her focus. Her main point throughout her text was her claim of sanity. She chose to rely on the same rhetorical strategy of truth-telling to dispel the claims of insanity working against her.

[294] Mattingly 41.
[295] Mattingly 41.

Critical Readings of Lathrop's Work

In their Introduction Geller and Harris explain the difficulties in trusting a narrator whose "very sanity is at issue."[296] I don't want to question if Lathrop was sane or insane. Instead, I want to look at the ways she used rhetoric to challenge a reader's assumption that she might be insane. She returned over and over again to "facts" as her proof of sanity. Facts were also a sign of her awareness of wider discourse communities and part of her bid to establish credibility. She used texts that would boost her credibility such as letters, legal documents, literary references, and poetry. For her, these represented the truth of the late nineteenth century. In going beyond a narrative of strictly her own words, incorporating the writing of others she wove a story that offered a factual picture from multiple angles to her reader.

While authors such as Wood, Hughes, and Hubert have looked at Lathrop's narrative, none of them have recognized the importance of her use of multiple genres in her narrative structure. Time and again her inclusion of letters, legal documents, and poetry all serve the larger purpose of illustrating her need to assert herself as the honest narrator through facts. Writing a straight narrative with only the use of prose would not have sufficed for Lathrop's purpose: to assert the truth at all costs and through all means necessary. This meant using more than one genre for telling her experience.

Many women reformers of the nineteenth century used all "available means" for constructing their arguments. This is clear in the works of Pennell who scrapped together whatever was available to her. Like Pennell and others working against the patriarchal rhetoric of the nineteenth century, Lathrop sought to establish her identity rather than let her mother, sister, or doctors impose an identity on her. As scholars of women's rhetoric, Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald note, "Over and over again, [women] must claim the right to name themselves rather

[296] Geller 7.

than to be named."[297] Lathrop argued against any labels of insanity and "delusional" that others attempted to give her. She directly refuted these through establishing the facts of her story and refuting the lies of others as shown in letters and legal documents. She also acknowledged that in holding fast to the truth her reader was left with little to argue about her narrative. In writing her experience, she proved that she had power, if not physical, rhetorical.

Cultural constrictions must have troubled Lathrop as she maintained insecurity about her strength as a narrator. According to Wood, Lathrop questioned her reliability throughout *A Secret Institution*. She analyzes how Lathrop "struggle[ed] with both [her] own anxieties and societal perceptions of [her] mental stability."[298] Through writing her narrative Lathrop became a reformer—someone who was devoted to uncovering the truth and fighting for justice.[299] I argue that Lathrop was not unclear about her intentions or her sanity. Lathrop returned time and again to the concept of what was right based on her use of facts in multiple genres. These facts proved the sanity she fought for in the asylum, the courtroom, and the printed page.

"Among the prominent citizens of the United States": Autobiography

Since there is no scholarship on Lathrop's life, we must take the word of Lathrop's own telling of her life story. Establishing her identity in sanity and middle-class values laid the groundwork for her narrative. Lathrop made sure that her reader did not see her as a victim of her circumstances at the beginning of her text. She created a picture of a strong woman from an established if not prestigious family. Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop was born in Rochester, New

[297] Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald, eds., Available *Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)* (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2001) xvii.
[298] Wood 68.
[299] Wood 101.

York.[300] As a whole, Lathrop's text was an autobiography; however, it was not one in the traditional sense of nineteenth-century life writing. Unlike Packard or Pennell, she did follow a chronological pattern, while also turning to multiple genres rather then one genre. Her chronology began with her parents' birth. Lathrop did this as a way of illustrating to her audience that she came from a good family. She wrote, "My father and mother belonged to what is sometimes called 'the good New England stock'—my father's people were of the old Yorkshire Lathrop-Lathrop family, whose descendants are among the prominent citizens of the United States conspicuous in pulpit, bar, army and literature."[301] Lathrop wanted to establish her family as one that had education and respect from the communities in which her ancestors lived. Her paternal grandfather was a man of faith and strong conviction. Like the Puritans who founded the United States, he came to Massachusetts as a religious "dissenter."[302] Her father "filled many positions of trust and honor."[303] Her mother received a good education and had "social advantages."[304] Lathrop worked to create a genealogy of a family that was grounded in the ideals of the United States. They were honorable, educated, and hard working. Here were facts of her family. Her lineage was traced and established in this first chapter of her work. One could, presumably, go to the Lathrop family history and find the truth of Lathrop's words recorded there as well.

Lathrop wanted an all-inclusive genealogy of her family and leaving anything out would be dishonest. Therefore, she spoke of her mother's nervous constitution in her narrative as another move to get at the truth. She would not shy away from the reality even if it could bias a reader against her. Above all, truth was the aim. Her history must be based in the facts if she is to

[300] Logan 598.
[301] Lathrop 4.
[302] Lathrop 4.
[303] Lathrop 5.
[304] Lathrop 5.

present herself as reliable. Her family's history must fall under this as well. A respectable city and family was not the only truth of Lathrop's background. That Lathrop set up her ancestors as coming from good stock is somewhat broken down she described her mother's constitution. She described her as having a "weak, self-absorbed temperament. She really had not the spiritual force to enable her battle with even petty domestic trials, but sunk under each annoyance discouraged and perplexed."[305]

Lathrop suggested that her mother was mentally unstable. Genetic causes of insanity were present in medicine at the time just as social causes led to insanity. Patients described these, as did doctors, for the cause of their condition.[306] Hereditary insanity, however, led to more anxiety than social causes as it was invisible.[307] Why then did Lathrop confer this aspect of her history to her reader? It made her susceptible. Her reader could easily infer that if Lathrop's mother had a nervous disorder it was most likely passed on to her children. It was a risky revelation of family history, but one that must be told.

Lathrop did not go into much detail about her life from childhood to adulthood. She did, however, discuss her education briefly and her occupation as a teacher—a role she felt would help her "impart to others, that which had been the source of so much happiness to me."[308] This part of her past was not only valuable in an autobiographical way, but also because it offered the reader the background for understanding her writing skills and reliance on empirical fact. She not only could write, but was paid to teach others to read, write, and learn facts. Her role as an educator was then an early indication of her belief in the importance of facts.

