An Analysis of Eight East-Coast Australian Newspapers' Coverage of Mental Illness Stories, 2000-2014.

*Examining the extent to which mental illness
is used to explain stories of violence and violent crime.*

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

September 2019

Declaration

I declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree in any university or another educational institution and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

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Abstract

The focus of this thesis is on the stories Australian journalists tell, and have told, about persons with mental illness in articles published in eight east-coast Australian newspapers between 2000 and 2014. The publications chosen for analysis were *The Herald Sun*, *The Age*, *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Courier-Mail*, *The Burnie Advocate*, and *The Border Mail*. A total of 1302 articles were sourced, containing both search terms 'mental illness' and 'mentally ill', published between 1 November 2000 and 31 December 2014.

Many analyses of media content have been conducted, though none have included an account of the history of mental illness as an overarching framework. This thesis is innovative in that it draws on the history of mental illness, as told by Michel Foucault, Roy Porter, Andrew Scull, Peter Conrad, and Elaine Showalter, to contextualize the stories told by Australian journalists in the twenty-first century. An analysis of this history, dating from the fifteenth century to the closing of asylums in the 1980s, was conducted to uncover the narratives that have defined it, and then, in turn, how they inform mental illness coverage in the twenty-first century. The analysis yielded two principal narratives that have underpinned this history, and these were 'confinement' and 'individual responsibility'.

This thesis began as an investigation into the types of stories that Australian journalists told about persons with mental illness, and how they could be understood in the context of the history of mental illness, but it became a thesis about the ways in which mental illness can be used as a means for explaining violent crime, and most commonly, murder. Qualitative in its methodological approach, the researcher employed a combination of narrative and discourse analysis techniques to examine the content published in 1302 newspaper articles. Analysis yielded five principal themes: 'violence', 'suicide', 'homelessness', 'prisons', and 'drugs'. Roughly forty per cent of the entire sample was coded 'violence', and it was this sub-category, along with 'suicide', that became the focus of the analysis chapters in this thesis. Analysis revealed that journalists frequently employ mental illness as an explanatory device to account for stories of violence, and in particular, murder. The researcher argues that this represents a continuation of the confinement narrative identified through historical analysis as it confines an individual diagnosed or being treated for mental illness to a stigmatized identity. This explanatory device was not employed uniformly. Mental illness was more likely to be drawn on in cases involving women who killed others, particularly family members, whereas men (particularly fathers) were more often portrayed as deliberate, calculated, and cold in their actions, as opposed to insane and uncontrollable. The social factors that underpin this coverage are examined at length.

Acknowledgments

To Sophie Adele. Our mutual love for language has been the backdrop to every sentence. I don't write a single word without hoping it will impress you. You have my complete respect.

Finally, to Papa, with whom I've shared conversations, both real and imagined. When I was much younger, you gave me two books, both hardcovers: *Tales From Watership Down* by Richard Adams, and C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*. These books taught me the power of storytelling. Reading your own journals offered me an example of a man, self-described as 'ordinary', writing in an extraordinary way. It was just the example I needed, and I think about you often.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The principal focus of this thesis is storytelling, and more specifically, the stories told by Australian journalists about persons with a mental illness (PWMI).[1] I wanted to understand the cultural history of mental illness in western countries, the major socio-historical narratives that have characterised this history, and how these inform the stories published in Australian newspapers today. A cursory glance at the history of mental illness suggests PWMI have long been depicted as distinctly abnormal and problematic. With this history as a backdrop, the concern that informed my interest in this topic was that so many of the stories I had read, seen, or heard about PWMI tended to depict these individuals as violent, dangerous, abnormal, and deviant. In fact, the first stories I recall hearing about mental illness were also about violence, dangerousness, and violent crime. It was in 1996 that a 29-year-old Martin Bryant killed 35 people and injured 21 others in what was then the world's worst single-person shooting.[2] Over the following twenty years, journalists sought to account for Bryant's actions, often shifting between the polar understandings that Bryant was either 'born to kill', or was instead the victim of 'a mind that had been indelibly warped by a lifetime of derision and alienation'.[3] Public discourse and media commentary reinforced the Port Arthur Massacre as a story defined by issues relating to both gun control and mental illness.

A similar narrative that questioned the extent to which mental illness had informed a violent crime was applied to the story of Timothy McVeigh, the 'Oklahoma City Bomber', who on 19 April 1995 killed 168 people, including 19 children, when he bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, USA. Psychiatrists concluded that McVeigh was 'not deranged', but speculation surrounding his mental health had implicitly reinforced the assumption that only a mentally ill person would be capable of committing such a crime.[4] This assumption was reinforced in the weeks following 24 March 2015, when German pilot Andreas Lubitz seized control of Germanwings flight 9525 and crashed it into the French Alps, killing himself, 144 passengers, and six members of the cabin crew on board. Similar to coverage of those crimes committed by Martin Bryant and Timothy McVeigh, one suspected that Lubitz's actions would be explained as a product of mental illness. A short preliminary study explored the extent to which this was the case. Factiva was used to source articles that contained both key search terms 'Germanwings' and 'suicide', published in all major Australian newspapers between 25 March 2015 and 1 April 2015; a period of one week immediately following the crash.[5] This analysis yielded a total of 26 articles, five published in *The Advertiser*, four in both *The Australian* and *The Daily Telegraph*, three each in the *Canberra Times*, *The Herald Sun*, and *The Courier-Mail*, and two in both *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.[6] Without exception, each of these 26 articles focused to varying degrees on Lubitz's mental health. These results could be interpreted as the product

of narrow search terms, though the large sample of articles sourced across just seven days indicates the extent to which Australian journalists portrayed this case as a mental health story. A wider glance at articles published in *The Conversation* and *Crikey* over this period also yielded coverage that focused on Lubitz's mental health.[7]

While each article from this small sample portrayed the Germanwings crash as a mental health story, some journalists were careful to include mental illness only as part of a broader discussion of the language most appropriate to employ when events of this kind occur. Erica Goode reported for *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 28 March 2015 that the power of newspapers to shape social discourse and public attitudes towards mental illness necessitated asking whether the Germanwings crash should be described as 'suicide' or 'mass murder'. Goode drew on the expertise of Michelle Cornette, executive director of the American Association of Suicidology, who argued that a pilot who crashes a plane carrying hundreds of passengers 'is probably more like the perpetrator of a mass shooting' than any other abnormal figure some journalists might be inclined to reinforce.[8] In the context of this group of 26 articles, Erica Goode's discussion of the relevance of mental illness to cases of this kind was the exception rather than rule. As this thesis will illustrate, mental illness is frequently used as a means to explain violent crime, and in this case, Goode was alone in choosing not to reinforce this correlation.

Some Australian journalists who reported on the Germanwings crash offered coverage that could have had the effect of cultivating fear for passenger safety during long-haul commercial flights. A total of five articles reinforced an increased fear from 'inside the cockpit'. *The Herald Sun* reported in an editorial published on 28 March 2015 that 'the possibility of a deeply disturbed pilot at the controls is now every passenger's nightmare as evidence emerges that the pilot … had suffered depression'.[9] Jim O'Rourke reinforced this 'threat to public safety' narrative in *The Advertiser*, explaining that Lubitz was not the first pilot to take a 'deliberate plunge'.

> Since 1976, at least eight instances of pilots deliberately crashing their planes, killing themselves and, in some cases, hundreds of others, have been identified by the International Aviation Safety Network.

While stories of passenger-plane disaster are always distressing, the US Federal Aviation Administration describes 'aircraft-assisted pilot suicides' as rare. The vast majority of cases involve just one fatality; that of the pilot involved in the light plane crash. This suggests that journalists should be careful not to overstate the threat posed by pilots, particularly in the aftermath of just one major event. Jim O'Rourke overlooked the potential consequences of conflating mental illness with violence when he reported on the number of pilots prepared to take a 'deliberate plunge'.

Gun violence in the United States also continues to be portrayed as the behaviour of deranged and disturbed untreated PWMI. The top four single-perpetrator mass shootings in the United States have all taken place since the beginning of the twenty-first century. These are the Sandy Hook massacre

of 27 people in December 2012, where the victims were mostly children; the Virginia Tech school shooting in April 2007, where the deceased numbered 32; the 2016 Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, where 49 perished; and finally, the most recent Las Vegas festival attack in October 2017, which claimed the lives of 58 people. Reporting for *The Independent*, Jeff Farrell wrote that the perpetrator of the Las Vegas massacre 'had a severe mental illness that was probably undiagnosed', a conclusion he reached after he noted that police had found Valium in the perpetrator's hotel room.[10] Farrell described the perpetrator as a 'high-stakes gambler', who was 'aloof' and 'had problems connecting with people'. He continued with the following:

> A search of Paddock's [the perpetrator's] room on the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay hotel turned up Valium tablets. The drug is used to treat a number of mental illnesses, from anxiety to panic attacks.

The descriptions offered by Farrell connect a packet of Valium tablets with 'a severe mental illness', and the single worst mass shooting in America's history. The journalist also implied that anxiety and/or panic attacks could legitimately explain this story of unprovoked violence. The Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando attracted similar coverage. Australia's Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) reported that the 'Orlando shooter [was] a mentally ill homophobe and wife beater, but not religious'. These descriptors are significant, and worthy of analysis, because they are portrayed in such a way as to offer a simple causal explanation for the violent act. The Orlando shooter attacked a club frequented by members of the LGBT community, and so the label of 'mentally ill homophobe' not only appeared justified, but also logical. The analysis presented in this thesis illustrates the failure of this kind of reporting to account for broader social factors involved in violent crime.

James Dawes wrote in *Evil Men* that we often imagine evil as inhuman. As a consequence, we frequently set aside an examination of the common causes of the most abhorrent crime.[11] The purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which journalists writing for eight east-coast Australian newspapers explain violence as the product of insanity. This research focus is borne of a time when so many school shootings in the United States are explained not as the product of issues related to gun control, but of issues pertaining to the treatment and care of those diagnosed with a mental illness. One could argue that journalists employ mental illness in these kinds of cases to explain the inexplicable. It could be understood as necessary to imagine these violent acts as those committed by the abnormal, the delusional, the deranged, the paranoid, the evil, and the insane, because to imagine the opposite – the potential for inhumanity and cruelty within ourselves – might be too much to bear. It might be more comforting to set aside an examination of broader social causes and the integral role they play in events of this kind. Perhaps it is easier, as James Dawes contends, to simply imagine the evil as inhuman, and the violent as mentally ill.

The relationship between mental illness and violence

On 20 January 2017, Dimitrious Gargasoulas drove a red Holden Commodore at high speed through Melbourne's CBD, killing six people and wounding 30 others. Commentary and analysis followed, the purpose of which appeared to be to account for 'why' a crime of this nature had occurred. Writing for *The Age* on 22 January 2017, Patrick McGorry and Rosemary Purcell reported that 'random multiple homicides of this kind always raise questions about the role undiagnosed and untreated mental illness may have played'.[12] These questions also formed part of the focus of the ABC's *Four Corners* episode titled 'Time bomb: the making of the Bourke Street murderer', aired in June 2019.

This kind of analysis often follows incidents of violent homicide, and particularly mass murder, and it is a trend reinforced by academics, government officials, and journalists that is reflected in the content of the large sample of articles sourced for analysis in this thesis. Rosemary Purcell is an Associate Professor of Forensic Mental Health at Swinburne University, and James Ogloff is a Professor of Forensic Behavioural Science at the same institution. Writing for *The Conversation* following the death of 11-year-old Luke Batty at the hands of his father in February 2014, Purcell and Ogloff reported:

> The violent and senseless death of …. Batty in Victoria has not only drawn attention to the serious problem of family violence but has also raised questions about the role that undiagnosed or untreated mental illness may have played in his father's behaviour.

While Purcell and Ogloff affirm that 'the vast majority of people experiencing mental illness are not violent', the purpose of their analysis is to argue for the plausibility of this relationship in some cases.[13] De Bortoli and Nixon argue that in cases of filicide – where a child is killed by their parent or caregiver – 'mental illness, previous abuse, and domestic violence are risk factors'.[14]

An assumption that underpins this thesis and is crucial for understanding the analysis of stories Australian journalists tell about PWMI is that PWMI are not inherently violent. To some extent, an appraisal of the relevance of mental illness to the crimes described above depends on an academic's discipline and theoretical standpoint. Purcell, Ogloff, De Bortoli, and Nixon are all lecturers in the field of Behavioural Science. Their focus, naturally, is on the individual, and I argue that it is a focus on individual accountability that has become most prominent in the public's perception of criminal behaviour and its causes. This is not surprising given one of the defining features of Western civilization is a commitment to individualism.[15]

But the relationship between mental illness and violence is complex, and well beyond a simple cause-effect explanation often used in media accounts of violent crime. First, PWMI are far more likely to be the victims of violent crime than the perpetrators.[16] The symptoms associated with severe mental illness that can make one vulnerable to physical assault include poor planning and problem solving, impulsivity, disorganised thought processes, and an impaired perception of reality; all of which can impinge on one's ability to perceive risks and protect oneself.[17] In circumstances where the violence is

being perpetrated by a PWMI, the individual's actions are informed by an *accumulation* of risk factors, which according to Varshney et al, can include any combination of age, sex, recent divorce, unemployment, past violence, juvenile detention, substance abuse, physical abuse, perceived threats, victimization, parental arrest records, and domestic violence. Importantly, Varshney et al conclude that 'for those with mental illness without [comorbid] substance abuse, the relationship with violence [is] modest at best', suggesting that a combination of precursors to violent crime is more a plausible and valid explanation for criminal behaviour than a simple cause-effect correlation between mental illness and violence.

The most violent individuals within our community continue to be young males from a low socio-economic background, often with problems involving illicit drug and/or alcohol abuse.[18] A history of violent behaviour also appears to be a significant predictor of future violent behaviour.[19] The purpose of this thesis is not to debate the presence of a mental health diagnosis in each story of violent crime told by an Australian journalist. In many of the cases examined in the analysis chapters that follow, the individual who has killed a family member or an indiscriminate other was suffering from a mental health condition at the time of offending. What *is* examined in this thesis is the inclination for Australian journalists to set aside the complex relationship between mental illness and violence, mediated by factors relating to age, sex, history of domestic abuse, socio-economic status and so forth, and simply reinforcing a simple cause-effect explanation between mental illness and violent crime. The vast majority of PWMI are not violent, and I expected some measure of this reality to be reflected in the storytelling examined in this study.

Chapter structure

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the stories Australian journalists tell about PWMI and the extent to which acts of violence are portrayed as the product of mental illness. The secondary aim of the study is to assess whether the conflation of mental illness and violence can be understood as a journalistic practice underpinned and informed by long-standing historical narratives. If Australian journalists portray PWMI in a certain way in the twenty-first century, can this be shown to have clear historical origins? Chapter Two charts the history of mental illness, as told by Michel Foucault, Roy Porter, Andrew Scull, Erving Goffman, Elaine Showalter, and Peter Conrad. This history begins in Europe in the thirteenth century, covers what Foucault described as 'The Great Confinement', and offers an in-depth examination of the legacy of Sigmund Freud. The consequences of deinstitutionalisation in the 1980s and the origins of modern medicalization are both examined. This historical account provides a backdrop for Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven, which are devoted to an analysis of 1302 newspaper articles published between 2000 and 2014. The purpose of charting this history is to examine the ways in which western populations have sought to confine and control PWMI, and the chapter concludes by

asking whether methods of control persist today, in a more subtle form, through the written word and its power to confine an individual to a stigmatized identity.

Chapter Three details the study's methodological approach, beginning with a justification of the combination of narrative analysis and discourse analysis techniques. The chapter details the date parameters, search terms, and publications chosen for data collection, while significant attention is devoted to explaining why this study privileged hard-copy newspapers given the range of news mediums – including Facebook, Twitter, and AOL – available to individuals in the twenty-first century. The methodological approach to coding the newspaper articles and how specific sub-samples were analysed is also detailed.

Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven comprise the analysis of 1302 articles sourced from eight east-coast Australian newspapers, published between 1 November 2000 and 31 December 2014. Roughly forty per cent of this sample, or 523 articles, consisted of stories of violence: violence perpetrated within the family setting; violence committed against persons unknown to the perpetrator; and violence against the self, comprising stories of both suicide and self-harm. Chapters Four and Five are devoted to an examination of those cases of family violence, and the sections within these chapters are constructed based on the identity of the perpetrator. Chapter Four accounts for 'fathers', 'mothers', and 'progeny', while Chapter Five examines 'spouses', 'siblings', and 'extended family members'. These two chapters both fell under the broader category of 'family violence', and the most common story told by Australian journalists in these articles described a murder committed by an individual described as 'mentally ill'. The chapters comprise an analysis of the extent to which mental illness was used to explain these murders and the differences that exist across each of the perpetrator groups. For instance, the mental health explanatory narrative was drawn on uniquely in cases that involved fathers who killed their children, compared with coverage of mothers who committed the same crime. While fathers were portrayed as cold, calculated, and embittered, mothers were presented as victims of a mental illness that compelled them to harm their children. These nuances in narrative and language are explored at length in these chapters.

Chapter Six examines 86 articles that comprise stories of indiscriminate violence committed by individuals that Australian journalists described as 'mentally ill'. This group of articles covered a number of major socio-historical flashpoints, including a series of school shootings in the United States, a number of copycat stabbings that took place at primary schools in China between 2005 and 2010, the 'Sydney Siege', 9/11, and numerous other incidents where violence had been wrought against a victim unknown to the perpetrator. Similar to the purpose of Chapters Four and Five, Chapter Six examines the extent to which journalists explained these crimes as the outcome of mental illness, at the expense of an examination of their broader social causes.

The final analysis chapter examines another 86 articles that comprised stories of completed suicide, suicide attempts, and/or self-harm. The chapter examines two distinct reporting methods employed by journalists who told stories related to suicide, and these were 'problem-focused' reporting and the use of 'personal stories'. The analysis presented in this chapter illustrates the extent to which journalists were inclined to privilege stories of completed suicide over stories of recovery.

The focus across four analysis chapters on stories of violence can be understood as a product of the content yielded through data collection. The most common mental health story told by Australian journalists in articles published between 2000 and 2014 was of violence committed against either a family member, an indiscriminate other, or the self. The most frequent criminal action depicted in these articles was murder.

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[1] The use of the acronym PWMI will be employed throughout this thesis to describe 'person/s with mental illness'. This choice was based on research from Granello and Gibbs (2016), who found that using the term 'people with mental illnesses' elicited a higher degree of tolerance than the use of the term 'the mentally ill'. The phrase 'the mentally ill' is not the optimal way to describe individuals diagnosed or being treated for mental illness because it portrays this group as one homogenous mass, and fails to account for the varying degrees in severity of mental illness, as well as the various mental health conditions that Australians are treated for each year. The use of the phrase 'the mentally ill' will only be preserved throughout this thesis when it is used by the Australian journalists whose coverage is examined in Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven of this study.

[2] Martin Bryant is Australia's worst single mass murderer. He killed a total of 35 people in the town of Port Arthur, Tasmania, in 1996, and is currently serving 35 life sentences in Risdon Prison for this crime. The 'Port Arthur Massacre' sparked the transformation of gun control legislation in Australia.

[3] Wainwright, R, & Totaro, P 2009, *Born or Bred? Martin Bryant: the making of a mass murderer*, John Fairfax Publications, Melbourne.

[4] Gore Vidal wrote for *Vanity Fair* in September 2001 about the story of Timothy McVeigh. In an interview with Dr. John Smith, the psychiatrist who evaluated McVeigh following the 1995 bombing, Vidal quotes Smith: 'I don't think he committed [the bombing] because he was deranged or misinterpreting reality'. This article can be sourced at https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2001/09/mcveigh200109

[5] At different points throughout this thesis, I will refer to a group of 'major Australian newspapers'. This group is not formed based on my own judgement of Australia's most important publications, but on a broad category defined by Factiva. This group includes *The Canberra Times*, *The Courier-Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Herald Sun*, *The Advertiser*, *The Age*, *The Australian*, and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

[6] These articles were Tom Kelly Dusseldorf's 'Pilot's eye fears 'in his mind'', *The Advertiser*, 1 April 2015; Daniel Meers and Robyn Ironside's 'Cockpit watch on pilots', *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 March 2015; 'Have your say', *The Advertiser*, 31 March 2015; Theodore Dalrymple's 'MEDICATED MISERY OF ANDREAS LUBITZ', *The Australian*, 30 March 2015; Charles Miranda's 'EX-GIRLFRIEND SAYS PILOT WOKE FROM NIGHTMARES SCREAMING… 'WE'RE GOING DOWN…'', *The Herald Sun*, 29 March 2015; Melissa Eddy's ''Tormented' pilot's grim warning to his former partner', *The Canberra Times*, 29 March 2015; Andrew Carswell's 'KILLER PILOT TORTURED BY LOST LOVE', *The Courier-Mail*, 28 March 2015; Charles Miranda's 'Desperate bid to stop descent into madness', *The Advertiser*, 28 March 2015; Andrew Carswell's 'NOTES UNMASK KILLER PILOT'S SICK SECRET', *The Courier-Mail*, 28 March 2015; Jim O'Rourke's 'Not first pilot in deliberate plunge', *The Advertiser*, 28 March 2015; Andrew Carswell's 'DESCENT INTO MADNESS', *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 March 2015; Byron Bailey's 'MURDER TAKES FLIGHT', *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 March 2015; Stephen Drill's 'DEATH WISH', *The Herald Sun*, 28 March 2015; Andrew Carswell's 'REVEALED LOVE MELTDOWN BEFORE SKY MASSACRE', *The Courier-Mail*, 28 March 2015; Cameron Stewart's ''Cheerful' talk turns to screams as 149 slain', *The Australian*, 28 March 2015; Steve Creedy and Cameron Stewart's 'Suicide at 38,000ft: helping pilots navigate dark times', *The Australian*, 28 March 2015; Steve Creedy's 'Canberra reviews cockpit security', *The Australian*, 28 March 2015; 'Reports desperate captain used axe', *The Canberra Times*, 28 March 2015; 'Aviation's new grim lesson', *The Canberra Times*, 28 March 2015; 'Letters', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 March 2015; Jamie Freed's 'Approach to mental health issues must be mature: union', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 March 2015; Erica Goode's 'Few precedents for pilots choosing death by airplane, but is it suicide or mass murder?', *The Age*, 28 March 2015; Jamie Freed's 'Mental health needs 'mature approach'', *The Age*, 28 March 2015; and Charles Miranda's 'KILLER PILOT', *The Herald Sun*, 27 March 2015. (The remaining two articles were duplicates and so were not referenced as part of this group).

[7] Some articles published following the crash were critical of the intense mental health focus adopted by journalists reporting for mostly western media organisations. Nooreen Akhtar's *The Conversation* piece, titled 'Germanwings coverage a kick in the teeth for people who suffer from mental health issues' is one such article, and it can be sourced at https://theconversation.com/germanwings-coverage-a-kick-in-the-teeth-for-people-who-suffer-from-mental-health-issues-39446

[8] Goode, E 2015, 'Few precedents seen as Germanwings investigation points to deliberate crash', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Available at https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/few-precedents-seen-as-germanwings-investigation-points-to-deliberate-crash-20150327-1m95xr.html

[9] Twelve articles, or 50 per cent of this sample, documented Lubitz's history of depression.

[10] Farrell, J 2017, 'Stephen Paddock: Investigators 'believe Las Vegas shooter had severe mental illness that was likely undiagnosed', *The Independent*, Available at https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/stephen-paddock-severe-mental-illness-undiagnosed-fbi-investigators-las-vegas-shooting-a7990021.html

[11] Dawes, J 2013, *Evil Men*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

[12] McGorry, P, & Purcell, R 2017, 'The fraying safety net of mental health care', *The Age*, Available at https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/the-fraying-safety-net-of-mental-health-care-20170122-gtwfwd.html

[13] Purcell, R, & Ogloff, J 2014, 'Violence and mental illness: harsh reality demands sensitive answers', *The Conversation*, Available at https://theconversation.com/violence-and-mental-illness-harsh-reality-demands-sensitive-answers-23460

[14] De Bortoli, L, & Nixon, M 2017, 'Understanding the triggers for filicide will help prevent it', *The Conversation*, Available at https://theconversation.com/understanding-the-triggers-for-filicide-will-help-prevent-it-86333

[15] DiAngelo, R 2018, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, Penguin Random House, United Kingdom, p. 9.

[16] Choe, JY, Teplin, LA, & Abram, KM 2008, 'Perpetration of violence, violent victimization, and severe mental illness: balancing public health outcomes', *Psychiatric Services*, vol. 59, pp. 153-164.

[17] Varshney, M, Mahapatra, A, Krishnan, V, Gupta, R, & Deb, KS 2016, 'Violence and mental illness: what is the true story?', *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, vol. 70, no. 3.

[18] Swanson, JW, Holzer, CE, Ganju, VK, & Associates 1990, 'Violence and psychiatric disorder in the community: evidence from the Epidemiologic Catchment Area surveys', *American Psychiatric Association*, vol. 41, pp. 761-770.

[19] Amore, M, Menchetti, M, Tonti, C, Scarlatti, F, Lundgren, E, Esposito, W, & Berardi, D 2008, 'Predictors of violent behaviour among acute psychiatric patients: clinical study', *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, vol. 62, pp. 247-255.

Chapter Two

The History of Unreason

In the years preceding the seventeenth century, PWMI were placed on boats, taken to foreign locations and dumped there, and for European populations, this was the primary method for dealing with a portion of society considered abnormal.[1] Michel Foucault described this *Ship of Fools* as a vessel for those who had no real connection to time or place, for 'as the madman sets sail for the other world, it is from the other world that he comes when he disembarks'.[2] This image of the mad as incongruous and lost on the high seas resonates in the imagination of the twenty-first century sociologist, because while the *Ship of Fools* no longer exists, one suspects that society's perception of PWMI as both deviant and abnormal endures.[3]

Throughout the twentieth century, western civilization continued to understand and construct mental illness as an abnormality. In the 1952 edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), patients could be diagnosed under one or more of 106 conditions.[4] In 1994, the DSM-IV contained nearly 300 disorders, an increase of close to 300% in just five decades.[5] Peter Conrad included these statistics in his thesis on the problems inherent in modern medicalization, and used them to outline the modern trend within which human beings are increasingly defined as sick rather than healthy, and as abnormal rather than sane.[6] The introduction of Prozac in 1987 as a drug for the treatment of depression signaled the dawn of a new era where antidepressant medication would be used to treat 'life problems' as well as serious illness.[7] This chapter illustrates that from the *Ship of Fools* to the introduction of Prozac, western civilization has sought to understand and develop ways of controlling those being treated for mental illness. The purpose of the study is to examine the sorts of stories Australian journalists tell about PWMI, and place these stories in the context of the broader history of mental illness in order to assess the extent to which journalists are influenced by long-standing mental health narratives.

This chapter details the history of mental illness, as portrayed by Roy Porter, Michel Foucault, Andrew Scull, Erving Goffman, Peter Conrad and Elaine Showalter. I trace the trajectory of the principal narratives that have characterised this history, and outline how they persist and operate today. Scholars who have sought to examine the way mainstream Western media portray PWMI often neglect to include an account of the history of mental illness. I argue that an account of the history of mental illness is critical in interpreting the present socio-cultural media landscape. In constructing this detailed historical account, the chapter is divided into four parts. The first introduces the notion that the lived experience of mental illness can be understood as socially constructed. Attention is given to the debate between essentialist and constructionist perspectives, and how the two can be considered in unison. The section also summarizes the biomedical approach to health for

the purpose of detailing how social understandings of health and illness are constructed uniquely across cultures. The second section of this chapter describes the history of madness, and drawing predominantly on the work of Michel Foucault, charts the trajectory of two primary mental health narratives which have played, and continue to play, an important role in the social construction of mental illness. These narratives are 'confinement' and 'individual responsibility'. This historical account continues in part three with an examination of the legacy of Sigmund Freud, the closing of asylums in the 1980s, and the significant expansion in both breadth and scope of modern medicalization. The chapter concludes with a focus on Australia's mental health history from 1870 to the present, grounding the thesis within its relevant socio-historical context. I reflect on the importance of this narrative history, arguing that Western countries have sought new ways to confine PWMI in the post-asylum era, namely through the effects of stigma and medicalization.[8]

Understanding the experience of mental illness as socially constructed

This section proposes that the experience of mental illness can be understood as socially constructed. Considering mental health from this standpoint places emphasis on the importance of historical accounts, the mental health narratives that underpin and inform these, and print media's role in shaping public attitudes towards PWMI. It is the social constructionist standpoint that forms the foundation for this thesis.

Questions pertaining to how mental illness can be understood have long been characterised by the philosophical debate between 'constructionists' and 'essentialists'. Constructionists argue that even the physical environment – a wheat field or savannah plain – can be interpreted as a socially constructed 'symbolic landscape'.[9] Greider and Garkovich propose that a real estate developer, a farmer, and a hunter each perceive the environment in different ways, making a concrete physical reality a myriad of potentials 'grounded in the cultural definitions of those who encounter that place'.[10] According to these scholars, a rock is not merely a rock, but can be a sacred stone, a cutting tool, or a wishing pebble, as the world is infinitely constructed and reconstructed.

Latour and Woolgar expand on this argument, and argue that the scientific study of external phenomena is mostly political and 'entirely fabricated out of circumstance'.[11] Observing scientists at work in a laboratory, these theorists found that the objective of positivist study was to extend and speed up the credibility cycle for scientists through the creation of work that would gain them higher esteem. In other words, scientists are social creatures first and foremost. Latour and Woolgar found that the scholars they studied were writers and readers in the business of being convinced and of convincing others, operating within a laboratory that engaged in an organised system of 'persuasion through literary inscription'.[12] Neurosurgeon and writer Paul Kalanithi argued just twelve months before his death in March 2015 that:

> Scientific methodology is the product of human hands and thus cannot reach some permanent truth. We build scientific theories to organise and manipulate the world, to reduce phenomena into manageable units. Science is based on reproducibility and manufactured objectivity.[13]

This particular example illustrates the breadth and scope of the constructionist perspective, which suggests that if scientific facts can be understood as socially constructed, then so too can mental illness.

M.R. Bury presents an alternate perspective, arguing that in giving little attention to the existence of a concrete physical reality, constructionists undersell the important role it plays in shaping our understanding of the world.[14] Bury argues that physical reality and human knowledge partake in a fluid relationship, whereby knowledge engages and operates with physical reality, while that physical reality simultaneously imposes itself on human knowledge. This contention suggests that too much emphasis is placed on the human appreciation of a landscape or phenomenon, when the relationship between the two is interwoven. Bury takes issue with Steven Shapin's argument that scientific knowledge is routinely constructed to serve the interests of its users.[15] He rejects Shapin's claim that facts about the origins of a particular disease are 'discovered' in the laboratory so as to aid doctors in the treatment of their patients, and argues that by representing medical knowledge as constructed in the interests of powerful institutions and groups, the sincerity and compassion at the basis of the medical profession is undermined. If facts about illness are constructed, then doctors become mere actors in the constructed play of life, and this perception, according to Bury, is myopic.

A balanced view is a panacea to a philosophical divide, and the argument that underpins this thesis suggests that while a concrete physical reality can exist, the construction of attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs around that phenomenon are fluid, malleable, and subject to numerous social forces. Barnes argues that a concrete physical reality and our ideas about it can exist together.[16]

> Knowledge is related to activity which consists precisely in [humans] attempting to manipulate, predict and control the real world in which they exist. Hence knowledge is found useful precisely because the world is as it is; and it is to that extent a function of what is real, and not the pure product of thought and imagination. Knowledge rises out of our encounters with reality.

This perspective places emphasis on the power of social institutions, and the human beings who operate within them, to construct external phenomena. As a result, social constructions can be liberating because they remove expectations and allow for reconstructions.

A significant body of social research offers support for Barnes's assertion that an external social world can be constructed around concrete phenomena. Julie Hepworth's account of the social construction of anorexia nervosa suggests that the reality of this illness, for many centuries, has involved three common elements: the starving of oneself, weight loss, and the presence of depression-related symptoms. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, anorexia nervosa was associated with holiness, as those who chose to subsist on minimal nutritional quantities were considered divine, and subsequently revered.[17] Today, the same individuals are defined as unwell;

mentally ill. While the three common elements of this illness have not changed significantly, society's understanding of the phenomenon has, and this shift in both understanding and attitude has transformed the lived experience of anorexia nervosa, illustrating the power of human beings to construct reality.

Michel Foucault and Roy Porter based their respective accounts of the history of madness on the assumption that the lived experience of mental illness can be understood as dependent on social forces. Foucault's thesis focused on the power and influence of social institutions.[18]

> Whether madness is described as a religious or philosophical phenomenon … or as an objective medical essence … these conceptions are not discoveries but historical constructions of meaning.

While Porter questioned some aspects of Foucault's argument (a critique examined later in this chapter), he agreed that the history of madness is an account 'not of disease and its treatment but of questions of freedom and control, knowledge and power'.[19] Neither contended that psychological anguish is fictitious, but that the social world around the individual being treated for mental illness is a construction. Thomas Szasz figured prominently in the anti-psychiatry movement of the second half of the twentieth century, and he argued in his thesis on 'the myth of mental illness' that madness is manufactured to serve the interests of psychiatrists with a view to professional advancement, 'endorsed by society because it sanctions easy solutions for problem people'.[20] He argued that the majority of human suffering originates from life circumstances and stress, and that the psychiatric profession routinely medicalizes these experiences. This thesis acknowledges this claim, but draws more on the accounts of Foucault and Porter because of the attention they give to the significance of historical narratives.

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Western culture's construction of health and illness is apparent in the dominance of the biomedical approach. Biomedicine explains illness as a malfunction of the body's biological mechanisms, and it generally ignores the social origins of health and illness.[21] It is a model that places medical professionals such as doctors in positions of power based on their status as experts in the field.[22] Like health and illness more broadly, medical practice has been constructed uniquely across cultures and over time. As a prelude to part two's account of the history of mental illness, this section concludes with an analysis of the role of biomedicine in modern western culture, and then within this biomedical context, a critique of one particular definition of mental illness.

George Engel was one of the first scholars to examine and describe biomedicine's failure to account for the psychological, social, and environmental aspects that are important in understanding health and illness. Engel's utopia is one where diabetes and schizophrenia are human experiences as well as disease, and he presents the biopsychosocial model as an alternative to biomedicine.[23] Cooper, Stevenson, and Hale offer support for this approach.[24]

> With the biomedical approach, healthy people become manifestations of healthy, cellular activity; ill people become manifestations of dysfunctional cellular activity. The patient becomes a 'problem' to be solved, and the solution to that problem lies in adopting a scientific, mechanistic approach that precludes any consideration of social, psychological, or behavioural influences.