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[305] Lathrop 7.
[306] Nancy Tomes, *A Generous Confidence: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the Art of Asylum Keeping, 1840-1883* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998). 94.
[307] Wood 82.
[308] Lathrop 10.

When she took on her occupation as a teacher she did so feeling "the necessity for some end and aim in life."[309] This foreshadowed what would become her later "end and aim"—that of asylum reform to which she unfailingly devoted herself through her narrative and her work with the Lunacy Reform League. Her education and educating of others formed her skills in language and persuasion. She recalled her "first experience with my troublesome flock" acknowledging that she "succeeded in reducing the school to subjection, winning at last their obedience and affection."[310] Ironically, such control and power would be the very aspect of asylum life that she would protest.

Lathrop and her sister were responsible for their family's financial well-being. Lathrop felt the weight of the pressure brought on by such responsibility but was also clear about her duty. She wrote, "I now resolved that my life and interests should be dedicated and enshrined upon the family altar, and that resolution was fulfilled. The worries and anxieties, which are usually borne by the head of the household, fell upon my sister and myself. I can conscientiously say that my life was one of devotion to my family."[311] Such devotion to her family resulted in greater feelings of betrayal when they turned against her during her confinement. What Wood recognizes about Lathrop's role in her family and in society is that she did not conform to the expected role for white middle-class women at the time. Lathrop was not the devoted wife and mother of the nineteenth century. She was "marked by this difference."[312] Both Packard and Pennell were mothers and wives, though in a troubled marriage or widowed. Lathrop stood outside this normative paradigm. She was a rebel in respect to her social role and her public protest against asylums moving into a new identity of womanhood.

[309] Lathrop 10.
[310] Lathrop 11-12.
[311] Lathrop 20.
[312] Wood 74.

Perhaps this turn away from tradition led Lathrop into relying on facts as the basis of her argument for sanity. She could not, like Packard or Pennell, reiterate her position as good wife and mother, therefore, she had to look to other means of negotiating the space of a woman's sanity. Concrete and scientific facts provided her with this. They represented progress. Lathrop took part in this forward movement as she explicitly declared the truth of her words. Her reliance on fact served as her refutation of insanity at a time when asylums were looking to physical evidence as proof of mental defect.

On October 19, 1880 Lathrop was admitted to the New York State Lunatic Asylum at Utica where she remained for over two years. According to a doctor's affidavit that Lathrop included in *A Secret Institution*, she was "controlled by [a] delusion."[313] She was released on December 8, 1882.[314] Following her release she lived in boarding houses and worked at various jobs including as an artist, a charity worker, and a court stenographer.[315] Lathrop chose to sever all ties with her family out of fear of possible actions against her, specifically that they would place her in the asylum again, because she felt that her family did not believe in her or her story. In addition they refused to help her financially after her release when she was penniless. Her family said as much in letters they wrote to her. Lathrop declared:

> There was no expression of satisfaction at my release, and little hope of pecuniary aid, and later I was informed by them that my money had gone towards liquidating a mortgage on the house….I was so angered by these letters, that I replied that they should never know my future plans, and that from that time they should have nothing to do with one cent of mine, for knowingly I would never place myself or my means at their disposal as long as I lived, "that from

[313] Lathrop 105.
[314] Geller 107.
[315] Logan 598.

> henceforth I had no family, but every suffering man or woman, particularly if they had suffered the horrors of an insane asylum, was my mother, sister and brother."[316]

Lathrop was upset over the "lies" her family told her in regard to her money. Her sister had explained in a letter that her money was gone because "so much had been spent on me while in the asylum."[317] Lathrop's anger came from the inability to trust those she held most dear. Her family was also one of the few means by which she could be released from the asylum. If they spoke to the doctors offering evidence that Lathrop was sane, the doctors were likely to release her into her family's care. They did not do this. Instead they took the doctors at their word and supported her confinement to the asylum. In response to the "lies" of her family and their mistreatment of her she turned her back on them and adopted a family of peers.[318]

Helping others—those who were also wrongfully confined and abused in insane asylums—was Lathrop's ultimate goal. She was most devoted to writing her story and reforming asylum practices. She wanted to reveal the facts of asylum treatment and practices. Lathrop was not the first female inmate to condemn the asylum at Utica. In 1855 Phebe Davis published her own account. Davis attacked the treatment and the doctors in the asylum; however, she was not asserting her sanity or fighting wrongful confinement. Lathrop most certainly affirmed her sanity through providing her audience with the facts. Reform was the natural extension of getting at the facts. Mary Logan wrote that this narrative directly lead to the formation of the national organization of the Lunacy Law Reform League in 1889. Lathrop was both the national

[316] Lathrop 302-303.
[317] Lathrop 302.
[318] Lathrop 303. Lathrop quoted the following from a letter to her family following her release, "'that from henceforth I had no family, but every suffering man or woman, particularly if they had suffered the horrors of an insane asylum, was my mother, sister and brother.'"

organizer and the secretary for the League.[319] In 1892 Lathrop died in Saratoga, New York.[320] She remains an obscure figure in both the history of asylum reform and women's rhetoric.

Although her text is not well known, it is one worth understanding in the context of nineteenth-century women's writing and asylum history. Knowing Lathrop's background provides a foundation for her text. Lathrop relied on the truth throughout her text reminding her reader through her language that her words were honest. Her charges against the asylum and the system of power in asylums was one for which she had ample evidence. This evidence came in many forms including poetry, letters, and legal documents.

Fact of the Matter: The Text's Construction

In 1890 Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop published her narrative *A Secret Institution*. Unlike Packard and Pennell, Lathrop's text was not self-published but released by the Bryant Publishing Company in New York. On the front cover of the book was a photograph of Lathrop. This picture refuted the image of insanity. Lathrop's hair was neatly in place as were her clothes so she appeared a prim and proper middle-class woman. Before opening her narrative and reading the text the reader was introduced to evidence of Lathrop's sanity.

[319] Logan 598.
[320] Logan 598.