Cooper, Stevenson, and Hale draw attention to a subtle irony that underpins western medicine in that while biomedicine is itself a cultural construction, illness is considered almost entirely through the framework of biological function or malfunction.

Differences in methods of treatment and medical beliefs that exist cross-culturally offer support for the notion that biomedicine is a social construct. In African cultures, traditional healers are important in providing spiritual assistance to the sick and dying.[25] South American shamans see illness as a force beyond the confines of physical degradation, and instead address sickness as 'inherently socio-political and cosmological'.[26] In the remote ethnic communities of Peru, physical affliction is considered the product of spirits, natural forces, and deceased ancestors. This approach is not considered guesswork in this culture, but a legitimate medical practice broadly termed 'shamanism'.[27] A comparison of biomedicine and shamanism emphasizes that where the custodians of legitimate medical knowledge differ, human beings forge unique and contrasting models of health and illness.

Even definitions of mental illness can be problematic because they must acknowledge health and wellbeing as constructed distinctly across cultures, environments, and historical epochs, while simultaneously accepting the dominance in western culture of biomedicine, a medical model which assumes mental illness is a disease. Aneshensel, Phelan and Bierman describe mental illness as a concept requiring the insights of several disciplines, and in reviewing the literature from the standpoints of psychiatry, psychology, anthropology and sociology, divided opinion prevails in the search for a universal definition of mental illness.[28] Aneshensel et al argue that mental illness consists of a vast range of behavioural, cognitive and emotional phenomena, including:

> Speaking to a companion whom no one else can see; sitting silently in a room, alone, eating little and sleeping less, contemplating death; becoming suddenly overwhelmed with intense anxiety for no apparent reason; consumption of alcohol to such a degree that it becomes difficult to hold a job or maintain friendships; frequent sickness with no identifiable physiological disease; and feeling no remorse when others are injured by one's actions.

The behavioural, cognitive and emotional phenomena offered in this description can form part of the lived experience of mental illness. Feelings of intense and overwhelming anxiety are often characteristic of deeper mental health issues, while the use of alcohol and illicit drugs as a form of self-medication to mask underlying mental health concerns is common, and can lead to significant upheaval in an individual's life circumstances.[29] Yet as a definition the description is inadequate because one could reasonably assume some of these behaviours and emotions are characteristic of the lived experience of the mentally well person. The human being whose consumption of alcohol is so problematic that it becomes impossible to 'hold a job or maintain friendships' has, first and

foremost, a problem with alcohol, and not necessarily an issue with mental health. Buddhist philosophy presents the solitary contemplation of death as both healthy and necessary as it grounds one more fully in the sanctity of the present moment.[30] The contemplation of death only becomes problematic in societies where discussing death is taboo, as Norbert Elias argued is now the case in the West.[31] Sitting in a room alone, 'eating little and sleeping less', sounds like the life of a student, while the notion that speaking to an invisible companion might constitute mental illness puts us all at risk outside those who have disengaged from that constant internal dialogue characteristic of the human condition.[32] The final example describes an individual who lacks empathy after harming another person. Depending on the social context, a lack of empathy can be associated with wellness and/or illness. In boxing and other competitive sports, empathy presents a decisive weakness, while outside the sporting arena someone who lacks empathy is not necessarily a PWMI, rather, very simply, someone who lacks empathy. Surely a propensity to engage in violence and feel no subsequent remorse is not exclusive to those with mental health problems? The rush to explain violence through the lens of mental illness offers an explanatory device for every perpetrator of domestic violence.

This is not to simplify or trivialize any of the issues listed in the definition above, however, these behaviours can be associated with wellness just as readily as they are associated with illness. This makes them no less problematic, or destructive, but being cautious and critical of these kinds of definitions affords individuals space for contemplation before explaining problematic behaviour through the prism of mental health. In fact, one of the central arguments of this thesis is that it is our readiness to associate problematic behaviour with mental illness that is at the core of negligent media reporting on mental health topics.

This section has outlined how health and illness can be understood as socially constructed. To understand this process more fully, it is necessary to consider the history of madness, a story of numerous social flashpoints. The following section charts the trajectory of two primary mental health narratives which have played, and continue to play, an important role in the social construction of mental illness. These narratives are 'confinement' and 'individual responsibility'. Drawing on the work of Foucault and Porter, I describe how western culture has come to consider PWMI as a distinct, abnormal other.

The history of mental illness

The history of mental illness is a story of control; a tale of both subtle and transparent confinement. It begins in the early thirteenth century, when according to Michel Foucault, King Louis VIII of France set in motion the opening of 'lazar houses'; secure places for the containment of those individuals with leprosy.[33] Such was their effectiveness that by the middle of the thirteenth century,

two thousand of these institutions were operating in France.[34] While PWMI would not pose a problem requiring state-sanctioned control for at least another three centuries, Foucault argues that the leprosaria are an important institution in the history of madness because they signaled the creation of a specific 'fearsome figure' who could be carefully excluded from society 'after a sacred circle had been drawn around him'.[35] Put simply, madness was leprosy's heir to the throne of otherness.

The lazar houses closed at varying rates across Europe between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1348, the leper house at Saint-Alban in France was home to just three inhabitants, and in 1627, the leper house of Saint Bartholomew was closed.[36] Throughout the decades in which the lazar houses were abandoned, and before the institution of the madhouse appeared across Europe, PWMI were placed on boats, taken to foreign locations and dumped there.[37] This practice was the dominant means for ridding cities of the presence of an undesirable group, and it is in this practice that we find the legacy of the leprosaria. Important are its implications for European attitudes towards abnormality and deviance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Long after leprosy had vanished, the physical structures, social attitudes, values and images that had been attached to the leper and associated with a fearsome 'other', would be attributed to the mad.

The seventeenth century saw the emergence of a more organised form of social control, what Foucault calls 'The Great Confinement'. The year 1656 marks the foundation in Paris of the first Hôpital-Général. These institutions were not houses created solely for the insane, but for those members of the population that posed a threat to normality and progress. The idle were locked away with the mad; the venereal with the gypsies. Within three years, the Hôpital-Général in Paris became home to more than 6000 people – approximately one per cent of the French population – and twenty years later, a royal edict decreed that an institution of the sort established in Paris be built in every city of the Kingdom.[38] The rate at which the mad were confined within these institutions differed across most European nations. Britain appears to have followed the trend in Paris. In 1651, the Navigation Act was passed in Britain signaling the formal beginning of a movement which would utilize every member of the 'abnormal' population as part of the broader workforce.[39] The structures that formerly housed the lepers became sites for the confinement of vagrants, homeless, gypsies, prostitutes, and the mad.

The process of placing the abnormal within structures that had previously been utilized for the leper marks the emergence of two primary mental health narratives, which have contributed to the social construction of mental illness and characterized its history. These narratives are 'confinement' and 'individual responsibility'. Foucault described the practice of confinement as having two important consequences. First, by locking away the debauched, the venereal, the alchemists, the libertines, witches, vagrants, the homeless, the idle, prostitutes, and the insane, the outcome was that all came to be considered as one 'undifferentiated mass'.[40] In a process that informed (and it could be argued continues to inform) how mental illness is understood, European

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society began to distinguish PWMI less clearly. Someone who was thought to have lost his reason because of extreme grief at the loss of his wife in childbirth was included in that same undifferentiated mass alongside the crazed lunatic.

The second consequence was that in the depths of these European asylums, madness found its place in opposition to reason and progress. Foucault described the relationship that developed.[41]

> Madness becomes a form related to reason, or more precisely madness and reason enter into a perpetually reversible relationship which implies that all madness has its own reason by which it is judged and mastered, and all reason has its madness in which it finds its own derisory truth. Each is a measure of the other, and in this movement of reciprocal reference, each rejects the other but is logically dependent upon it.

Within the four walls of these institutions, society's abnormal became one undifferentiated mass, and this mass was portrayed as opposing reason and progress. Outside lay progress, and inside, its threat. As late as 1815, Bethlem Hospital in London showed its insane every Sunday for one penny, with the institution accruing an annual revenue of almost 400 pounds from 96,000 visitors who came to see the mad each year.[42] This figure is today's equivalent of a little more than US$44,000. The portrayal of madness as a social spectacle and public scandal emphasizes the place of the mad in the consciousness of European populations. They were the abnormal other, not unlike the lepers centuries before.

The second narrative – individual responsibility – is one with firm historical roots cultivated and fostered throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The earliest depictions of mental illness, dating back to 650BC, locate madness in the context of an inner devil.[43] The seeds of modern western medicine saw mental illness as originating from an imbalance in the body's basic fluids and juices; or 'humours' as they were called.[44] For a long time, at least until the beginning of the seventeenth century, many behaviours considered mad 'remained fixed within the tradition of these four humours', or more pointedly, within the individual.[45] Early Greek attitudes towards madness found their place within the tragedy of literary figure *Oedipus*, while Shakespeare transposed his understanding into *King Lear*. In each of these works, madness was depicted as a self-created affliction, which, through introspection of the self, formed a potential road to self-discovery. In both cases, the disease is described as a problem for the individual. Society is an audience.

While the Christian view held that reason and sanity were found walking in harmony with God, most early analyses of the origin of madness came from the Socratic belief that self-control held the key to one's living conditions.[46] If one could summon free will and base one's actions on it, then madness could be abated. Western culture, according to Foucault, saw madness as 'the weakening of discipline and the relaxation of morals', an overflowing measure of uncontrolled passion within the individual.[47] Foucault contends that this belief was pervasive among European populations during the seventeenth century.[48]

The possibility of madness is offered in the very fact of passion. It is true that since long before the classical age, and for a series of centuries that has probably not yet come to an end, passion and madness have been kept in close proximity.

The belief that individuals were responsible for their own mental health continued throughout the nineteenth century. Edgar Sheppard was the Professor of Psychological Medicine at Kings College in London, and in 1872 he wrote that the majority of those he would describe as insane 'have made themselves what they are by their own vice and wickedness'.[49] We can assume that the views of professionals during and before this time were reflected in the attitudes and perceptions of society as a whole. As Erica Bates explains, knowledge on the issue of mental health is a two-way process whereby 'popular beliefs influence professional thinking, and professional thinking modifies popular beliefs'.[50] To what extent these two narratives persist in the twenty-first century, and print media's role in reproducing and disseminating them, is one particular focus of this study.

*   *   *

Five decades following the publication of Foucault's *History of Madness*, the French historian's central thesis regarding the confinement of PWMI is still subject to critique, revision, and interpretation. As this thesis draws heavily on Foucault's narrative history, some of which has already been provided in this chapter, it is important to offer a short analysis of his critics' appraisals.

The most common critique of Foucault's history is that it is too simplistic; his account of the confinement of the mad, too generalized. Yannick Ripa supported Foucault's contention that madness is a social construction, and a product of changing social norms, but argued that the French historian's history neglected a 'more intimate and fastidious examination of particular [social] groups' that were confined, in particular, women.[51] According to Ripa, institutionalisation was the ultimate form of feminine repression at a time when women were being held to an absurd expectation of morality, one to which men were immune. Indeed, in his summary of the confinement of the idle, the vagrants, the homeless, and the mad, Foucault made little mention of the female asylum experience. This is an example of Foucault using broad brushstrokes to paint his history at the expense of finer details.

There is very little debate as to whether the movement to confine the 'abnormal' took place, in fact, English historian Lawrence Stone described it as 'undeniable'.[52] But Eric Midelfort and Roy Porter both argued that Foucault misread the motivation behind society's institutionalisation of the mad.[53] Porter saw the rise of the asylum not as an act of state, but as a 'side effect of commercial and professional society'.[54] As the affluent accrued more medical services that had previously been offered in the home, madhouse keepers were in the business of persuading the public that services in the asylum were therapeutic. By 1800, the confined mad in England were largely housed in private asylums. Midelfort extended this argument, stating that confinement was aimed 'not at madness or

even deviance, but at poverty', and instead of a deliberate attempt to segregate the mad, the poor of every kind were locked away.[55]

These critiques suggest that Foucault generalized French confinement and overlooked the unique characteristics of the movement in France's neighbouring countries.[56] Yet Foucault's legacy is in his depiction of confinement as a retrogressive step by which PWMI became one solid mass, within which variation would go undetected. Andrew Scull's historical account of the segregation of the mad offers support for Foucault's argument. Scull reinforced the importance of the asylum in the history of mental illness, arguing that the 'presumed need to segregate the mad … remained so notable a feature of the Western response to mental disorder until the last decades of the twentieth century'.[57] Scull described this movement to confine and segregate the mad as 'a new geography of suffering', and the asylum, the 'chosen solution' to the broad set of problems posed by this deviant group.[58]

Whether or not the purpose of confinement was to round up the mad or the poor is largely irrelevant because too much evidence exists to support the locking away of the mad as part of a broader group that threatened progress and reason. Inheriting the stigma and abnormality that had long been associated with the lepers, even the slightly deranged became synonymous with the dangerous lunatic. The mad were considered as one. Foucault could be criticized for generalizing from the French experience to develop a theory of how madness was understood in Europe at the time, but his depiction of the movement of confinement and its transition in varying forms into the twentieth century was accurate, and has been undeniably powerful.[59]

Foucault did fail to account for the large number of asylum inmates who were women. Elaine Showalter explains that while Foucault's description of the repressive ideologies of confinement was 'brilliantly exposed', he did not explore the possibility that the irrationality and abnormality that the asylum sought to confine was also the feminine. It is worth noting that this critique mirrors the views of Midelfort and Porter.[60] Where these scholars argued that Foucault misread the motivation behind the 'great confinement', pinning it on madness instead of poverty, Showalter argues for a similar misinterpretation. Showalter's *The Female Malady* demonstrated how cultural ideas about 'proper' feminine behaviour have shaped the definition of female insanity for nearly two centuries, giving mental disorder in women a gender-specific connotation, one which eludes the sick man. Women's madness has historically been tied to the female body, with sickness derived from any one of an unfettered female sexuality that disturbs and threatens the intelligent man; the reproductive functions of menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause; or even a simple tendency towards strong emotion.[61] This is significant because if women's madness comes to be associated with the female body, and this is replicated historically, this link presents female suffering as inevitable. On this topic, Showalter argued the following:

> [Women] are typically situated on the side of irrationality, silence, nature, and body, while men are situated on the side of reason, discourse, culture, and mind.

As a consequence of this linking of insanity with femininity, society came to seek the same symptoms in the male.[62] Since the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars have sought to revise this association, citing male representations of madness through literature and art which are equally powerful in comparison with the feminine images of suicidal Ophelia, crazy Jane and violent Lucia.[63] Wright and Owen state that 'images such as the mad genius and the criminal lunatic portray men's madness as a "malfunction" of masculine rather than feminine traits', suggesting a movement beyond madness as inherently linked with the female body.[64] The extent to which madness has moved beyond these gender-specific connotations will be examined in Chapter Four.

In summary, Foucault overlooked the oppression of women within the asylum regime, and this is a shortcoming of his narrative history. But whether or not the movement to confine those perceived as threatening European reason and progress was aimed at the poor, the feminine, the mad, or all three, is irrelevant when considered in the context of this thesis. The legacy of Foucault's work is in confinement as a deliberate system of control, and his depiction of PWMI as one part of a large, undifferentiated mass that fell under this oppressive system. This was not a unique form of constraint, as even the institutions used to confine this group had once been saved for the lepers. As this study shows, after these institutions had closed, western culture found new ways to control and confine those who appeared as abnormal, undesirable, or threatening. Sometimes this confinement was physical, and sometimes it was more subtle, as is evident in the power of storytelling to confine individuals to a stigmatized identity.

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Early asylums across Europe, Great Britain, and North America came in 'all shapes and sizes', and according to Porter, many were atrociously run given medical supervision was not a legal requirement until well into the nineteenth century.[65] Treatments were basic and mostly ineffective; with hot drinks or ice cold baths employed to return the human flesh to its 'natural suppleness'.[66]

> In the cold shower proper, 'the lunatic was tied to a chair and placed under a reservoir filled with cold water, which poured down directly onto his head through a wide pipe'. The variant was the surprise bath where 'the patient was … tipped backwards into the water'. This violence promised the rebirth of a baptism.[67]

In the years preceding the seventeenth century, the mad who were placed on foreign-bound boats searched for their reason out on the high seas. This image persisted throughout the eighteenth century, as water remained the dominant purifying method for the treatment of madness.

Yet among this prolonged ill-treatment were periods of progress where compassionate ideals were adopted. These began most clearly in 1794 when Philippe Pinel liberated the mad in chains at Bicêtre, an asylum in the south of Paris. It was Pinel who would pioneer moral therapy in

revolutionary France, promoting more compassionate ideals that were to be mirrored by physician William Tuke in England.[68] Despite the number and scale of mental hospitals increasing rapidly throughout Europe in the nineteenth century, reforms were introduced that minimized restraint and delivered some freedom back to the insane. Roy Porter described the rate at which non-restraint methods were adopted at the Lincoln Asylum in London. Between the years 1829 and 1838, the total number of patients restrained went from 39 to 0; the total number of instances of restraint went from 1727 to 0; and the total number of hours passed under restraint declined from 29424 to 0.[69] This example illustrates the power of human beings to construct the lived experience of mental illness. In the span of nine years, the asylum experience had transformed from a life characterised by restraint to one with the possibility of autonomy and freedom. Discarding methods of restraint, the mad were treated with greater levels of compassion throughout the nineteenth century, contributing to a process whereby madness would transition from 'badness' to 'sickness'.

The asylums of Europe, Great Britain and North America developed into locations and structures suitable for the delivery of psychological treatments, largely on the back of the pioneering work of William Tuke and Philippe Pinel. It was these individuals who devised the first true methods of treatment, ones that would form a platform for the work of Sigmund Freud. It is at this point in the history of unreason that the story of confinement takes a subtle turn. The following section examines the legacy of Sigmund Freud and the psychiatric relationship as a modern means of confining PWMI.

The legacy of Sigmund Freud

The practice of confining the mad within asylums has formed one part of a broader narrative that has defined, and continues to define how mental illness is understood. Western civilization has used this method for over three centuries, and has done so in both subtle and overt ways. The sixteenth century saw PWMI placed on boats, taken to foreign locations and dumped there. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, western nations segregated PWMI within workhouses, a system of confinement that would continue in varying forms until asylums were closed in the 1980s.[70] In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, following the pioneering treatments of William Tuke and Philippe Pinel, Michel Foucault argues that the expression and treatment of mental illness were confined within the institution of the psychiatric relationship. In proceeding with this chapter's account of the history of unreason, I argue that Sigmund Freud played a central role in connecting the physical confinement of the seventeenth century with the more subtle segregation of the twenty-first. This section details the legacy of Freud and places particular emphasis on his role in the birth of modern medicalization.

Born in 1856, Sigmund Freud came to prominence at a time when the legacy and effects of confinement had become two-fold. First, madness had become entwined with unreason. Both

metaphorically and physically, the mad posed a threat to enlightened thought and progress, and so justified 'normal' society's sequestering of this group within asylums.[71] Second, within confinement the mad became one undifferentiated mass, with individual insanity distinguished less clearly. It is only with the value of hindsight that one is able to assess the relevance of these consequences for the development of Freud's work, as effects that offered a platform from which he could develop his psychoanalytic approach. The mad were guilty of unreason, and so required a treatment that could deliver them back to normality. And with the mad as one unbroken mass, theories and hypotheses could be freely developed for a group that was, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, relatively static. If the mad were not this solid body of despair, threatening civilized society, they would have been too fragmented and fluid for the development of a large-scale therapeutic technique.

Following the publication of his first major thesis, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud began to develop and outline the fundamental tenets of his psychoanalytic approach, a set of theories that would become the dominant therapeutic method of the first half of the twentieth century.[72] His work on the unconscious, the symbolic meaning of dreams, hysterical symptoms and infantile sexuality laid the foundations for the work of other prominent European psychologists, notably, Eugen Bleuler (1857-1939), Carl Jung (1875-1961), Pierre Janet (1859-1947), and Alfred Adler (1870-1937), each of whom developed and reshaped Freud's theories.[73]

While asylums were still prominent well into the twentieth century, Freud's work allowed for the flourishing of a more subtle method of control, namely, the doctor-patient relationship. As Michel Foucault explained, Freud's most powerful legacy was in opening up the possibility of a dialogue between madness and medical thought, bringing mental illness back in tandem with unreason.[74] He argued that Darwinian-based positivism had reduced the experience of madness to silence because it locked it away inside the walls of the asylum and within the confines of incurability. The development of a therapeutic technique prefaced on conversation reopened the gateway between reason and madness, with the consequence that it concentrated the treatment of mental illness within the doctor-patient relationship, laying the foundations for twenty-first century medicalization.

This transformation was mostly subtle. Foucault argued that Freud did not change the nature of the structures put in his place by his predecessors, he simply moved them from the madhouses into the psychoanalytic situation. He did not change the nature of madness, but altered its location and so forced others to see it in a new light.

> Freud made sure all the structures integrated by Pinel and Tuke into confinement were appropriated by the doctor. He freed the patient from that asylum experience … but he failed to spare him the essential components of that existence. He concentrated its powers … and placed them in the hands of the doctor. He created the psychoanalytic situation, where … alienation became disalienating because, in the doctor, it became a subject.[75]

The doctor came to be seen as the sole means by which a patient could be delivered from their suffering, as madness was now a subject for the doctor to decipher. This is a transition of power that remains to this day. Considering the development of the doctor-patient relationship in conjunction with the growth of medicalization following the second World War, one could argue that confinement did not end with the liberation of the mad in chains at Bicêtre, or the birth of psychoanalysis. Rather, the walls remained, but they became invisible.[76]

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Medicalization is the process of taking non-medical problems and reframing them as issues that require medical attention.[77] It is not the direct work of Sigmund Freud, but medicalization has benefited greatly from the platform of the therapeutic relationship, without which its ability to expand in both breadth and scope would be greatly diminished. Medicalization is an important figure in the history of madness for two reasons. First, it represents a continuation of the confinement narrative, albeit in a more subtle form. Second, it is a social process that supports the constructionist view of health and illness, explored in the early stages of this chapter. Peter Conrad illustrates how mental health can be understood as socially constructed through a description of medicalization's bidirectional nature.[78]

> Medicalization is bidirectional, in the sense that there can be both medicalization and demedicalization … For demedicalization to occur, the problem must no longer be defined in medical terms, and medical treatments can no longer be deemed appropriate interventions. A classic example is masturbation, which in the nineteenth century was considered a disease and worthy of medical intervention.[79]

Conrad's thesis on the medicalization of society focuses on balding, erectile dysfunction and adult ADHD as more recent examples of non-medical problems that have been defined and treated under the umbrella of the medical model. This medical imperialism has been aided by major pharmaceutical companies and their development of medication designed to treat what Conrad argues are not illnesses, but 'life problems'.[80]

These developments became most evident in the second half of the twentieth century. The introduction of penicillin in the 1940s and chlorpromazine in 1954 were the precursors of the pharmacological revolution.[81] Chlorpromazine was the first antipsychotic drug designed for the treatment of mental illness, and significantly changed the way the insane were treated in asylums during the twentieth century.[82] Elizabeth Bott explained that medication was useful in British institutions because it solidified the distance thought necessary between the insane and their carers.[83] She argued that 'talking to patients is dangerous because it threatens to puncture the barrier that keeps sanity and madness in their proper places'.[84] The use of medication to confine and control, evident in Bott's description, represents an overlap in the confinement narrative. While the confinement of the psychiatric institution faced imminent closure towards the end of the twentieth century, the confining effects of medication and the therapeutic relationship were rapidly developing in its stead.

Barham argued therefore that the legacy of the asylum is the 'abolition of the *person* who suffers from mental illness', replaced by the mental patient, identity permanently spoiled, exiled on the margins of society.[85]

In 1987, Prozac was introduced as a new type of medication to treat depression. Conrad and Schneider argue that the introduction of Prozac was important because while the 1980s saw the widespread closing of asylums and the end of physical confinement for those in western countries being treated for mental illness, PWMI found a new segregation within the doctor-patient relationship, the site at which they remain dependent for their antidepressant and antipsychotic medication.[86] The uptake of prescription medication has been unrelenting. Between 1990 and 2007, there was a 2.5 fold increase in the number of visits to a doctor in the United States that resulted in a prescription for a psychotropic medicine, suggesting that 'problems that a decade or two ago would not have been deemed appropriate for medication are now managed with psychotropics'.[87] Between 2011 and 2012, in Australia, there were over 23 million prescriptions written for mental health medication.[88] According to Conrad, medicalization holds biological factors accountable for illness and disorder, and it is here that prescription medication, as well as the physician who prescribes them, present themselves as necessary for complete recovery. In describing the patterns of use for mental health medications, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported in 1995 that:

> Almost everyone who used … anti-depressants did so on the advice of a health professional, mostly a General Practitioner or medical specialist … Nearly all people who used medications in these groups obtained them either by prescription from a doctor or a hospital. Patterns of use differed by the types of medications used … of people who used antidepressants, 94% used them regularly and 91% used them daily. Of people who used antipsychotics, 90% used them regularly and 87% used them daily.[89]

Peter Barham argued that this dependency on medication was one of the major consequences of the closing of asylums in the 1980s. He also believes that it propelled the process of deinstitutionalization forward, arguing that multiple factors originating from the middle of the twentieth century combined to reinforce a focus on deinstitutionalization, namely, 'the literature of protest against the indignities of the mental hospital regimes on the one hand, and the new-found psychiatric optimism about the major tranquilizers on the other'.[90]

With inadequate community-based support set up to meet treatment and care needs, PWMI were discharged and expected to re-join the broader community outside the mental hospital seamlessly. Evidence suggests that doctors were the most vocal enthusiasts for community-care policies, based on their belief in the effectiveness of new drug treatments. Community care facilities were envisaged as a stepping-stone between a brief stay in a mental hospital and complete reintegration back into society, and so it appears there was a discrepancy between the commitment to scale down mental institutions and the establishment of alternative forms of service.[91] As a consequence, a vast majority of PWMI found new forms of confinement within prisons, on the streets as the homeless, and finally, through the confinement of the psycho-therapeutic relationship, an

institution that began with the work of Sigmund Freud at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is a modern manifestation of the *Ship of Fools*, the leprosaria, and the madhouse; figures in a narrative of deliberate control and containment. In the final section of this chapter the focus shifts to how twenty-first century confinement is taking place in Australia.

Australia

Australia's mental health history mirrors that which has been described throughout this chapter regarding seventeenth-century Europe, woven with threads unique to Australia's 'colonial obsession with custodial practices', and its rich Indigenous culture.[92] [93] In *Madness in Australia: Histories, Heritage and the Asylum*, Coleborne and MacKinnon argue that understanding mental illness means examining and understanding the socio-historical context within which it is constructed. To conclude this chapter's summary of the history of unreason, I draw predominantly on a series of essays published in Coleborne and MacKinnon's *Madness in Australia* to chart the trajectory of the social construction of mental illness within a contemporary Australian context.

Accounts of Australia's history of mental illness acknowledge the influence of European treatments and practices, but emphasize the extent to which a custodial narrative prevailed until the middle of the nineteenth century. Stephen Garton writes that in the years preceding 1850, Australians struggled to understand or imagine mental illness (or 'madness') as anything more than a measure of social disorder. In those accounts where custodial treatment was replaced by more compassionate approaches to the mental health of individuals – mirroring the shifts taking place in England and France around this time – Garton refers to them as a 'triumph'. To some extent, the motivation to confine PWMI alongside other 'deviant' groups in Australia reflected the prevailing sentiment in France in 1656. With concern for Ray Evans's study of mental health practices in Queensland, Stephen Garton writes:

> Evans examines colonial Queensland policies for the treatment of such groups as lepers, the indigent aged, the incurably ill, the unemployed, criminals and the insane, seeing them as efforts to control deviant populations … psychiatry [became] a tool of the socially dominant classes to govern and control those living outside the social, racial and class norms of colonial society. Rather than alleviate social distress, colonial Queensland politicians sought to isolate the 'deviant', expelling them to islands in Moreton Bay – forms of permanent social exile rather than efforts at reform, rehabilitation or treatment.[94]

This attitude reflects the practices most common for dealing with PWMI in Europe and Britain between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Brenda Happell reported that in the 1800s, Australia's approach still followed the British model, and tended to 'reflect the views of medical superintendents who migrated to the colonies to oversee the asylums'.[95] By 1811, at the Castle Hill Lunatic Asylum in New South Wales, mental illness was still being referred to as 'madness', and its origins remained the product of 'bad blood' or character flaws, as opposed to illness, suggesting that the 'individual responsibility' narrative introduced earlier in this chapter was also transposed from

the British context into Australia.[96] PWMI were managed through methods of physical restraint and isolation, and there appears no evidence of treatment, with a far greater emphasis placed on the custodial role.[97] Garton argues that it was the beginning of the twentieth century that saw Australia break from its custodial past, with language shifting from 'alienist', 'asylum', and 'lunatic', to 'psychiatrist', 'mental hospital', and 'patient'.

The treatment of Indigenous Australians reportedly suffering from mental illness forms part of Australia's mental health history, albeit one with limited published literature available for dissemination. Philippa Martyr found that between 1870 and 1914, a total of 30 Indigenous Australians, mostly from Western Australia, were charged and/or diagnosed with lunacy.[98] The incarceration that followed forms part of colonial Australia's mistreatment of Aboriginal Australians following settlement. While a scarcity of research in this space informs the limited discussion that takes place here, one can assume that White Australia's treatment of Indigenous persons defined as 'mad' formed part of the country's deep cultural anxiety relating to gender, race, sexuality, and power; anxieties that gave the repressive tendencies of the asylum regime a distinct Australian flavor.[99] Stephen Garton argues that Australia's cultural history of madness has frequently been explored in the context of this anxiety surrounding gender:

> Jill Matthews *Good and Mad Women* (1984) is the most ambitious effort to see mental illness as a cultural struggle, one imbricated in networks of gender and power.[100]

Andrew Scull noted that in Britain's settler colonies, where 'indigenous populations had been partially exterminated or otherwise marginalized', violent men appeared to form the largest portion of the asylum population.[101] The image and role of women in this socio-cultural landscape is perhaps best described by Don Watson.

> Forty years ago, in a famous book, Anne Summers wrote that the women of colonial Australia were cast into one of two ancient repressive archetypes – whores or obedient representatives of a feminine ideal. Like the Indigenous people, they came wild or tamed. For the first fifty years, the majority went under 'whores'. Thereafter, what Summers called the existential straitjacket was enlarged to include the option of being 'dutiful wives and bountiful mothers'. In both cases women were commodities: prostitutes to be bartered among the men who far outnumbered them, or wives to keep the men in line and to breed up a free, white and decent population.[102]

Watson's description of this supposed 'feminine ideal' illustrates the powerful construction of deviance in Australia at this time. In a subtle though powerful reflection of methods of confinement taking place within Europe, deviant populations that had somehow managed to escape the physical segregation of the asylum found themselves confined to the 'existential straitjacket' and other invisible forms of control.

As the moral therapy pioneered by Tuke and Pinel signaled the transformation of European attitudes towards mental ill-health, Australia's approach began to consider mental illness less as a moral failing and more as an issue requiring behavioural treatment and change.[103] In line with broader changes in most western countries, mental illness in the nineteenth century was shifting from

'badness' to 'sickness'. In 1867, a British Act of Parliament ensured that PWMI were sent to asylums rather than prisons, and by the middle of the twentieth century, mental patients were being transferred from jails to newly opened asylums in all major Australian cities.[104] As was the case in England and France at this time, responsibility for the treatment of mental illness was falling less on the shoulders of individuals, and more in the hands of the state.

In 1955, the Stoller Report became the first document to outline the consequences of social indifference towards public mental health services, and the effect this lack of attention could have on PWMI.[105] Erica Bates described the report as 'the first public recognition that the problem of mental illness is a general problem, and not one to be blamed on the individual'.[106] The report was reflective of broader cultural shifts in Australia's understanding of mental health treatment, as the introduction of 'major tranquilizers' in the 1950s replaced the formerly heavy reliance on traditional forms of restraint such as the straitjacket. As a result, therapeutic relationships began to blossom, both in individual and group therapy settings, and the Stoller Report proved prophetic.[107] In 1981, the Richmond Report offered further evidence to justify the closing of asylums in Australia, uncovering various systems of abuse that were being perpetrated against PWMI held within mental health institutions. Following the commencement of deinstitutionalization in the 1980s, Australia's mental health approach moved towards community-based care, ensuring the responsibility for mental illness came to rest on society more broadly. Brenda Happell argues that the enthusiasm for the shift to community-based care was not matched by adequate funding, resources, or support for those families who found themselves charged with the care of those PWMI to whom they were related. Bircanin and Short argue that funding for community-based treatments lacked funding and were poorly orchestrated.[108] Despite this, the development of community-based services was still heralded as a 'significant advance', and reflected a broader cultural belief that PWMI should be cared for, where possible, in family and community settings.[109]

Government policy introduced just before the beginning of the twenty-first century also informed subtle shifts in the way mental illness was being treated and understood in Australia. The National Mental Health Policy released in 1992 reinforced a more proactive focus on the prevention and maintenance of mental health, as opposed to reactionary measures designed to treat serious mental illness after it had developed. The National Inquiry into the Human Rights of People with Mental Illness (also known as 'the Burdekin Report') concluded in 1993, and was significant because it was the first national inquiry into mental health conducted within Australia that focused on the human rights of PWMI and would be inclusive of the effects of the closing of asylums as sufficient time had passed since deinstitutionalisation.[110] The report was damning in its assessment of the effectiveness of community-based services, noting that 'the widespread inadequacy of community health services is an indictment of our society's lack of concern for people with mental illness [and] the inadequacy of existing community mental health services to treat, care for, and support people

with mental illness living in the community is disgraceful'. The Burdekin Report found that the financial benefits of deinstitutionalisation had not been redirected into community-based mental health services, and so at the turn of the century, these services remained 'seriously underfunded'.

Despite the Burdekin Report's findings, community mental health organisations increased in prominence at the beginning of the twenty-first century, with *Reach Out* founded in 1996, *beyondblue* in October 2000*,* and *Black Dog* in 2002. State governments sought to address some of the deficiencies in the mental health system that had been identified in the Burdekin Report, and in 2008, the Victorian Government began a review of the 1986 *Mental Health Act*, acknowledging that proposed changes must include greater recognition of – and support for – the role carers and families play in supporting PWMI.[111] Corney argues that one of the principal implications of the shift to community-based care has been the blurring of boundaries of the work done by specific healthcare workers.[112] Community care has allowed for the flourishing of new models of care that involve nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers.