Figure 17. Photograph. Inside cover image of Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop. Reprinted from *A Secret Institution*

Lathrop included a dedication and a table of contents. Her dedication is to "The friends of those in whose behalf this volume is written." In the first six chapters Lathrop wrote about her parents, her childhood, and the events that led up to her incarceration. The last fourteen chapters detailed her confinement and what happened in the asylum, how she gained release, and the life she faced once free from the institution walls. Chapters are not arranged by genres. Instead she incorporated various genres into the chapters as she needed them for support of her sanity claim. For example, in chapter eight Lathrop inserted an affidavit and a declaration of commitment.[321] In chapter nine there was a poem Lathrop wrote while in the asylum. Chapter sixteen included testimony Lathrop gave in court seeking her release from the asylum. Lathrop inserted various genres throughout her text as a means of offering more fact to her narrative.

Like Packard and Pennell, Lathrop turned not to a single genre convention for telling her story but followed in these women's footsteps constructing a text that incorporated multiple genres. Estelle C. Jelinek, suggests this was nothing new to women's asylum narratives. She writes, "Throughout the nineteenth century, female autobiographers continued to write in the same disjunctive forms as during the previous two centuries, maintaining the same emphasis on the personal and concrete."[322] I argue that Lathrop used genres that would get at what was "concrete" in her personal story. One could attempt an argument that writing in a multi-genre form is, as Jelinek says, "disjunctive;" however, this was not the case with Lathrop. Her text flowed and her various genres do not disrupt the meaning of the narration but add to it. Just as the lawyer in a courtroom presented witness testimony, oral facts, and visual evidence and a doctor in the exam room supplied the patient with images of the body and statistics, so Lathrop appropriated these techniques strategically.

[321] Lathrop 105-106.
[322] Estelle C. Jelinek, *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography From Antiquity to the Present* (Boston: Twayne, 1986) 69.

In two instances, Lathrop went beyond the traditional elements of a narrative including a menu and a map. Both of these were attempts to show her reader the exact truth through illustration. A map provided a visual reference that presented a hard and fast factual scientific representation. If one looks at the area mapped, it is obvious if the map is constructed realistically or not. Lathrop included a map of her home in the text.

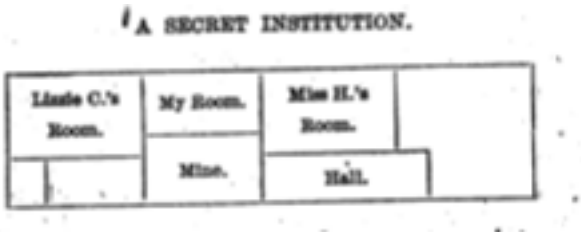

Figure 18. A Map of Lathrop's Home. Reprinted from *A Secret Institution*

Lathrop's map appeared when she told her reader how others came to believe her insane. While others might not believe her words because she was "insane," a map offered irrefutable evidence. Although she had already explained the layout of her home she offered a map as further evidence. It also provided a visual for the reader to better see the situation. Lathrop may have meant for this map to boost her claims of sanity and reject the label of delusional.

Like the map inserted into the text, Lathrop included a menu. Lathrop kept a record of the asylum meals for two weeks in 1882. She chose to provide an actual list of two days of meals.

> Monday Jan. 1,--Breakfast.—Gravy, potatoes and bread.
>
> Dinner.—Mutton, bread, potatoes and white winter radishes.
>
> Supper.—Bread, butter, quince sauce and cookies.
>
> Tuesday Jan. 2,--Breakfast.—Gravy, potatoes and bread
>
> Dinner.—Soup, bread pudding and potatoes.
>
> Supper.—Bread and butter.[323]

Utica's asylum menu appeared in this format—set apart from the narration. She could have easily written a sentence including the two days' fare. Her choice to print a menu was deliberate. It stood out. This menu was given to Legislative Committee. It was proof she compiled for them of the poor nutrition in the asylum. Incorporating a map and a menu gave readers credible documentation that went beyond making a "claim." These two genres become puzzle pieces that work with others in creating a full picture of her asylum experience.

Truth in Poetry

Regardless of the genre she used in proving her story, facts remained at the forefront of her argument. She built this into her poetry as well. One might argue that poetry is far removed

[323] Lathrop 241

from fact—it is art, literature, but not fact; however, Lathrop used poetry as another means of supporting her story. For her, poetry was not merely an aesthetic or spiritual truth. It was a genre that further proved the facts of her experience. Poovey discusses how early nineteenth-century poets established a poetics of fact. She notes, "Like political economists, poets aspired both to capture observed particulars—what Wordsworth called 'a simple product of the common day'—and to produce general, possibly even universal knowledge."[324] Poetry, then, could serve as a fact representing the truth of the time conveying an honest image through figures of speech. Honesty, then, was not only found in hard evidence or numbers but in sharing one's experience through a multitude of genres including poetics. Truth was found in literature.

Authors who observed life and shared this with their audiences were creating an ethos for themselves. All in all Lathrop included seventeen poems or excerpts from poems. Relying on famous poets: Tennyson, Browning, and Shakespeare as well as anonymous pieces and those of her own authorship. She used them as epigraphs and inserted them directly into her text. She aligned herself with the educated class of people who she believed would read and sympathize with her text. In doing this, she also claimed her own intelligence and knowledge. Lathrop was capable of using famous and highbrow poets in the context of her own account. In using poetry as well as other genres Lathrop sought to establish herself as a woman of literature. She provided her reader with another facet to her as a reliable author.

Chapter three's epigraph does not, at first read, seem to fit with the chapter title "Entertaining an Angel Unawares."[325] This poem was not attributed to any author, but is, in fact, Longfellow's "Priscilla." It read:

"It was wrong I acknowledge, for it is the fate of a woman

[324] Poovey 325.
[325] Lathrop 23.

Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a ghost that is speechless
Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell of its silence;
Hence is the inner life of so many suffering women
Sunless and silent and deep, like subterranean rivers."[326]

This poem as Lathrop used it seems to be about women's voicelessness in society. Lathrop spoke out in her narrative for the many silenced voices in the asylum. Hers was the "questioning voice." She told stories of women who had no voice like the German woman whose husband beat her and confined her to Utica when she ran away,[327] women who disappeared on back wards, and women who died in the asylum years after recovering yet remaining confined like Mrs. Sutton.[328] Lathrop wrote her narrative to save others from this fate. This poem offered readers the realities of "the fate of a woman" within the Utica walls. Poetry allowed her a safe space from which to protest the treatment of women, like herself. Rather than a direct confrontational genre, Lathrop used the elements of poetry for telling her truth and that of other inmates.

At times Lathrop went beyond describing the events of her life in the poetry she included in *A Secret Institution.* Chapter four "An Odd Acquaintance" also began with an epigraphic poem that read, "I will not flinch,/ Nor let the dart pass by my heart/ To wound another."[329] Lathrop's narrative was how she did not flinch. She stepped up telling her story so that others would not suffer what she went through in the asylum. As an asylum reformer her intent for writing the story was to change asylum practices and the system that placed one man in absolute control much like the inspiration for Packard's narrative. Although a risk, Lathrop would rather

[326] Lathrop 23.
[327] Lathrop 202-203.
[328] Lathrop 191-192.
[329] Lathrop 33.

take "the dart" than see another pierced with it the way she was. She had, as she said, "the desire to ameliorate the condition of the insane,--and thus bring help and comfort to the sane as well as the insane, who I felt sure in many instances were cruelly imprisoned."[330] Her use of poetry expressed this sentiment of saving others from what she saw as a horrible fate.

Lathrop, like Packard was after asylum reform; however, Lathrop did not rely on religious doctrine to the extent of her predecessor. Lathrop preferred to stick with a truth she could prove. Yet she did at times make reference to the divine. Her epigraph to chapter nine "Struggling for Liberty" is a short, two-line poem that read, "The love of liberty with life is given,/ And life itself the inferior gift of heaven."[331] First and foremost was the reference not to liberty but a love of it. She, like others, wanted her liberty. Her chapter was about this love and her struggle to gain her freedom from the asylum. Line two gave the reader the notion that heaven endows life upon people, it is a gift—a gift that is "inferior" to the gift of heaven, but still a gift. If life came from heaven, and the love of liberty was borne in life, then depriving one of their liberty was a sin against heaven. Not merely one against men. Lathrop used a logical path in these lines of poetry. She relied on truth in its tangible form within poetry to prove herself. It seems Lathrop believed that she deserved her freedom and this poem was evidence to that fact.

In a poem she penned, Lathrop spoke of losing hope that she would be ever be free. "Departing Hope" was inserted into the text in chapter nine. It was part of her story. It served dual purposes. First, she let her reader know that access to the very tools for writing was "treasure[d]."[332] Pencils and paper were difficult for a patient to obtain in the asylum walls. Lathrop "found a small piece of wrapping paper" and one of the attendants, Mrs. O., gave her a

[330] Lathrop 327.
[331] Lathrop 127.
[332] Lathrop 136.

"pencil about an inch long."[333] Through inclusion of the poem Lathrop could stress how isolated inmates were from communicating through writing. Without paper and a pencil it was impossible to communicate with the outside world. Secondly, Lathrop used the poem as a metaphor for her own despondency. While her words expressed a sorrow over the coming winter and the death of "bud and rose."[334] Underneath laid the reality of her own emotions and the hope inside her that was slowly dying. She spoke the reality of her emotions. This was the truth of her experience; however, she expressed it through poetry that, if doctors read, could be interpreted as a poem about nature.

In her epigraph to chapter twenty, Lathrop reminded her reader that this narrative was about the truth of her story. She stated,

> "Give me but one hour of my first energy,
> Of that invincible faith—one only hour!
> That I may cover with an eagle glance
> The truths I have, and spy some certain way
> To mould them, and completing them possess."[335]

She restated her enthusiasm for reforming asylum laws and practices. This "energy" would move her to tell the "truths." At the same time she used the word "mould." One might question if she was indeed committed to the facts, or to achieving her goals through any means necessary. This poem makes it unclear. Throughout her narrative she asserted the truth but here she admitted she would alter it. Perhaps in admitting this to her reader she claimed her honesty. Unlike the doctors

[333] Lathrop 136.
[334] Lathrop 136.
[335] Lathrop 327. Like other poems she used this one is out in quotation marks but no credit is given to another author.

and attendants in the asylum whom she believed to mold the truth to their own dishonest ends her truths would be in the name of justice even if transformed in some way.

"Subjective" to "Objective" Truth

Although Lathrop hinted at constructing a subjective truth through poetry, her inclusion of letters was, undoubtedly, a reliance on objective truth. Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop all include letters in their asylum narratives. For Lathrop, letters aided her in telling her story; however, they were not part of the story in terms of plot. Rather they served to illustrate how Lathrop's world, as she experienced it, was the reality. Again there is the return to the facts of the story. She has these on her side while the letters from others reveal the misrepresentation of facts. Letters served as primary source historical documents supporting Lathrop's own words. Like the map and menu, the letters are facts in and of themselves. Lathrop's rhetorical act of refuting the "facts" in the letters as given by her sister and mother is her claim of truth.

Correspondence between Lathrop and others was further proof Lathrop used in establishing her ethos. Letters from Lathrop's family are the most prolific in the text. If taken out of context, they would assuredly appear as proof that Lathrop was insane. Lathrop, however, used these letters to assert her sanity. She turned her mother's and sister's letters on themselves analyzing them for lies and misrepresentation and then revealing those to the reader. For each letter presented, Lathrop offered a rebuttal. One can clearly discern a tone of superiority in the letters from Nellie, Lathrop's sister, and her mother. Lathrop refused to succumb to their accusations. Instead, she proved to her reader that these women did not know the facts questioning their understanding of reality and reaffirming her sanity.