Despite this increase in community-based care organisatons, and the resulting blurred boundaries between distinct healthcare professionals, medicalization continues its rapid expansion, fueling a modern form of mental health confinement. This control, enabled through psychiatric diagnosis and psychotropic medication, has been no less pronounced in Australia. Following the publication of the DSM-V in 2013, the Australian Broadcasting Commission reported that current definitions of mental illness were so broad that '50% of Western populations can be diagnosed with a mental disorder'.[113] To an extent, this is exactly what is taking place. The prevalence of mental illness in countries like Australia has become a problem taking on epidemic proportions. According to the World Health Organisation, major depression is the most prevalent psychological disorder in the West, affecting approximately 350 million people, and surpassing heart disease as the world's leading cause of disability.[114] This growth is symptomatic of a society seeking to distinguish between normality and abnormality, reason and unreason. In reinforcing this divide, western civilizations have re-enacted an historically effective method of controlling PWMI. This method is confinement.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the power of human beings to construct the lived experience of mental illness. Whether the mad were placed on foreign-bound boats, locked away in madhouses, or confined to the psycho-therapeutic relationship, PWMI have been (and one could argue continue to be) subject to forces beyond their control. In this chapter, I have argued that these forces – whether they be methods of treatment, mental health policy, or simply attitudes towards PWMI – have been informed by historically-derived narratives.

The two principal narratives outlined in this chapter are 'confinement' and 'individual responsibility'. With regards to the former, the historical account presented in this chapter has shown that over the last century physical forms of confinement, namely, madhouses and asylums, have been replaced by the less tangible walls of medicalization. Despite the closure of asylums in the 1980s, medicalization has been an effective means of controlling PWMI, leaving those struggling with long-term mental illness as 'structurally isolated as ever they were in the asylums'.[115] The process of identifying more and more behaviours as symptomatic of mental illness confines PWMI because it could be understood as a means of segregating the site at which mental health issues are treated: within the doctor-patient relationship. The belief system that underpins this narrative of confinement is society's 'deep disposition to see madness as essentially Other'.[116] The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which the 'confinement' narrative persists in the twenty-first century, informed by (and reinforced by) the stories Australian journalists tell about PWMI. I argue that Australian journalists' contribution to mental health stigma can be understood as a modern means of containing PWMI because it confines the suffering individual to a stigmatized identity.

The second narrative, 'individual responsibility', was described in this chapter as having firm historical roots. In contrast to the 'confinement' narrative, beliefs around who is responsible for the treatment and care of PWMI have transformed considerably, shifting from the notion that individuals were possessed by an 'inner devil' to the belief that these same individuals 'made themselves what they are by their own vice and wickedness'.[117] The pioneering work of William Tuke in England and Philippe Pinel in France in the eighteenth century informed Western civilization's dismissal of explicit notions of blame. This movement became the precursor to an embrace of a more compassionate therapeutic approach in asylums, and an emphasis on community based care, where responsibility for the individual's suffering is shared by family, support networks, carers, and social institutions. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the extent to which the stories Australian journalists tell about PWMI reinforce a narrative of 'responsibility'. Given the emphasis of biomedicine on focusing problems within the individual at the expense of a thorough examination of broader social causes, one might expect Australian journalists to also reinforce notions of personal responsibility for mental health treatment and care.

In the following chapter, the methodological approach used to source newspaper articles published between 2000 and 2014 is detailed. I argue that an exploration of the sorts of stories that Australian journalists tell about the mentally ill will help shed some light on both current attitudes towards PWMI (and how this has changed since 2000), and the extent to which journalists contribute to those principal narratives outlined in this chapter. Are methods of confinement replicated in Australian journalists' mental health coverage? Are the notions of personal responsibility for one's mental health reinforced, or is the influence of broader social forces on health and illness privileged?

[1] Foucault, M 1967, *Madness and Civilization*, Routledge, London, quote from page 8.

[2] Originating from Plato, the *Ship of Fools* is a metaphor depicting a ship on the high seas, without a pilot and with no direction home, populated by deranged and frivolous inhabitants. 1)The image has been a feature of western literature and art for centuries, with its most famous adaptation being Hieronymous Bosch's painting, entitled *Ship of Fools*.

[3] This chapter preserves the use of somewhat controversial terms such as 'mad', 'madman', 'dangerous lunatic', and 'insane' as they appear in original documents and were the terms used throughout the period specified in the text. As I discuss, the 'mad' became the 'mentally ill' when mental illness transitioned from badness to sickness. As such, all terms used will be relative to the historical context outlined.

[4] American Psychiatric Association 1952, *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*, (1st ed.), Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

[5] American Psychiatric Association 1994, *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*, (4th ed.), Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association.

[6] Conrad, P 2007, *The Medicalization of Society: On the Transformation of Human Conditions into Treatable Disorders*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

[7] Conrad 2007, his 'life problems' reference comes from page 61.

[8] An amended version of this chapter was published in Jennifer Martin's *Mental Health Policy, Practice, and Service Accessibility in Contemporary Society*, in 2019. Teague, S, & Robinson, P 2019, 'The history of unreason: social construction of mental illness', in Jennifer M. Martin (ed.) *Mental Health Policy, Practice and Service Accessibility in Contemporary Society*, IGI Global, USA.

[9] Greider, T & Garkovich, L 1994, 'Landscapes: the social construction of nature and the environment', *Rural Sociology*, vol. 59, no. 3, pp. 1-24, quote from page 1.

[10] Greider & Garkovich, 1994, p. 2.

[11] Latour, B & Woolgar, S 1979, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, quote from page 239.

[12] Latour & Woolgar 1979, p. 88.

[13] Kalanithi, P 2017, *When Breath Becomes Air*, Penguin Random House, London, quote from page 169.

[14] Bury, MR 1986, 'Social constructionism and the development of medical sociology', *Sociology of Health and Illness*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 137-169.

[15] Shapin, S 1982, 'History of science and its sociological reconstructions', *History of Science*, vol. 20, pp. 157-211.

[16] Barnes, B 1977, *Interests and Growth of Knowledge*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, quote from page 110.

[17] Hepworth 1999, p. 13.

[18] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. xiv.

[19] Porter 2002, *Madness*, p. 3

[20] This quote was taken from Porter's history of madness, page 2.

[21] Engel, GL 1977, 'The need for a new medical model: a challenge for biomedicine', *Science*, vol. 8, no. 4286, pp. 129-136.

[22] Wreford, J 2005, 'Missing each other: problems and potential for collaborative efforts between biomedicine and traditional healers in South Africa in the time of AIDS', *Social Dynamics*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 55-89.

[23] Engel 1977, 'The need for a new medical model'. Engel's model accounts for biological, psychological and social factors in the experience of health and illness. Social factors might include family circumstances and peer relationships; psychological factors could include one or more of coping skills, self-esteem, and social skills; while biological factors might account for physical health, disability, and genetic vulnerabilities.

[24] Cooper, N, Stevenson, C, & Hale, G 1996, *Integrating Perspectives on Health*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

[25] Wreford 2005.

[26] Greene, S 1998, 'The shaman's needle: development, shamanic agency, and intermedicality in Aguaruna Lands, Peru', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 634-658, quote from page 641.

[27] There are a number of articles dedicated to this topic, including work by Bastein, Mehl, and Greene. These references read as follows: Bastien, J 1992, *Drum & Stethoscope*, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City; Mehl, LE 1988, 'Modern shamanism: integration of biomedicine with traditional world views', in *Shaman's Path*, Gary Doore ed., pp. 127-138, Shambhala, Boston; Greene, S 1998, 'The Shaman's needle …'

[28] Aneshensel, CS, Phelan, JC, & Bierman, A 2013, *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, Columbia University, New York.

[29] Harris, KM, & Edlund, MJ 2005, 'Self-medication of mental health problems: new evidence from a national survey', *Health Services Research*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 117-134.

[30] Rinpoche, S 2008, *The Tibetan Book of Living & Dying*, Rider, San Francisco.

[31] Elias, N 1987, *The Loneliness of Dying*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

[32] Hearing voices and responding to them can be culturally important as well. In *The Short Long Book: A Portrait of Michael Long, The Man Who Changed the Australian Game*, author Martin Flanagan described 'a few stories that [Australian footballer and Indigenous Australian Michael Long] told me more than once. One was when he'd shake his head in wonderment and say, "People reckon you can't talk with the dead." He told me he has a cup of tea with his mother every day'. This story illustrates the socio-cultural construction of normality and abnormality.

[33] King Louis VIII was known for his courage on the field of battle and for seizing back lands lost to the English through his strong and willful character. He subsequently earned the epithet 'The Lion'. He is arguably most famous for being the only French Monarch to ever invade England and successfully claim the English throne, a position he held briefly between 1216 and 1217. He died in 1226 of dysentery.

[34] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. 3.

[35] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. 5.

[36] The varying rate at which these structures were closed contrasts with the rate at which asylums were established in the latter half of the seventeenth century.

[37] Porter 2002, *Madness: A Brief History*.

[38] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. 54.

[39] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. 67.

[40] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. 118.

[41] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. 28.

[42] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. 143.

[43] Porter 2002, *Madness*.

[44] Porter 2002, *Madness*, p. 37.

[45] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. 113.

[46] Trosse, G 1714, *The Life of the Reverend Mr. George Trosse*, ed. A.W. Brink, Mcgill-Queen's University Press, 1974.

[47] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. 54.

[48] Foucault 1967, *Madness*, p. 228.

[49] Sheppard, E 1872, 'On some of the teachings of insanity', *Journal of Mental Science*, vol. 17, pp. 499-514. The quote used was cited in Barham, P 1992, *Closing the Asylum: The Mental Patient in Modern Society*, Penguin, London.

[50] Bates, EM 1977, *Models of Madness*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia.

[51] Ripa, Y 1990, *Women and Madness: The Incarceration of Women in Nineteenth Century France*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

[52] Stone, L 1982, '"Madness" in *Critical Thought Series: 2, Critical Essays on Michel Foucault*, Scolar Press, England.

[53] Midelfort, HCE 1992, 'Madness and civilization in early modern Europe: A reappraisal of Michel Foucault', in *Critical Thought Series: 2, Critical Essays on Michel Foucault*, Scolar Press, England.

[54] Porter 2002, *Madness*, p. 95.

[55] Midelfort 1992, p. 36.

[56] Merquior, JG 1985, *Foucault*, University of California Press, Los Angeles.

[57] Scull *Madness*, p. 190.

[58] Scull *Madness*, p. 190.

[59] Stone 1982, p. 26.

[60] Showalter, E 1985, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980*, Virago, London, p. 6.

[61] Ussher, J 1991, *Women's Madness: Misogyny or Mental Illness?*, University of Massachusetts Press, Boston / Russell, D 1995, *Women, Madness & Medicine*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 12.

[62] Showalter 1985; Wright, N & Owen, S 2001, 'Feminist conceptualizations of women's madness: a review of the literature', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 143-150.

[63] Elaine Showalter describes in *The Female Malady* the three major Romantic images of female insanity – suicidal Ophelia, crazy Jane, and violent Lucia. She argues, along with other feminist scholars, that all three were constructed to establish female sexuality as the primary source of madness.

[64] Wright & Owen 2001, p. 145.

[65] Porter 2002, p. 97.

[66] Foucault 1967, p. 316.

[67] Foucault 1967, p. 317.

[68] Porter 2002, p. 106.

[69] Porter 2002, p. 115.

[70] Barham, P 1992, *Closing the Asylum: The Mental Patient in Modern Society*, Penguin London.

[71] Foucault 1967.

[72] Porter 2002.

[73] Porter 2002.

[74] Foucault 1967, p. 339.

[75] Foucault 1967, p. 511.

[76] Conrad 2007, *The Medicalization of Society*.

[77] Conrad, P, & Schneider, JW 1992, *Deviance and Medicalization: from Badness to Sickness*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

[78] Conrad 2007.

[79] Conrad 2007, p. 7.

[80] Conrad 2007, p. 61.

[81] Barham 1992.

[82] Barham 1992, p. 6.

[83] Bott, E 1976, 'Hospital and society', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, pp. 97-140.

[84] Bott, p. 133.

[85] Barham 1992, p. xi.

[86] Conrad, P, & Schneider, JW 1992, *Deviance and Medicalization: from Badness to Sickness*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

[87] Conrad 2007, p. 129.

[88] Department of Health Australia, 2012, *Australian Statistics on Medicines 2010*, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia.

[89] Australian Bureau of Statistics 1995, 'National Health Survey: Use of Medications, Australia, 1995', cat No. 4377.0, ABS, Canberra.

[90] Barham 1992, p. 12.

[91] Barham 1992, p. 12.

[92] Coleborne, C, & MacKinnon, D 2003, *Madness in Australia: Histories, Heritage and the Asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Australia, p. 11.

[93] Martyr, P 2010, 'Behaving wildly: diagnoses of lunacy among Indigenous persons in Western Australia, 1870-1914', *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 316-333.

[94] Garton, S 2003, 'Asylum histories: reconsidering Australia's lunatic past', in Coleborne and MacKinnon (Ed.), *Madness in Australia: Histories, Heritage and the Asylum*, University of Queensland Press, Australia, p. 12.

[95] Happell, B 2007, 'Appreciating the importance of history: A brief historical overview of mental health, mental health nursing and education in Australia', *The International Journal of Psychiatric Nursing Research*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 1439-1445, quote from page 1440.

[96] Happell 2007.

[97] Keane B 1987, 'Study of mental health nursing in Australia', *Commonwealth Department of Australia*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra.

[98] Martyr, P 2010, 'Behaving wildly: diagnoses of lunacy among Indigenous persons in Western Australia, 1870-1914', *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 316-333.

[99] Garton 2003, *Asylum Histories*, p. 17.

[100] Garton 2003, *Asylum Histories*, p. 17.

[101] Scull *Madness,* p. 199.

[102] Watson, D 2014, *The Bush*, Penguin Random House, Melbourne, p. 98.

[103] Happell 2007.

[104] Happell 2007.

[105] Bates, EM 1977, *Models of Madness*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, p. 20.

[106] Bates 1977, p. 20.

[107] Cade, JFJ 1979, *Mending the Mind: A Short History of Twentieth Century Psychiatry*, Sun Books, Melbourne.

[108] Bircanin, I, & Short, A 1995, *Glimpses of the Past: Monk Park, Arundel, Plenty*, Melbourne.

[109] Singh, B, Benson, A, Weir, W, Rosen, A, & Ash, D 2001, 'The history of mental health services in Australia', in Meadows and Singh (Ed.), *Mental Health in Australia: Collaborative Community Practice*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne.

[110] Burdekin, B 1993, 'National inquiry into the human rights of people with mental illness', *Australian Human Rights Commission*, Available at https://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/news/speeches/burdekin-national-inquiry

[111] Department of Health Victoria, 2014a, 'Mental health act reform', Available at http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/mhactreform/mh-act/index.htm

[112] Corney, R 1999, 'Mental health services in primary care: the overlap in professional roles', *Journal of Mental Health*, vol. 8, no. 8, pp. 187-194.

[113] Australian Broadcasting Commission 2014, 'Mental illness – a history', *Rear Vision*, Available at http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/mental-illness---a-history/5611268

[114] World Health Organisation 2013, *Depression: Factsheet No. 369*, Available at http://www.who.int/medicalcentre/factsheets/fs369/en/index.html.

[115] Barham 1992, p. 32.

[116] Porter 1987, p. 35.

[117] Porter 2002, *Madness* / Sheppard, E 1872, 'On some of the teachings of insanity', *Journal of Mental Science*, vol. 17, pp. 499-514. The quote used was cited in Barham, P 1992, *Closing the Asylum: The Mental Patient in Modern Society*, Penguin, London.

Chapter Three

Methodological Considerations

> The human need for stories never diminishes – they are, and will forever be, our principal way of understanding the world and our place in it.[1]

This thesis is about storytelling, and in particular, the extent to which Australian journalists draw on long-standing mental health narratives when they tell their stories about PWMI. As explained in the previous chapter, these narratives have changed over time, and they still operate today in both subtle and overt ways. An analysis of the way journalists draw on and reinforce these narratives requires a mixed-methods qualitative approach that combines both discourse and narrative analysis techniques, and as such, this chapter describes the methodological foundations upon which this study is based. It begins with definitions of both the narrative and discourse analysis approaches to qualitative research, drawing on the work of scholars Edward Bruner, Alasdair MacIntyre, Margaret Somers, and Gloria Gibson to justify their use in this study.[2] I account for the ways in which these two research techniques can be employed simultaneously, and in a complementary fashion.

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to an account of how articles were sourced for this study, and the ways in which they were examined. I explain why hard-copy newspapers were privileged given the range of methods Australian citizens can use to access news in the twenty-first century; the date range and search terms chosen to source these articles; and the selection of eight east-coast Australian newspapers within which these articles were published. The chapter concludes with an account of how these articles were analyzed, coded, and then categorized into the groups that form the analysis chapters of this thesis.