The first letter Lathrop included was written to Mr. Zell, a family friend, from her sister, Nellie. It was dated Oct. 20, 1880. In this Nellie stated, "'She had been suffering with some disorder of the nervous system, which has finally developed in a brain disease, and we have been obliged to send the dear child away for special treatment.'"[336] Nellie betrayed her sister while portraying her as a child, despite the fact that Lathrop was older and had been the sole financial supporter of the family prior to her physical illness. Ultimately, the betrayal was not in the words "brain disease" but in the addressee. Nellie had taken it upon herself to write to the one man who Lathrop trusted and loved. What Lathrop explicitly points out in contextualizing the letter is that her sister gets her facts wrong. She called Nellie "ignorant" and says that "a false impression is given of the real facts of the case."[337] This continues in the extract she included from a letter to her from her mother dated Feb. 22, 1881. Lathrop's mother wrote "I knew you could not be in your right mind from the first moment you imagined you were *poisoned* and *sticky*."[338] Lathrop reminded the reader that her mother knew full well that she tried to wash the stickiness off her body. Lathrop stated that her mother "knew that I had bathed my feet in hot soda and water to remove numbness and stickiness, yet she seemed so blinded by others that she seemed incapable of recalling the facts."[339] Lathrop argued that her mother, like her sister, had the facts wrong. In attempting to tell the straight story, Lathrop's mother and sister wrote accounts that Lathrop disproved in her earlier account of what happened and she used the letters to reaffirm what happened. She is correct and others got it wrong.

Lathrop included an extract from her sister in which she showed how Nellie made false assumptions without any evidence. Her sister declared, "'You think you are perfectly sane, and

[336] Lathrop 151.
[337] Lathrop 153.
[338] Lathrop 155.
[339] Lathrop 155.

well. Do not the majority of the patients think themselves sane, and others to *blame* for their confinement?'"[340] To this Lathrop argued with proof she had from life in the asylum walls. She answered for her reader stating, "To any one who is at all familiar with insanity, this idea of hers will seem as ridiculous as it did to me, as it is a fact that I never saw a person in the asylum, except those who were sane at the time of their imprisonment, who blamed any one for bringing them there."[341] In this case the reality of the statement was clearly on Lathrop's side. She knew, as she was in an asylum. Nellie was speaking from assumptions instead. Lathrop showed her reader that she was the one with the facts here, not her sister.

After including a letter from her mother dated March 24, 1881, Lathrop again refuted the information in her mother's letter claiming, "It was evident that my mother had wrong impressions and was ignorant of facts, still she persisted in drawing conclusions inimical to me."[342] Lathrop continuously illustrated how her mother and sister were not speaking from factual evidence—the evidence she had already laid out in the first part of her narrative.

Lathrop also placed the letters in her narrative to show she was truly sane. In reading and understanding the letters and their meaning she proved her sanity. She shared the letters, as troubling as they were to her, with Dr. Gibson. He stated, "'They do not write to you as if they thought you were insane.' 'No,' I replied, 'they never have.'"[343] Each of these letters from her family though disheartening to Lathrop were, in fact, written as though she were rational even when they declared "'that your *imagination* would be the *death of you*?'"[344] Lathrop seems aware that even in her family's disparaging her they came back to treating her as though she were as sane as they were.

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[340] Lathrop 155.
[341] Lathrop 155-156.
[342] Lathrop 158.
[343] Lathrop 163.
[344] Lathrop 160.

When Lathrop included letters she wrote, they were not to her family, but to men who she believed could help her in her plight. Perhaps this was because she knew her family would not offer their assistance in gaining her release. She declared:

> My despairing efforts to argue the facts, only more thoroughly convinced me of the utter futility of any further efforts in this direction, as I knew it was impossible for me to say anything different from what I had stated were I to remain in the asylum a thousand years, could I be doomed to exist so long a time as that; therefore, after the first six months of my imprisonment, the subject was not alluded to by me in any of my letters.[345]

Lathrop saw that nothing she said to her family would help them see things in a different light. Her label of insanity overshadowed all attempts of convincing her family of the true facts such that she accepted them as "despairing efforts." She felt they had been assured of her delusions and would not believe the facts, but only this label of insanity. She, therefore, chose to keep the argument out of her letters to her sister and mother.

Tangible truths appeared again in Lathrop's legal documents. *A Secret Institution* included legal documents as a part of its multi-genre make up. Lathrop probably saw the value of using this rhetoric as support of her cause and her case for freedom. Much like her use of letters as evidence that the facts were on her side, legal documents were given as proof that the law was on her side not that of her family or the doctors. It is not until her move to the asylum that she included legal documents. They are not part of her autobiographical section. Instead they are part of the fight against asylum life and wrongful confinement. Legal documents support her testimony. As Shapiro notes, "In civil cases there was a strong belief that written records were superior to witness testimony because they were not subject to the fallibility of human

[345] Lathrop 171.

memory."[346] Thus these documents heighten the "factual" elements of the narrative while they lend credence to Lathrop as a witness.

Lathrop first used legal documents in an epigraph to chapter eight, "Revelations." She offered her readers Section 1 of "Law in regard to Medical Examiners."[347] This law was given that the reader "may understand the situation, which of course I was ignorant of at the time, and did not understand fully until long after my release, although from the circumstances of my imprisonment I knew there must be some chicanery, some illegal and underhand conduct on the part of Dr. Nefus."[348] Lathrop carefully chose these words denoting deception and impropriety. She portrays Dr. Nefus as practicing fraud. This is not merely her belief, but it is proven through the inclusion of Section 1 of this law. Lathrop then goes on to provide the facts that included how the incarceration took place—the judge's hearing of the case, the evidence presented, etc. Dr. Nefus' affidavit, included in the text, "was the only one presented to the court."[349] This gave proof that the "Law in regard to Medical Examiners: Section 1" was not followed. Another doctor's signature was required in order to commit Lathrop legally. One was not present and, therefore, her commitment was illegal. Once again, she provided facts for her case.

Dr. Nefus' affidavit was placed in the text it seems for the same reasons that Lathrop included letters. Lathrop took to proving the falsehood of the document and gave her reader the opposing and true facts. In Nefus' affidavit he declared, "'For at least *two years* she has complained of certain imaginary symptoms especially of the brain and nervous system generally, being obliged to give up all mental labor.'"[350] Lathrop gave the following rebuttal to this claim:

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[346] Shapiro 12.
[347] Lathrop 104. This section of the law asserted that no one could be committed to an asylum without the certificate of two doctors and that within five days of confinement a judge must approve the certificate and may choose to investigate into the case within ten days of commitment.
[348] Lathrop 104. Dr. Nefus was the doctor who originally signed the certificate asserting Lathrop's insanity.
[349] Lathrop 105.
[350] Lathrop 105.