Storytelling animals: defining narrative analysis

Humans make meaning by telling stories, ordering events in such a way as to form narratives, and yet what constitutes a narrative and how one might be understood are matters debated among political, social, and psychological scholars.[3] Among some of the more common explanations is the understanding that narratives have four basic features. The first is that narrative is a form of storytelling, comprising a beginning, a middle, and an end. This notion assumes that a narrative consists of a past, a present, and a future, ensuring the stories we tell about ourselves and our social world are always in a state of becoming.[4] Second, the events that form a narrative must make sense together; must 'have an intrinsic, meaningful connection to one another'.[5] It is not enough that one simply cobbles together four seemingly disparate events and presents these as constituting some form of meaningful correlation. The third feature relates to David Carr's concern about the 'truthfulness'

of a narrative; the ability of a story to represent clearly the events in life it attempts to depict.[6] This concern is addressed through an understanding that narratives are not attempting to mirror reality, but rather, mediate between the self and the world, acting as facilitator in the construction of order and meaning. Finally, narratives can be understood as constitutive; woven with the threads of what Somers and Gibson describe as 'private' and 'public' stories.[7] Private narratives are those pertaining to the self and the construction of personal identity through storytelling. Woven within and against these stories are public narratives, which are those attached to 'formations larger than the … individual', like schools, governments, media, and the history of mental illness.[8] The previous chapter traced the trajectory of the public narratives that have played, and continue to play, an important role in the social construction of mental illness. These narratives are 'confinement' and 'individual responsibility'. While this thesis acknowledges the influence of these stories on the lives of individuals and the construction of their private narratives, it primarily explores the reproduction and dissemination of major public narratives in modern-day texts, namely newspapers.

A study that analyses newspaper coverage of issues and events involving PWMI acknowledges that journalists encounter the world as storytellers, and the stories they tell can draw on, and contribute to, powerful mental health narratives. Given that this thesis explores how narratives that date back to the fifteenth century inform this storytelling, it is appropriate to employ narrative analysis as the primary qualitative research technique. The following section details how this method will be implemented, and how it complements the use of another research approach: discourse analysis.

Combining narrative and discourse analysis methods

In the previous section, I argued that narratives are founded on four basic assumptions. These four assumptions are useful in understanding how to define and identify a narrative history, but they offer little explanation as to the specific components of a narrative, and how these might be relevant to an analysis of newspaper articles. This section examines Bruner's three elements of narrative, specifically, 'story', 'discourse', and 'telling', and draws on these definitions to justify the use of narrative and discourse analysis techniques as a complementary methodological approach to a study of this kind.[9]

Bruner describes the three principal elements of a narrative as 'story', 'discourse', and 'telling'. First, the story, or the 'abstract sequence of events', is the social history of mental illness as described in the previous chapter.[10] This story comprises the significant events that characterize the history of mental illness in western countries, from seventeenth century madhouses set up in Paris to the work of Sigmund Freud. Each event forms part of the 'story'; the first component of a narrative. The second component is 'discourse', defined by Bruner as the text in which the story is published.

In this study, 'discourse' is defined as the eight east-coast Australian newspapers chosen for examination. The third and final element is 'telling', or the act of narrating, defined in this thesis as the newspaper articles themselves. These final two components – discourse and telling – acknowledge the important role texts play in narrative construction, as well as the effect of individuals, through 'telling', to shape and guide the overarching story.

While narrative analysis is employed in this study to identify and analyze those themes that define the history of mental illness, to address the 'discourse' and 'telling' elements of narrative, it is appropriate to employ discourse analysis. Discourse analysis can be understood to investigate how power relations are established and/or reinforced through the use of language.[11] Where narrative analysis can define the overarching story and the principal events that characterize a narrative, discourse analysis explores the properties of text that inform these social histories.[12] It is a method that lends itself to phenomena that are both qualitative and interpretive, and is therefore suitable for an investigation of print texts and their role in the construction of mental health narratives.[13]

Print and online media: a newspaper focused study

One major challenge facing this study is to explain why print newspapers have been privileged given the range of methods Australian citizens can use to access news in the twenty-first century. Addressing this challenge, this section argues that despite the decline of print circulation in Australia since 2001, significant differences in the way online and hard-copy news content is published and accessed by consumers make hard-copy newspaper articles more suitable for a study of this kind. For research that employs narrative and discourse analysis approaches to uncover the presence of historical narratives in media coverage, hard-copy newspapers constitute a superior news-information source because they are not subject to change following publication.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, newspaper circulation in Australia has been in steady decline. Between 2001 and 2009, over 1000 Australian journalists lost their jobs in a retrenchment that coincided with a declining readership, one that continues to shrink annually.[14] [15] Between 2013 and 2014, sales fell at every major Australia newspaper except *The Northern Territory Times*. Even *The Herald Sun*, Australia's highest selling hard-copy publication, slipped from sales of 1.04 million copies daily in 2013 to 892,000 twelve months later.[16] Print media has entered a period of uncertainty, but there is enough evidence to support the ongoing relevance of hard-copy publications, adopting a refined role among other mediums. Their importance extends beyond sales figures.

> From the poorest country to the richest, a welter of academic research … points to the importance of an independent press – mostly newspapers – in disseminating hard-to-get information, mobilising the public and putting pressure on government and business in favour of the public good.[17]

Australians continue to report faith in print journalism, with newspapers ranking as the most trusted paid medium in 2013, ahead of television, radio, and online media.[18] Fifteen million Australians read a newspaper every month, while eight million read regional or community newspapers daily.[19]

While these figures support the ongoing relevance of print journalism in Australia, newspapers have had to adapt to a market where news is delivered continuously and updated every minute. Some print publications now offer a greater depth of commentary and analysis to complement the pace of the online platform.[20] Writing for *Crikey* in 2008, Eric Beecher argued that newspapers would continue to be important, so long as they fulfilled this role.

> A newspaper … built on news with backgrounding, probing and analysis. A newspaper with fewer pages, vastly less lifestyle and advertorial journalism and much more certainty about its place in the life of its (smaller) audience. A newspaper that connected with the issues that mattered to its more defined universe of readers.

This study assesses the extent to which journalists draw on long-standing mental health narratives when they tell their stories about PWMI, and argues that a greater emphasis on commentary presents a double-edged sword because a journalist is afforded both the space to reduce mental health stigma, and also perpetuate it.

The established importance and relevance of Australian print publications is not sufficient justification for a study focused solely on newspaper coverage of mental health stories. There are fundamental differences in online and print news content which make print newspapers more suitable for qualitative analysis. Electronic media has altered the significance of space and time as barriers to communication.[21] Joshua Meyrowitz argued that as a consequence of television, radio, and home computer technology, human beings have recalibrated their approach to social stages and the roles they play within their social environment. Qualitative researchers have not been unaffected by such changes. In 1983, Belinda Steele bemoaned the difficulty of separating one news medium from another when conducting qualitative analyses, and one can safely assume that this challenge has become more pronounced since then.[22]

A qualitative study of the coverage offered by multiple media platforms could be understood as capturing the 'totality of media content', one that 'creates a mythology … that subsequently shapes viewers' perceptions of a response to their real environments'.[23] Certainly, when a major world event takes place, news coverage is delivered across multiple mediums, including but not limited to television, radio, online, and hard-copy newspapers, Twitter, and Facebook. Qualitative research that examines both online news content and hard-copy coverage could go some way to addressing the 'totality' of news and information sources.

There are major differences, however, between online and print media reporting that make qualitative analyses of their content impractical. First, the two mediums differ at a fundamental level relating to the malleability of their respective content. The purpose of the online news platform is to

offer users a fresh set of stories each time they log in, resulting in the regular substitution of articles to appease the broader expectation that news is breaking minute-to-minute.[24] Peter English found in his study of print and online sports coverage in Australia and the United Kingdom that news websites alter the content of their articles regularly, often with 'considerable variations'.[25] This debunks the notion that news sources like *The Age* or *The Herald Sun* publish the same articles in their daily edition as they do online. English sourced three newspapers from Australia (*The Australian*, *The Age*, and *The Courier-Mail*), and three from the United Kingdom (*The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Sun*), and discovered that the qualitative scholar must pick the right moment to access similar content across both domains, stating that 'the 7.30am data collection was before the reader spike at 9.00am … so the material was likely to be most similar to the hard-copy edition'.[26]

This distinction between online and hard-copy content was more pronounced for some publications in English's study. Consider the following description of the differences in content between online and print versions of Queensland's highest selling newspaper, *The Courier-Mail*.[27]

> *The Courier-Mail*'s website was dramatically different from its newspaper and, while the website was populated with fresh stories during the day, the majority of these entries did not end up in the following day's newspaper.

Online news content is fluid, not some Orwellian form of information control and data deletion fed to populations without critique or question, but certainly a news information source more subject to change and alteration than the print publication. For news organisations, this malleability is an essential component of online news construction. It presents an advantage over the print medium because it allows for the delivery and updating of news moment-to-moment.

In 2009, the continuous updating of online news stories was still regarded as 'a major benefit of the online newspaper', yet for qualitative researchers, this medium presents some significant issues.[28] A hard-copy newspaper's content is verified, dated, and then printed, making it a reliable primary data source. Online content can be altered, and additions are often made to news articles as events unfold. As a result, researchers are faced with the impossible task of analyzing fluid content.

In addition to the fixed nature of print content, an archival advantage is present for historians, researchers, and academics assessing thematic content in hard-copy newspaper articles. Hughes, Lancaster, and Spicer recognize print newspapers as the only news medium 'for which there [is] sufficient freely available data to enable detailed examination of the frequency and patterns of reporting'.[29] Factiva is an online research tool that preserves articles in their original form, and so is a reliable primary data source for a scholar who wishes to explore thematic content in newspaper coverage. In conducting this study, Factiva allowed for the comparison of newspaper coverage both within and between print publications. It was possible, for instance, to contrast coverage from *The Age* between 2005 and 2009 with that from the same publication between 2010 and 2014, exploring and assessing changes in reporting patterns over time. Researchers could also use Factiva to compare

print coverage of a particular news event from *The Age* and *The Herald Sun* across specific days, months, and/or years. This archival advantage is available to scholars examining hard-copy editions of Australian newspapers, making print publications the superior data source for the qualitative scholar. For the scholar assessing media coverage of issues and events related to mental illness, data that is concrete, unchanging, and archived, as it is in hard-copy newspapers, is of the highest importance.

A qualitative study of online news content could be useful depending on the aims/goals of the study. When assessing changes in reporting patterns over a period of months or years, the use of hard-copy publications accessed from Factiva is most appropriate. Similarly, when assessing differences in coverage between two or more publications over time, again the use of print newspapers is recommended. Yet when the scope of the research topic is much more narrow, online content can be of considerable value to the qualitative scholar as its fluidity becomes of particular interest. For example, between March and April 2016, a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse saw Australian Cardinal George Pell present as a key figure offering evidence at these hearings. For a scholar who wishes to assess changes in reporting patterns over a short space of time, and poses the research question: 'How is the Cardinal George Pell story being treated this month?', it is the very fluidity of online content that becomes the subject of thematic analysis. While no archive exists to store these online articles, it matters little for a study of this scope and purpose. This is not applicable for the present study of mental health stories published between 2000 and 2014, but is worthy of mention as it illustrates the usefulness of different news mediums when the purpose of a particular research project varies. The following section describes the processes employed in this study to source articles for qualitative analysis.

Accessing articles using Factiva: date range, newspapers, and search terms

Chapter Two described how dominant public narratives have informed social attitudes towards PWMI, finding that Australian journalists have inherited a tradition that has continually sought to confine and control this group.[30] I traced the trajectory of these narratives from the years preceding the seventeenth century (when the mad were placed on boats, taken to foreign locations and dumped there), up until the beginning of the twenty first century in Australia. This section discusses the role of *Beyond Blue* as an Australian mental health organisation, founded in October 2000, committed to reducing mental health stigma. I describe how the founding of *Beyond Blue* offered a convenient starting point for an analysis of Australian newspaper coverage of stories related to mental illness, as it presented the opportunity to assess the extent to which *Beyond Blue's* goals and advocacy had translated into more progressive views of the lived experience of mental illness, as portrayed through the stories told by Australian journalists.

Established in October 2000, *Beyond Blue's* goal is to promote greater community awareness of the issue of mental illness and decrease mental health stigma.[31] In the years following its foundation, *Beyond Blue* can be understood as having had a significant effect on attitudes towards PWMI. Jorm, Christensen, and Griffiths found that in the states and territories where *Beyond Blue's* message was most prominent, social perceptions of the origins of poor mental health were most progressive.[32] *Beyond Blue's* depression awareness campaigns have been 'associated with less belief that the [PWMI] is weak rather than sick', contributing to Australia's improved mental health literacy.[33] Research suggests improved literacy is associated with higher rates of early intervention and a significant reduction in mental health stigma.[34]

In conjunction with this progress, and perhaps as a result of it, the twenty-first century has seen a number of political and social changes concerning mental health in Australia, suggesting shifting attitudes towards PWMI. The closing of asylums in Australia in the 1980s ushered in a new era of prominence for community mental health organisations, with *Reach Out* founded in 1996, *Beyond Blue* in 2000, and *Black Dog* in 2002.[35] Today there are over 50 mental health organisations in Victoria alone.[36] Some initiatives developed by these groups have contributed to an increased awareness of negative attitudes towards PWMI in Australia. *Beyond Blue's* ManTherapy campaign aimed to address the high suicide rate among Australia's male population, and in June 2014, just one year following its launch, 43 per cent of Australian men were reported to have seen this important health message.[37] *Black Dog* is another organisation promoting a number of youth and workplace education initiatives. *Headstrong* is one such program that aims to educate Australian high school students about the nature of mood disorders, offsetting the often inaccurate portrayals of mental illness that young people absorb through media.[38]

The extent to which these programs and initiatives have been effective is debatable. One meta-analysis employed to determine the effectiveness of programs to combat stigma found 'no evidence that stigma interventions were effective in reducing perceived or self-stigma', while a review of interventions designed to reduce stigma towards those suffering from schizophrenia, psychosis, or bipolar disorder found that 'contact' and 'education' initiatives had 'small-to-medium' effects on stigma.[39] [40] These findings are sobering, particularly in the context of campaigns like *Beyond Blue's* ManTherapy, which is run entirely online and contains no component where individual members of the community have prolonged contact with someone diagnosed or being treated for a mental illness. Research also suggests that the success of a stigma-reduction campaign can depend on whether the initiative is tailored well to its target audience.[41] For adults, research indicates that 'contact' interventions are more successful than education programs, which suggests that *Beyond Blue's* ManTherapy – targeting adult males struggling with depression – may be less effective than previously understood. Conversely, adolescents appear to respond better to education initiatives rather than contact, suggesting that the online youth and workplace education initiatives

promoted by *Black Dog* are well constructed and suited to its target audience. Corrigan et al suggest that young people's perceptions about PWMI and understanding of mental health is less rigid than is the case for adults, meaning the potential for these perceptions to be broken down and reconstructed is greater.[42] Their research is presented in this thesis not as a means to suggest that the work of *Beyond Blue* and other such organisations is ineffective, but that claims to their undisputed success may be premature. That the effect of these stigma-reduction initiatives are so varied reinforces the importance of examining the stories told by Australian journalists about PWMI because storytelling comprises another component of potential stigma-reduction initiatives, albeit unintentionally.

In conjunction with these initiatives, notable political changes continue to take place. On 8 May 2008, the Victorian Government began a review of the *Mental Health Act* 1986, in response to the increasing prevalence of mental illness in Australia, as well as the previous Bill's outdated 'approach to the treatment and care of persons with a mental illness'.[43] A similar reform was introduced in 2012 when the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) launched the *Ten Year Roadmap for Mental Health Reform*, an initiative that focused on the prevention of mental illness through the promotion of community awareness and support.[44] These renewed legislative changes promoted a greater recognition of the role community plays in the treatment of PWMI, a shift consistent with the founding goals of *Beyond Blue*.

The evidence presented in this section suggests there has been some measure of change in public attitudes towards mental illness since the founding of *Beyond Blue* in 2000. Research published by Jorm, Christensen, and Griffiths (and by Jorm and Wright) suggest that *Beyond Blue's* message has been associated with an erosion of the belief that PWMI are 'weak', and though the effectiveness of anti-stigma campaigns can certainly be questioned, we can conclude that *Beyond Blue* has made a significant contribution to Australia's mental health discussion. Acknowledging the influence of this mental health organisation, Factiva was used to source articles published between 1 November 2000 and 31 December 2014. The first date was chosen to coincide with the founding of *Beyond Blue*, which was judged by this researcher as the most significant and important mental health organisation founded in Australia since asylums were closed in the 1980s and a movement towards community based care was adopted. While the founding of *Reach Out* in 1996 would transform the way young people accessed health services and understood mental illness, the goal of this organisation was to offer Australia's first online service for young people dealing with mental illness. By contrast, *Beyond Blue's* founding goal in October 2000 was to raise awareness of depression and reduce mental health stigma. The organisation's emphasis on addressing mental health stigma made it a logical starting point for analysis given the purpose of this study was to assess the way Australian journalists told stories about PWMI, and whether these stories contributed to mental health stigma. The latter date was chosen to allow for timely completion of the study.

*   *   *

My preliminary analysis of print coverage of mental health stories endeavored to be inclusive of publications from all major Australian states and territories. Articles were sourced from *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW), *The Age* (VIC), *Canberra Times* (ACT), *Courier-Mail* (QLD), *The West Australian* (WA), *The Advertiser* (SA), *The Herald Sun* (VIC), *The Northern-Territory News* (NT), *The Daily Telegraph* (NSW), and the *Burnie Advocate* (TAS), and the initial sample totaled 2242 articles sourced from these eleven publications. This sample was far too large for the methodological approach I planned to undertake, and so I was forced to refine the scope of the study. The purpose of this section is to describe how eight east-coast publications were chosen for analysis.

This study aims to assess the extent to which journalists draw on long-standing mental health narratives when they tell their stories about PWMI. While the thesis did not intend to examine the consequences this news coverage can have on the population's understanding of the lived experience of mental illness, it was still important that the publications chosen for analysis had a substantial readership. Six of the eight highest-selling newspapers in Australia are east-coast publications, and these include *The Herald Sun*, *The Age*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Courier-Mail*, and *The Australian*.[45] While these six newspapers failed to account for coverage delivered exclusively to Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the ACT, they fully accounted for the news coverage delivered to Australians living on the east coast.

The Age and *The Herald Sun* were the first publications chosen for this study because of the different approaches they take, and have taken, in addressing mental illness. *The Age* was founded by three Melbourne businessmen, Walter Powell, and brothers John and Henry Cooke, with the first edition printed in October 1854 at the time of the gold rushes in Victoria. The newspaper has been in circulation for over 160 years and is currently owned by John Fairfax, who purchased the majority of shares for the company between 1972 and 1983. *The Age* is known for taking a progressive stance on topical issues, and this was an important factor leading to its inclusion in this study. For example, it favors gay marriage, and is opposed to the detention of asylum seekers in offshore facilities.[46] Under the editorship of Graham Perkin, who ran the publication between 1966 and 1975, *The Age* ran a mental health campaign known as 'Minus Children', which helped to expose the abuse of handicapped children at the now closed Kew Cottages, a Melbourne-based mental asylum opened in 1887 to accommodate intellectually disabled children and adults.

The Herald Sun has a much shorter history. First published in October 1990, it was established as a union between *The Sun-News-Pictorial* and *The Herald*. News Corporation owns the publication, and like all media organisations owned by this company, including Fox News, its stance on social, economic, and political issues is conservative.[47] The inclusion of *The Herald Sun* (and ultimately, other News Corp publications) ensured that the group of newspapers chosen for analysis encompassed both ends of the political spectrum.

The six east-coast publications identified above do not account for rural areas. To account for the differences in the lived experience of mental illness across the rural/urban divide, articles were sourced from two additional publications, *The Burnie Advocate* (published in Tasmania), and *The Border Mail* (prominent in regional Victoria). The inclusion of these two newspapers acknowledges that mental illness can be perceived and experienced distinctly, and that this experience is often dependent on one's socio-cultural status. Table One documents readership and ownership details for each of these eight publications. The eight newspapers are ranked based on average daily readership (Monday-Friday).

Table One: *Average daily readership (2018) for the eight Australian newspapers chosen for analysis*

Publication	Readership (M-F, '000s)	City/State	Ownership
The Herald Sun	740	Melb/VIC	News Ltd.
The Daily Telegraph	574	Syd/NSW	News Ltd.
The Sydney Morning Herald	430	Syd/NSW	Fairfax
The Age	410	Melb/VIC	Fairfax
The Courier-Mail	338	Bris/QLD	News Ltd.
The Australian	303	Syd/NSW	News Ltd.
The Border Mail	50	Albury/VIC	Fairfax
Burnie Advocate	30	Burnie/TAS	Fairfax

Note: All figures sourced from Roy Morgan Research, except statistics for *The Border Mail*, sourced from Australian Community Media AdCentre.[48]

The combined average daily readership of the eight newspapers chosen for this study is slightly less than 3.5 million, indicating that despite the steady decline of print media since the beginning of the twenty-first century, newspapers remain an important source of news information. The table also shows that the study includes a balance of both Fairfax and News Ltd. publications, with four newspapers sourced from each.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

The purpose of this study is to examine the stories journalists tell about PWMI. It is therefore a broad study focused on all types of mental disorder. Given the personal nature of mental illness, many scholars have sought to focus their research on a single aspect of the mental health experience. Robert Cover explored coverage of queer youth suicide and the narratives that Australian print media associate with this phenomenon; Rowe et al investigated the representation of clinical depression in print publications; and Cain et al summarized print and online coverage of events related to schizophrenia.[49] While these studies shed light on Australian media's coverage of stories relating to specific mental disorders, this thesis moves beyond these distinctions to explore the conditions of

PWMI more broadly, accessing articles containing both key search terms 'mental illness' and 'mentally ill'.

The first stage of the research involved obtaining these newspaper articles using the Factiva database. Using the terms 'mental illness' and 'mentally ill', the search initially yielded a total of 1410 newspaper articles published between November 2000 and December 2014. A total of 108 articles were removed from this sample because they were either duplicates that had slipped through the methodological net, letters to the editor, obituaries, or reviews of books, television shows, movies, or stage shows. This left a total of 1302 newspaper articles for analysis. The following chart outlines the percentage of this sample sourced from each of the publications chosen for this study.

Chart One: *Percentage of the overall sample sourced from each of the eight east-coast Australian newspapers chosen for analysis.*
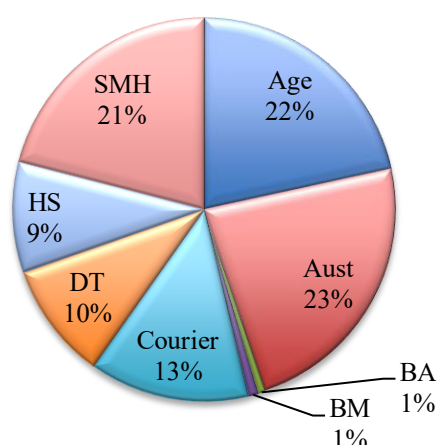
Excluding *The Border Mail* and *The Burnie Advocate*, an even spread of articles were sourced from each newspaper. The chart shows that *The Australian*, *The Age*, and *The Sydney Morning Herald* yielded the highest number of articles devoted to mental health stories. Their respective coverage will be a significant focus of this study.

Analysis of this sample of newspaper articles yielded five major themes: violence ($n= 523$), suicide ($n= 250$), homelessness ($n= 142$), prisons ($n= 253$), and drugs ($n= 199$).[50] These were the five contexts within which Australian journalists – writing for eight east-coast Australian newspapers between 2000 and 2014 – discussed mental illness. Table Two provides a visual representation of the number of articles that covered each of the five major themes, and illustrates the prominence of stories of violence in the sample.

Table Two: *Number of articles per theme.*
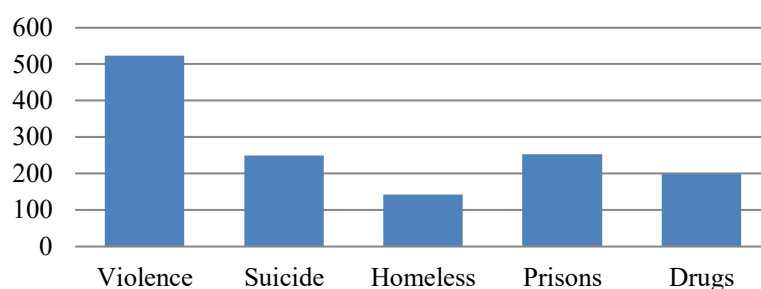
The initial structure of the study was intended to reflect the five major themes identified above. This plan changed when analysis of the 'violence' sample commenced and it became apparent that multiple studies could be conducted on this group alone. The 'violence' sample contains stories of murder, physical and sexual assault, acts of terror, stabbings, filicide, parricide, infanticide, and a large body of stories where an individual described as 'mentally ill' was depicted as posing a threat to those around them. It is a sample that contains the stories of the twenty-first century's most memorable social flashpoints, including the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City on 11 September 2001; the stories of Andrea Yates, Greg Anderson, and Arthur Freeman; the 'Sydney Siege'; the mass shooting committed by Anders Behring Breivik on 22 July 2011 in Norway; a large number of school shootings that took place in the United States between 2000 and 2014; as well as a series of copy-cat stabbings at primary schools in China during the same period.

It should also be noted that while the articles examined in this thesis were published between 2000 and 2014, a number of these pieces focused on crimes committed before the beginning of the twenty-first century, and so, outside the study's date parameters. The 'violence' sample contains articles that revisited the crimes committed by Charles Manson in the 1960s and Martin Bryant in 1996, as well as a number of lesser-known murders, such as Mark Briscoe's killing of his father with a cane knife in Queensland in 1997. The inclusion of the analysis of some of these stories has been justified on the basis that the subject of this thesis is *reporting* published between 2000 and 2014, and so while the events upon which these stories are based might have taken place in the twentieth century, the reporting is still published in the twenty-first century and so is informed by the same socio-cultural norms and understandings of mental health as those pieces published in the same period that deal with more recent crimes.

It was not my intention to focus so exclusively on stories of violent crime, but the large number of articles dedicated to stories of violence necessitated a chapter structure devoted to the 'violence' code, inclusive of the 'suicide' sample because of its considerable emphasis on stories of violence (albeit against the self) and self-harm. Preliminary drafts yielded three significant analysis chapters that each covered the type of violence perpetrated by an individual described by Australian journalists as 'mentally ill'. These were 'murder', 'terror', and 'suicide'. First attempts at drafting

the 'murder' and 'terror' chapters were stunted by the significant number of stories that could have legitimately been examined in either chapter. The case of an American mother who drowned her five children in the family bath-tub was initially labeled a story of 'terror', though it is also clearly a murder case. There were many stories like this where I found it difficult to justify the inclusion of certain articles in the 'murder' chapter, but not in the one devoted to 'terror' cases. As a result, this structure was set aside in favour of chapters devoted to the *context* within which the violent crime was committed as opposed to the label placed on the crime itself. 'Murder', 'terror', and 'suicide' were replaced by 'violence against the family', 'violence against indiscriminate others', and 'violence against the self'.

The four analysis chapters that follow are devoted to an examination of these three sub-samples, drawn from the 'violence' and 'suicide' codes. Chapters Four and Five describe the first of these three groups; 'violence against the family'. The wealth of stories of family violence necessitated an analysis across two chapters, which were organised based on the identity of the perpetrator of the violent crime. Chapter Four examines stories of family violence committed by 'fathers', 'mothers', and 'progeny', while Chapter Five explores those crimes committed by a 'spouse', 'sibling', or a member of the 'extended family'. The entire family violence sample comprises 151 newspaper articles, and the most common crime depicted in these articles was murder.

Chapter Six examines 86 articles devoted to stories of indiscriminate violence. The chapter is divided into four sections based on the most significant sub-categories identified in this group, and these were 'terrorism', 'mass shootings', 'knife attacks', and broader cases of 'murder'. The defining characteristic of this 'indiscriminate violence' group is that, in contrast with the family violence sample, the crime committed was against victims unknown to the perpetrator. Similar to the family violence sample, the most common crime depicted in this group was murder.

Chapter Seven comprises an analysis of 86 articles coded 'suicide', a group that contains stories of suicide and self-harm. The analysis is divided into two parts; the first examines 'problem-focused' reporting, while the second explores the telling of 'personal stories'. The following chapter examines those 24 articles which told the stories of fathers who killed their children.

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[1] Flanagan, M 2016, *On Listening: The Curiosity Lecture Series*, Penguin Random House, Australia / Bruner, EM 1986, 'Ethnography as narrative', *The Anthropology of Experience*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago / MacIntyre, A 1984, 'The virtues, the unity of a human life, and the concept of a tradition', *After Virtue*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame.
[2] Bruner, EM 1986, 'Ethnography as narrative', *The Anthropology of Experience*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago.
[3] Hinchman, LP & Hinchman, SK 2001, *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*, State University of New York Press, Albany. An emphasis on the power of storytelling and narrative construction is present in each of Peter Robinson's three books on the work, personal, and emotional lives of gay men. His third book, *Gay Men's Working Lives, Retirement and Old Age*, has been particularly useful in helping to form the present study's methodological approach.
[4] Bruner, EM 1986, 'Ethnography as narrative', *The Anthropology of Experience*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago.
[5] Hinchman & Hinchman 2001, quote from page xv.
[6] Carr, D 1986, 'Narrative and the real world: an argument for continuity', *History and Theory*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 117-131.
[7] Somers & Gibson 1994.
[8] Somers & Gibson 1994, quote from page 31.
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in this text is that many articles were read more than twice; some up to eight times. The articles that received the closest examination are those that are presented in the analysis chapters of this thesis.

Chapter Four

Family Violence I

This chapter begins with an analysis of the 24 articles which described violence perpetrated by fathers. Within this sub-sample are the stories of eleven separate men, three of whom stand out from this group because multiple articles detailed their actions.[1] These men were the unnamed Bribie Island father who raped and murdered his 10-year-old daughter on New Year's Eve in 2007 ($n=5$); Greg Anderson, who killed his son (Luke Batty) in the cricket nets at an oval in Tyabb on 12 February 2014 ($n=6$); and Arthur Freeman, who threw his daughter Darcey off Melbourne's West Gate Bridge on 29 January 2009 ($n=4$). The chapter begins with an analysis of the reporting on these three cases. The first two cases illustrate how journalists can use stories as exemplars for broader social problems involving PWMI, often without sufficient justification for doing so, while the third and final case is explored to show how some narratives are drawn on exclusively in cases where violence has been committed by a father.

Sections two and three of the chapter are devoted to an analysis of reporting on those crimes committed by 'mothers' and 'progeny'. The 'mothers' section comprises an analysis of 22 articles that detailed the stories of 24 mothers who harmed their children. This group contained nine articles that described cases where mothers heard voices and/or messages from God compelling them to harm their children, while in all but three of the 24 cases, the crime committed was murder. The stories of Andrea Yates, Dena Schlosser, Christine Gifford, and Shan Shan Xu are examined in this section as representative of the 'mothers' group. The final section of the chapter examines 58 articles that presented accounts of sons or daughters who killed their parents. A total of 33 articles from this group were dedicated to four individual murder cases, and these were the stories of Mark Briscoe, Kylie Fitter, Malcolm Robert Potts, and Anthony Waterlow. These four cases are examined at length because they were judged as representative of the broader 'progeny' group.[2]

Fathers

The 'fathers' sample contains eleven individual cases, three of which are addressed in this section. Five articles published between January 2008 and April 2009 told the story of a 39-year-old unemployed man who moved his family into a holiday home on Bribie Island and within days raped and murdered his 10-year-old daughter. Three of these articles were published in *The Courier-Mail* and two in *The Australian*.[3] The broad focus of this sub-sample was on a neglected health system, and most representative of this narrative was Margaret Wenham's article entitled 'System failure –

warnings ignored before man raped and killed daughter', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 21 April 2009. Wenham summarized the crime as follows:

> The state's largest hospital was warned, so were police and a doctor, but no one stopped a mentally ill man from taking a family holiday which ended with him raping and killing his 10-year-old daughter.

Wenham reported that the unnamed father had been sole custodian of his four children since 2004 before he 'ritualistically killed his daughter and spared her three younger siblings'. Details of the crime were a central component in the five articles that reported on this case, along with frequent mention of a 'communications breakdown within the public sector' and persistent 'underfunding', descriptions which portrayed the rape and murder as the result of a neglected health system, one that failed to control a violent individual.

Co-authors Margaret Wenham and Janelle Mills argued in *The Courier-Mail* on 25 April 2009 that even an improved Queensland health system would not prevent a similar event from occurring again. This argument had been presented previously in an editorial published in *The Australian* in January 2008, which argued that 'no system, however watertight, can prevent some dysfunctional individuals in fraught situations from harming those around them'. The editors argued in this piece that 'the frequent connection between mental health and violent crime [needs] to be addressed', and this statement was reinforced in four of the five articles that reported on the Bribie Island murder. While these articles explored some aspects of the broader social context that contributed to the murder of a 10-year-old girl, the journalists framed this broader context as relevant only in its ability to control a PWMI, who without medication and/or involuntary admission to a mental health triage center, would be violent. Just one article, published in *The Courier-Mail* in 2008, addressed the reality of the link between mental illness and violence.

> Crime and mental illness do not automatically go together. And anyone who does suffer from mental illness of whatever description has every right to be treated with compassion and sensitivity.

The effect of this statement is to remind the reader that while the crime was abhorrent, the case may not necessarily reflect the broader experience of mental illness. Short statements like this help to reduce the spread of stereotypes surrounding individuals with mental illness and their tendency to engage in violent criminal behaviour.

The editorial published in *The Australian* on 4 January 2008, entitled 'Lessons must come from tragedy', shifted the focus from the publication's belief that a neglected health system lead to this crime, to the safety of children who have parents with a mental illness, and this relates to the principal argument of this section concerning the tendency for journalists to report abhorrent cases, and frame them as representative of broader social problems. The editors presented the Bribie Island murder alongside a number of other violent crimes, and in so doing, portrayed them as mental health cases. They wrote that 'a report tabled in Queensland parliament in November [2007] revealed that 57 children known to the Department of Child Safety died in 2006-2007'. It is unclear how many of these deaths were at the hands

of parents being treated for mental illness. This detail was not mentioned and instead the editors continued with a discussion of how the problem was one that extended beyond Queensland's borders.

> In Victoria in 2006, serial rapist William Craig Forde told a prison psychologist before he was released from jail that he would rape again. Three months later he took a young Ballarat mother captive at knifepoint and raped her repeatedly during a 29-hour ordeal.

It is not clear how the actions of 'serial rapist' William Craig Forde relate to the Bribie Island murder. Because the Bribie Island story is framed as a case of a 'mentally ill' father raping and killing his daughter, one must assume that the additional stories and statistics presented by the editors are also related to mental illness and have been included to strengthen the claim that mental illness can help to explain violence. This point was not stated explicitly in the article, but was implied when the editors stated that 'Prime Minister Kevin Rudd [would] inevitably need to look at care for the mentally ill'.