"Dr. Nefus's statement that I had been insane for two years was instantly disproved successfully and constantly up to within *four months* of the closing of school and the previous term and within *two weeks* of the time of my imprisonment of the present term."[351] She was able to argue this because she had successfully taught in the school without any complaints of her mental state. Also she noted that her friends "were seeing me every day, [and] they would have known it was impossible for me to be insane."[352] She provided witnesses to her sanity. Lathrop had the facts in her corner and wanted to show that to her reader. She discredited Nefus in this way and put the question of his honesty in the mind of her reader. In regard to the other claims he made in his affidavit Lathrop wrote, "The other charges are too absurd to even contradict."[353] Lathrop did not want to argue against claims she felt ridiculous such as "imaginery symptoms" and "delusion[s]."[354] Instead she took on those "facts" that she could disclaim. Lathrop was careful to tell her story so that the facts were on her side.

Following Nefus' affidavit Lathrop supplied her reader with the judge's commitment order. This was a county commitment order given by a county judge. Unlike Nefus' legal document, Lathrop did not discredit this text. Instead it served as a "professional" document that supported her beliefs in the corruption of these institutions. She used the order to show the financial reasons why county commitments were preferred in the asylum system. County commitments obliged the county to pay for the cost of care of the patient. Even wealthy patients who could pay for care were often committed as county patients. Lathrop argued the reason for this was power and money. A paying patient could be "taken out of an asylum at any time his friends see fit to do so, whether in accordance with the doctor's permission or not, whereas a

[351] Lathrop 108-109.
[352] Lathrop 108.
[353] Lathrop 109.
[354] Lathrop 105.

county patient is entirely at the mercy of the superintendent as to the length of time he may choose to detain him." In addition to holding a patient for as long as the superintendent saw fit when committed by the county, the "county is sure to pay, and the greater the number of patients, the larger the revenue to the asylum."[355] If a county patient's family or friends wanted to free the patient, they had to go through the court system. Lathrop wanted her reader to know the ways in which the legal system took part in the abuse of power and money in the asylums. Producing the actual legal text offered her audience concrete evidence of this. Including the county commitment order allowed her to introduce and explain this.

Legal documents were not only about illustrating abuse in the asylum but also as a means of showing that others saw Lathrop's sanity. With the help of a man named Mr. Silkman, Lathrop was given an examination by a judge, the testimony from which she included in her narrative. She gave it in the form that one would find in the transcription of the testimony.

> "Q. Who placed you in the asylum?
>
> "A. Dr. Nefus.
>
> "Q. Who of your own family?
>
> "A. Sister, I suppose.[356]

This format continued onto the following page. Lathrop invited her reader into the courtroom in this way. It was not merely a restatement of what happened in the courtroom. Her text became the courtroom and the reader an audience to the judge's evaluation that he "failed to find a cobweb in her brain" and that "she is able to defend her own case."[357] In the actual court of law that Lathrop presented in her text, she was found sane.

[355] Lathrop 107.
[356] Lathrop 274.
[357] Lathrop 274-275.

Judge Barnard examined Lathrop a second time and she presented for her reader a portion of the cross-examination by a Dr. Brush. She wrote the testimony as it would appear transcribed. This was not a summary of the court proceedings; rather it was the exact wording of what transpired. Lathrop's reader is in the courtroom with her and the judge. At the close of the examination Judge Barnard declared, "I see no cause for detaining this lady. She seems perfectly able to take care of herself. I cannot hold her. She seems perfectly sane. I therefore discharge her."[358] These words were pronounced exactly as she prints them in the narrative. Not only that but a judge, a legal professional with authority, declared her sane officially orally and in print.

After her release from the asylum Lathrop continued to fight for her cause in exposing the abuses in asylums, especially in Utica where she spent two years of her life. When an investigating committee of the state legislature of New York looked into the Utica Asylum Lathrop offered her testimony. This time she did not use the transcription format instead incorporating it into her text. Lathrop wanted to do more than gain her freedom. She wrote, "if I could only be the instrument in God's hand to aid the poor unfortunate sufferers in the Utica Asylum."[359] She had such an opportunity when a state appointed committee investigated the Utica Asylum. Lathrop appeared for the committee and "called the attention of the committee to the necessity of new laws, of employing women physicians on the female wards, the banishment of enforced labor, the posting of regulations on the asylum walls for the direction of patients, and above all the employment of trained nurses and the appointment of a capable, conscientious superintendent…"[360] All of the proposals she offered in her testimony before the legislature came out of earlier passages in her narrative where she gave her reader the facts of life in the asylum.

[358] Lathrop 289.
[359] Lathrop 299.
[360] Lathrop 303-304

She requested female attendants on the ward for keeping sexual abuse at bay. Lathrop asserted that she was drugged and sexually abused by male attendants. She said, "I was at the mercy of unscrupulous and vicious men, with no one to appeal to for help or redress, with no escape, no refuge,--powerless to protect myself."[361] She was not the only one who knew about what went on with male attendants. Lathrop offered, "I now recalled the fact that two attendants had left the asylum after becoming disgusted with the abuses they knew existed."[362] She acknowledged not that this was a rumor going about the asylum, but a "fact" that she knew. Further she stated, "I also was cognizant of the fact that a patient who had been confined in the asylum for about two years had given birth to a child."[363] That this woman had a child was something unhidden from others, "this fact was generally known to the attendants and patients alike in the asylum."[364] The child did not live and a patient saw the dead body as it was taken away. There was a witness to the event supporting the "fact" known throughout the asylum. Lathrop returned to the idea that not only was this truth but that others were aware of this truth as well. Another woman told Lathrop she was pregnant and Lathrop did not believe her at first and then "witnessed the truth of her assertions."[365] Lathrop declared, "I believe that few patients escape the wanton lust of the physicians."[366] Lathrop's testimony for the Investigating Committee was one based in facts that her reader already knew from earlier illustrations of sexual abuse on the ward. Abuse that she assured her reader was "fact."

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[361] Lathrop 212. That Lathrop was willing to speak publicly about sexual matters was a risk. As Inez Schaechterle and Sue Carter Wood discussed in their essay "What about Sex? Reconsidering Histories of Nineteenth-Century Women's Public Reform Discourse" "In short, women reformers were often obliged to speak publicly about sex and sexual issues, sometimes explicitly, often obliquely, which added an additional element of risk to the challenges of female public speech."[361] Inez Schaechterle and Sue Carter Wood, "What about Sex? Reconsidering Histories of Nineteenth-Century Women's Public Reform Discourse," *Sizing Up Rhetoric* (2008): 325-333. 325.

[362] Lathrop 213

[363] Lathrop 213.

[364] Lathrop 214.

[365] Lathrop 214.

[366] Lathrop 216.

One year after Lathrop's initial appearance before the legislature, she was called back to speak following "the murder of a patient in the Utica Asylum, which was charged to an attendant."[367] She asked for advice from a lawyer who told her to "'tell the committee everything you know.'"[368] Again, she took the rhetorical strategy of using the word "fact" in her explanation of what happened. She wrote, "I simply gave a few facts in reference to the asylum."[369] It is the importance of her rhetoric that stood out. Her testimony was strictly based in fact and she was sure to let her reader know this.

Fact after fact and genre after genre served for Lathrop as truth. Whether she claimed that her past experiences with the family's boarder, Miss Hamlo, were true or she gave her reader a document in its original form, Lathrop used multiple genres as strategy for constructing reality regardless of what others might say. She knew that her family questioned her sanity—if those close to her, then why not her readers. She had to maintain an appearance of rationality and that was found nowhere better than in facts. Other women who wrote about their asylum experiences in the nineteenth century often worked against this label of insanity, albeit in dissimilar ways. For Lathrop, multiple genres aided her in constructing a text that fought against that label.

Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop's commitment to the Utica Insane Asylum influenced how she wrote her narrative account of this experience. *A Secret Institution* constantly reaffirmed that Lathrop fought for credibility throughout her text. She incorporated elements from non-autobiographical texts in order to make her point about sanity, lies against her, and false claims. In doing this she could draw on cultural truisms that assisted in establishing her as the reliable narrator of her story.

[367] Lathrop 307.
[368] Lathrop 308.
[369] Lathrop 309.

Conclusion

Throughout the narrative, Lathrop puts "fact" into the multiple genres she uses. It is only in using more than one genre that she can prove her sanity. Had she chosen a traditional autobiographical format her entire assertion would be hearsay. Instead she puts together various genres of poetry, letters, legal documents, and graphics for a comprehensive defense that fought the belief of others that she was insane. One may argue against one genre, but opposition to all of them cannot hold up. Fact after fact and genre upon genre built a wall difficult to penetrate. Her nontraditional approach to her story solidified her stance.

Lathrop was able to use facts in not only claiming her truth but the truth of what she saw taking place in asylums. When Lathrop discussed the control of the asylum it was horrific. Control and authority were not used for gaining "affection." Lathrop concluded her narrative with the following:

> The time will not be far distant when our institutions for the insane can not be vast prisons and dens of iniquity to enrich venal asylum superintendents and to shield and foster crimes which can be so readily concealed and denied, and where some people can be so ruthlessly denied "liberty and the pursuit of happiness" by an unfeeling jailer, who fears no punishment…[370]

Superintendents were, in Lathrop's opinion, hiding the truth to maintain their power. And in doing this, they squashed the rights of the inmates. Once she was released she turned to her right to free speech for refuting the "lies" of the institution. Lathrop's vehemence against the Utica asylum was based on the facts that she and others experienced. She told of these throughout her

[370] Lathrop 339.

narrative establishing the basis for her attack on the asylum and the famous superintendent, Dr. Grey. Lathrop understood the difference between a need to keep order through control and that which was tyrannical in nature and based on falsehood.

Lathrop's final chapter was devoted to the cause of reform. This epigraph connected her previous chapter with the final chapter. She said at the end of chapter twenty-one that her one goal in life was to expose the wrongs of the Utica asylum and see to it that life there was made better for others. In the beginning of her final chapter she reasserted this declaring, "During all these years as I have said, I had not given up the aim of my life—the desire to ameliorate the condition of the insane."[371] She may have asked for that energy in her poem but from her prose one sees that she has that energy. Now she wanted to mold this truth for her reader, provide them with the eagle eye she had for the truth of her experience and let them see for themselves the facts of the situation in which she found herself. In this way the reader would possess the truth of Lathrop's narrative and see through the lies of others and the abuses of the asylum.

Whether visual, literary, or legal Lathrop contended that the fact was of utmost importance in her narrative. She strove to find it and offered it to her reader as "fact" time and again. There was nothing more important to her than the reality of her experience. Multiple genres allowed Lathrop a method for engaging readers on different levels and at various angles while always coming back to the truth of the story. Others would misrepresent these through letters and legal documents, but in the end Lathrop won out because she had the facts on her side—the point she always held in front of her reader.

Lathrop moved away from the more sentimental approach of Packard towards reliance on fact. This move towards tangible ideas and images was a move into a new time period. Lathrop's identity was as "a secular political organizer….she came to advocate women's activism based

[371] Lathrop 327.

not on the separation of spheres but on a political equality she saw as superseding gender."[372] This was a move away from the pure, pious woman of the earlier nineteenth-century. Rather then seeing her identity wrapped up in her role as a proper female of those before her like Packard, Lathrop transformed into a woman who saw herself as "independent."[373] She became a "new woman" of the late nineteenth century who would welcome in the Progressive Era through facts rather than sentiment.

[372] Wood 78.
[373] Wood 103.

AFTERWORD

Following Lathrop's confinement, asylums and treatment of the mad changed in numerous ways. Not only did moral treatment fall out of favor, but the very existence of insane asylums was called into question. Asylum superintendents were under attack from state and local officials, reformers, and the medical field. Such antagonism lead physicians in asylums to transform their practices.[374] Grob argues that the changes that took place in psychiatry moved away from the "caring function" that was so inherent in the asylum treatment of the 1800s. The AMSAII became the American Medico-Psychological Association (AMPA) in 1892 signifying the allegiance to medicine and admitting non-superintendents into the group.[375] Papers presented at conferences reflected this connection with "pathology, physiology, and pharmacology."[376] Grob, however, notes that this alliance to doctors in other fields of medicine had both positives and negatives. Among the negatives was the increasing lack of concern over care for the mentally ill. In turning to more scientific practices, the unique treatment of the insane was somehow seen as no longer distinctly different.[377] Lathrop's asylum was undergoing changes and her writing reflected this. Just as Packard and Pennell wrote for their times as well.

Three women confined over decades and throughout the United States told their stories of confinement in seemingly similar ways—with a multi-genre narrative. Each did this for different reasons related to their circumstances of confinement and argument that that they were sane. They shared their experiences in an effort to make public realities of asylum life as well as what might put a woman in an asylum of the nineteenth century. For all three social control was a main component for the label of madness given them. Whether married, widowed, or single,

[374] Grob, *Mad Among* 138.
[375] Grob 139
[376] Grob 140
[377] Grob 140

these women argued their sanity and protested their institutionalization. Using multiple rhetorical strategies in their texts allowed them to write for a specific purpose. For Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard this was in order to gain as much support as she could for reforming confinement laws especially as they pertained to women. Lemira Clarissa Pennell took up the multi-genre approach in order to present others', most often men's, declarations of her sanity. At the same time she explained her ideas of sanitary reform. Lastly, a multi-genre approach allowed her to include letters and legal documents that she believed proved the wrongs of the state in confining her both in the asylum and the poor house. Clarissa Caldwell Lathrop understood that her family and doctors questioned her perceptions of reality, thus she turned to facts for proving her case. She established herself as credible in this way refuting the madness label.

This reliance on facts became key to reform movements of the Progressive Era. Lathrop turned from sentiment to science in her efforts to bring change to treatment in asylums. This was essential to the movement of scientific philanthropy that took root in the late 1800s. The Charity Organization Society (COS)[378] dedicated to helping the poor turned to this. According to Robert H. Bremner in his article "'Scientific Philanthropy,' 1873-93," (1956): "scientific philanthropy accumulated and organized a fund of detailed knowledge throwing needed light on the living standards of low-income families….the basic task of the charity agents was to get the facts about the families they tried to help."[379] Lathrop took to getting the facts about life in the asylum in the same way these established upper-class men and women did. Reliance on science was

[378] Donna L. Franklin, "Mary Richmond and Jane Addams: From Moral Certainty to Rational Inquiry in Social Work Practice," *The Social Service Review* 60:4 (June 1986): 504-525. 508. Franklin notes, "The Charity Organization Society (COS) emerged from a concern for making almsgiving scientific, efficient, and preventative."
[379] Robert H. Bremner, "'Scientific Philanthropy,' 1873-93," *The Social Service Review* 30:2 (June 1956): 168-173. 172.

something women were doing in their homes as "'scientific homemakers.'" Mothers and wives turned to solid economic fact for running their households.[380]

Society's turn to science in reform movements was hardly the only place one saw such change. Psychiatry relied more on facts than ever before in the late nineteenth century: "Not only did psychiatry attain respectability and power but the treatment of persons with mental disorders became increasingly medicalized and scientific."[381] Lathrop's text reflected this where Packard and Pennell, like the moral treatment itself, relied upon the rhetoric of morality and social control. All three women incorporated the language of the asylum into their own rhetorical practices. For Packard and Pennell, this was done in establishing their ethos as moral and proper women that didn't require society's control over them. In this way they took the ideas of moral therapy and cures of insanity visible in patient's behavior and portrayed themselves as the sane well-behaved woman. Lathrop, on the other hand, writing later in the century sought credibility in pushing forth facts in her narrative. Making available to themselves the rhetoric of the times in which they experienced asylum life, Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop astutely adopted the language of their keepers.

As for psychiatry, the narratives of women such as Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop provided doctors and the public with another perspective of life in asylums—the patients'. Where much of the knowledge of how a patient experienced treatment came from case files and articles shared in publications such as *The Journal of Insanity* during the nineteenth century, now there was also the published patient view. Although not always believed or taken seriously at the time period in which they were written, these narratives provide historians today with a rich understanding of how women in asylums perceived their life within the institution walls.

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[380] Geller 172.
[381] Geller 96.

While this study was limited to three nineteenth-century multi-genre narratives, such texts are not isolated in time. As asylum and mental institution narratives have continued into the twenty-first century they have used this rhetorical strategy for varied yet effective purposes. In the twentieth century, American women in mental hospitals writing about their experiences were far more likely to claim their insanity. Narratives often spoke of a resistance to a diagnosis and later coming to terms and acceptance of such. Although clearly proponents of their treatment and their doctors, they took on similar strategies for expressing this in their writing as women who protested these things.

In the late twentieth century and into the present women's "madness narratives" have most often taken a dual stance on mental hospitals, treatment, and diagnosis. They look critically at their experiences and offer positives and negatives of systems that they believe helped them, but also require improvements. Few of these are multi-genre texts, rather strict memoirs telling an autobiographical tale. A return to the multi-genre rhetoric appeared in Lenore McCall's *Between Us and the Dark* (1947) and musician Emilie Autumn's memoir *The Asylum for Wayward Victorian Girls* (2009) that includes personal narrative, hospital records, drawings, photographs, poetry, song lyrics, and letters adding historical fiction as a genre. Autumn's autobiographical text details her experience in a mental hospital. It is told through diary entries kept in a notebook. Each day she was in the hospital she found a letter from a girl, Emily, who lived in a Victorian insane asylum. Autumn connected her own treatment with that of insane women and girls in the nineteenth-century. In this multi-genre approach Autumn connected two time periods as a way of illustrating to her audience that perhaps they are not as different as one might assume and change is a must. Like Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop, her text asks readers to think about labels/diagnoses, treatment, and reform.

With the growth of disability studies in both rhetoric and history that includes mental disorders/illnesses, there exists a platform for discussing the development of asylum narratives as they have transformed over time. Understanding how women have used language in constructing their identities as they claim or refute insanity more than one hundred years ago. Recent articles on memoirs from the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries addressing mental illness and life inside psychiatric hospitals illustrate the need for research into the history of such accounts. Packard, Pennell, and Lathrop are women who paved the way for others like Lenore McCall and Emilie Autumn. Examining the rhetorical strategies and historical context in which women wrote, and continue writing, narratives addressing self, society, and "insanity" is valuable in moving forward the fields of rhetoric, disability studies, women's history, and medical history.

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