It is not unreasonable for a journalist to argue that a health system has been neglected, or an underfunded sector needs reform. But it could affect the public's image of those being treated for mental illness to conflate mental illness and violence without an appreciation for the broader social context within which these crimes take place. It is unlikely that 'serial rapist' William Craig Forde raped a Ballarat mother over 29 hours because he was a PWMI. In fact, I would argue that to explain sexual violence as an outcome of mental illness can lend support to a dangerous narrative, one that has the potential to be used by lawyers defending individuals on trial for domestic abuse.[4] That Forde was seeing a 'prison psychologist' is unremarkable for multiple reasons. The Australian Government reported in 2017 that high rates of mental illness in Australian jails could be explained by incarceration, or the threat of incarceration, as well as control mechanisms operating within prisons that have an adverse effect on inmates' mental health.[5] Put simply, speaking to a prison psychologist is common because environmental circumstances necessitate a need for support. That he told the prison psychologist he planned to 'rape again' is uncommon, but cannot necessarily be linked to his alleged mental illness. And with regards to the 57 children known to the Department of Child Safety who died in 2006-2007, one could assume that there were some who did not die at the hands of parents with a mental illness. I argue that in each of these cases, Australian journalists could tell multiple stories. Some children may have died in violent circumstances, while others may have died as a result of neglect. Some may be cases involving mental illness, while some children grow up in homes with parents who are addicted to methamphetamine, living on the margins of society. Without consideration of other possible explanations for violent crime, the mental health narrative can continue to foster a belief in society, among lawyers, judges, journalists, academics, and the general public, that mental illness explains violent crime in domestic settings.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

The second case that involved a father killing one or more of his children was no less graphic than the Bribie Island murder. In a summary of the death of 11-year-old Luke Batty, John Silvester portrayed Luke's father, Greg Anderson, as a man with motive.[6] Silvester reported in *The Age* that after leaving his

Frankston accommodation on 12 February 2014, Anderson 'told fellow residents he would not be coming back'. He concealed a knife in his backpack, caught public transport to Tyabb Recreation Reserve, and 'it was there the mentally ill Anderson killed his son'.

Silvester outlined some of the broader social circumstances involved in this case. He described Greg Anderson as 'alone', 'unemployed', and 'unemployable'. According to Silvester's account, jobs had dried up, Anderson's marriage to Rosie Batty had ended, and 'he knew he would never be granted shared custody of his son or even allowed overnight visits'. These details are important as they offer the reader an image of the circumstances of Luke Batty's death, and perhaps, the father's state of mind. Yet despite consistent reference to the social stressors involved, Silvester still asserted that the young boy's death was an outcome of mental illness. He explained that Anderson's plan was 'borne from madness … he knew his tenuous links to his son were fraying [and] through the fog of his mental illness he saw it as the only possible release for both of them'.

Silvester also portrayed Batty's death as reflecting a broader social problem concerning PWMI, a method used by journalists who reported on the Bribie Island murder.[7] Where the actions of the Bribie Island father were presented as the result of a neglected health system, John Silvester regarded Greg Anderson as representative of other violent PWMI. He assumed a similar link between mental illness and violence as was assumed by the editors of *The Australian* when they tried to account for the Bribie Island murder.

> The real issue is our inability to deal with the mentally ill, and the problem is getting worse. It is a massive problem, so much so that all police are being retrained to deal with the deeply disturbed. In 2009 the police dealt with 4798 people so disturbed they were taken to a mental health triage center.

By including these statistics, where 4798 individuals were involved in incidents so problematic they required intervention from law enforcement, Silvester implied that there is a causal link between mental illness and violence. Of the 4798 'deeply disturbed' individuals mentioned above, one could assume that their stories offer a deeper complexity than could be explained by a diagnosis of mental illness. Some individuals may be homeless, some addicted to illicit substances, some struggling with a mental illness, and any of these three in isolation would be incapable of explaining the malicious crime depicted in these articles. This lack of complexity illustrates the dangers present in relying on police testimony and court transcripts to construct stories for newspapers. While police have an important and often difficult role to play in incidents like the one that took place at Tyabb Recreation Reserve, where Luke Batty was murdered, they are not trained in diagnosing mental illness, and their appreciation for the broader contexts involved in crime often appears to be obscured by their tendency to make a layman's judgement about the mental state of male perpetrators of violent crime in domestic settings.

A similar pattern where journalists described an abhorrent event and portrayed it as representative of a broader social problem was present in *The Age* editorial published in February 2014, entitled 'A bereft mother's insightful message'.[8] Its purpose appeared to be to commend Rosie Batty, who had

spoken to media less than 24 hours after the death of her son to explain that 'no one loved Luke more than his father … I want to tell everybody that family violence happens to everybody, no matter how nice your house is, no matter how intelligent you are'. While Rosie Batty argued that her son's death was a product of family violence, two sub-sections – one that outlined family violence statistics and the other that paired these statistics with mental illness – dominated the 637-word editorial. In one paragraph the authors explained that 'family violence was involved in 80 per cent of child deaths … in 2013, up from 62 per cent in 2010'. The following paragraph stated that 'this year, 4 million Australians will have mental health problems … half of us will encounter such difficulty at some stage in our lives'. The placement of these statistics can again have the effect of reinforcing a causal relationship between mental illness and family violence. The significance of this relationship, however, could be seen as dubious. While a large portion of Australians will deal with a personal experience of mental illness across their lifetime, the vast majority of this group will never engage in family violence. Is it not conceivable that the small percentage that do, do so for reasons beyond their mental illness? The murder of Luke Batty at the hands of his father might represent an intersection of family violence and mental illness, but the extent to which this story is reflective of most cases of family violence is questionable, and to reinforce the 'mental illness-family violence' relationship is to offer an explanation to all perpetrators of abuse.

*   *   *

The final case explored in this section on 'fathers' is included to contrast with the articles that reported on mothers who took the lives of their children, explored in the following section of this chapter. At 9.15am on 29 January 2009, Arthur Freeman threw his daughter Darcey from Melbourne's West Gate Bridge. The sample contained four articles which addressed varying aspects of this event.[9] In 2011, Andrea Petrie was the Supreme Court reporter for *The Age*. Her piece was a 1636-word summary of Darcey's death, and the discussion that took place in the Supreme Court two years later, when Freeman was brought to trial. Petrie's emotive opening set the tone for the rest of the piece.

> The only thing cold on the morning of January 29, 2009, was the heart of Arthur Phillip Freeman. But the nation felt a chill of horror when news broke that a little girl had been thrown off Melbourne's West Gate Bridge. Dozens of people in peak-hour traffic at 9.15am saw her tossed over the railing 'like a rag doll'. It was such a long way to fall: 58 meters. She sustained massive internal injuries and ultimately drowned.

In contrast with the sample that reported on mothers who took the lives of their children, explored in the following section of this chapter, Petrie's article represents the inclination of some reporters to provide multiple explanations for murders that are committed by fathers against their children. Where it appears unfathomable that a mother would knowingly and intentionally take the life of her child, Petrie presented an image of Freeman as possibly mentally ill, but more likely 'cold' and 'motivated by spousal revenge'. This narrative is exclusive to the 'fathers' sample.

Petrie began her analysis by quoting defence lawyer David Brustman, who asked in court whether Freeman was 'mad' or 'bad', and then argued that the father's actions were unintentional, unconscious,

involuntary, and the result of a 'highly disordered mind, a mind suffering mental illness'. Petrie then contrasted this observation with the prosecution's claim that Freeman was 'angry at his ex-wife' and 'deliberately threw his daughter off the bridge because he was motivated by spousal revenge'. The article reinforced this view with a quote from a relative of Arthur Freeman, who asked to remain unnamed.

> A relative of Freeman's … has told *The Age* of a comment the father-of-three made at a family dinner at the height of his custody concerns in 2008. "We were discussing the custody of his children, and Arthur said 'She [his ex-wife] would regret it if he lost custody of the children' … it was only later that the comment began to play over and over in my mind".

This comment was representative of a broader stance taken by the author in this article. While even weight was given to all aspects of the trial, Petrie was transparent in her belief that Freeman acted knowingly when killing his daughter. This is significant as it contrasts with the central argument of this thesis; that mental illness is used as a default explanatory device to explain abhorrent events when no other explanation is available to the journalist or the reader. In the case of Arthur Freeman, the presence of a mental illness was debated, and its relevance to the crime committed was obscured by a focus on 'spousal revenge'.

A second narrative that ran through the four articles that dealt with this case was the reputation of Professor Graham Burrows, described by Andrea Petrie as 'the only one of six psychiatrists to conclude Freeman did not know what he was doing was wrong'. According to Petrie, Professor Burrows had testified that the perpetrator 'was suffering from a major depressive disorder at the time of the crime … was psychotic, out of touch with reality and was in a dissociative state'. Yet the reputation of Burrows was questioned and then attacked in the next two articles, one published in *The Age* on 12 May 2011 and the other in *The Herald Sun* on 23 June 2011. *The Age* journalist Selma Milovanovic reported that a Liberal MP 'accused Professor Graham Burrows of giving concocted evidence at the trial of Arthur Freeman'. This article was titled 'Expert witness in Freeman case should be sacked: MP'. *The Herald Sun* provided additional evidence one month later, compounding this attack on Burrows. Lucie Van den Berg reported:

> The Medical Board is monitoring allegations made by patients against high profile psychiatrist Professor Graham Burrows to determine what action may be necessary to protect the public. A Seven News Investigation raised a list of allegations against the doctor including over-medication of drugs, consultations of 30 seconds and a conflict of interest involving pharmaceutical companies.

The effect of these two articles, alongside Petrie's commentary on the event and the subsequent court case, was to discredit the defence witness in the Arthur Freeman trial. In contrast with articles I explore in the following section, there was an apparent reluctance on the part of the journalist to attribute Freeman's actions to mental illness. This is significant in its distinction with the rest of the sample, where my consistent argument has been (and will continue to be) that Australian journalists tend to draw on the mental health narrative as a means to explain abhorrent or abnormal behaviour. It would appear that in cases like that of Arthur Freeman, where a father has taken the life of a child, other explanations are likely to be explored and/or offered, and the mental illness explanation is not so readily the 'default' stance. In

the following section I contrast this trend with 22 articles that reported on mothers who took the lives of their children.

Mothers

The articles that reported on mothers who killed their children are best considered in light of research relating to our constructed understanding of women and their role in western culture. American sociologist Arlie Hochschild's term for the unpaid domestic labour that falls predominantly on the shoulders of women is 'emotion work', and George Levinger argued in his study on the social behaviour of married couples that this work, which includes maintenance of family emotions and interpersonal relationships, has been an aspect of married life in the west since the middle of the twentieth century.[10] Where this relationship has long been interpreted as a product of the 'male breadwinner-female nurturer' model, today, women who are engaged in full time paid employment still take on the bulk of routine housework and childcare.[11]

Rebecca Erickson argues that it is the socio-cultural construction of gender roles that informs this unequal division, meaning we generally come to see being an emotional caretaker as 'something women *are* rather than something women *do*' (my emphases).[12] A woman's performance in the household is understood as a 'natural' expression of her love for her partner and her children, and Erickson explains that some women contribute to and reinforce this understanding.[13]

> Women themselves often discount the time and effort involved in caring work not only because it is expected to be a spontaneous expression of love but also because the illusion of effortlessness is part of doing the work well.

For many women, performing household labour has become a core aspect of their identity construction. One must also consider the weight of traditional beliefs and theories of socialization that assert women continue to perform most of the work associated with 'being female' because it is to these tasks that they are most suited.[14] While this perspective could be seen as archaic, some of this sentiment persists in the west.

It is in this context that 22 articles were examined which documented the stories of 24 mothers who harmed their children. This is more than twice the number of stories dedicated to fathers who killed their children, of which there were eleven men in total. This group contained nine articles where mothers heard voices and/or messages from God compelling them to harm their children, while in all but three of the 22 articles the crime was murder. This section examines the reporting identified as unique to this sub-sample, and in particular, the tendency for journalists to portray mothers as psychotic and delusional, and to be more sympathetic to the plight of mothers than fathers. I open with an analysis of those nine articles that involved mothers who heard voices that compelled them to kill their children.

On 20 June 2001, Andrea Yates drowned her five children in the bathtub of their home in Houston, Texas. The story gained national prominence across North America, and was overshadowed only briefly by the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington on 11 September 2001. Journalist Andrew Cohen wrote in 2012 that a hearing to determine Yates's competency to stand trial for the murder of her five children was cancelled on 11 September 2001 because of the attacks.[15] Two articles from the sample of eight east-coast Australian newspapers documented her crime.[16] *The Australian* ran the headline 'Mama's deadly state of mind', and described the case as follows:

> What police found inside the Yates's modest home shocked the nation. Neatly lined up under a sheet on a bed were the still-wet bodies of the couple's four youngest children: Mary, 6 months, Luke, 2, Paul, 3, and John, 5. Their eldest child, Noah, 7, was still in the bathtub in which Yates had drowned her children. Seeing what was happening to his siblings, Noah tried to run – but Yates chased and caught him.

Yates was described by the editors of *The Australian* as having suffered from 'a bout of post-partum depression so devastating, so mind-altering, that she was incapable of judging right from wrong'. She told psychologist Steven Rubenzer in one of eight interviews in Houston's Harris County Jail – where she was held and treated with anti-psychotic medication following her arrest – that she believed she was 'Satan … [and that] George Bush will kill Satan', in the belief that the President at that time was still the governor of her home state. The editors portrayed Yates's actions as irrational, delusional, and the result of mental illness, and claimed 'few would disagree that Yates is mentally ill. Her 1000-page medical record chronicles … a history of severe depression marked by delusional episodes'. They then drew on statistics from 'health experts' to support the link they were wanting to make between mental illness and the killing of Yates's five children.

> Health experts estimate about 40 per cent of women experience mood swings after having a baby ... However about two women in every 1000 ... can become delusional, have visions and hear voices urging them to harm themselves or their babies.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) notes that depressive episodes that include psychotic features during pregnancy or following the birth of a child occur in 'from 1 in 500 to 1 in 1000 deliveries' and may be more common for women having their first child.[17] Even though the statistics the editors cited were at odds with those from the DSM-5, they still portrayed the case as rare, and this appeared to be one moment in the article where the authors had the opportunity to emphasize and reiterate the extraordinary nature of Yates's crime in the broader story of mental illness. That Yates was seriously unwell appears to be beyond dispute, but again, the fact is, the majority of severely mentally ill people would never contemplate a crime of this magnitude, and in the case of women who give birth, this story is exceptionally rare.

The editors who documented Yates's crime used mental illness as a default explanation for violence. The editorial published in *The Australian* in 2001 quoted Dianne Clements, from a Texas-based victims' rights group known as Justice For All, who argued that we 'just can't conceive of someone in their right mind doing what [Yates] did'. The previous analysis of the 'fathers' sample

showed that journalists can conceive of fathers committing the same acts in their 'right mind'. They seem to find it easier to imagine a father committing a similar act of violence deliberately and knowingly against his own children. Arthur Freeman, for example, was portrayed as someone 'motivated by spousal revenge' when he threw his daughter Darcey off the West Gate Bridge. And journalist John Silvester framed Greg Anderson's 'descent into homicidal madness' as calculated and deliberate. Anderson told fellow residents at his Frankston accommodation house that he 'would not be coming back', and then took his son's life with a knife he had stowed in his backpack. Even the story of Robert Farquharson, the man who drove his three children into a dam between Geelong and Winchelsea on Father's Day in 2005, while not a mental health story in this sample, was still portrayed as a deliberate murderous act by an embittered and estranged father.[18] Mothers from this sample, like Andrea Yates, are defined by contrast as psychotic, hearing voices, and out of control, and mental illness is presented as the only plausible explanation for their actions.

Two articles published in *The Daily Telegraph* in 2004 also reinforced this link between hearing voices and violence committed by mothers against their children, which I mentioned at the start of this section was a common feature in nine of the 22 articles that make up this sub-sample.[19] Zoe Taylor was the author of both articles. In a piece entitled 'God told me to kill daughter', Taylor reported that 'a mother who believed she was freeing her only daughter of evil spirits when she killed her with a single stab wound has been found not guilty of murder by reason of mental illness'. The woman 'heard messages from God' and was helping her 15-year-old daughter 'become an angel' when she took her life. A similar case was the subject of another article published in *The Australian* in December 2004, which reported that 'a mother who admitted killing her baby daughter by cutting off her arms claims to have been guided by a Bible passage in which Jesus refers to severing body parts to cast away sin'.[20] The 35-year-old perpetrator, Texas housewife Dena Schlosser, was 'found in her living room, covered in blood, still holding a knife and listening to a hymn'. *The Australian* reported that she had been hospitalized for postnatal depression in January 2004, committed the murder in December, and was later found not guilty by reason of mental impairment.[21]

In many of these articles, the killer was portrayed as irrational, psychotic, and sometimes even animalistic. While Andrea Yates 'chased' down her final victim, her eldest son, Marea le Rade portrayed Christine Gifford in an article published in *The Australian* in 2003 as the 'rope-wielding mother' who pursued her 10-year-old daughter through scrubland before strangling her to death.[22] Marea le Rade described Gifford's crime as 'the worst excess of psychotic disorder', and this piece was included in the sub-sample of nine articles which reported on mothers who heard voices or messages from God because le Rade noted that in February 2000, Gifford 'told doctors she feared [her daughter] was at times possessed by the devil'.

Shan Shan Xu was another mother who was said to have heard voices that compelled her to harm her child. She drowned her four-year-old son in 2003 and was later found not guilty by reason

of mental impairment. John Stapleton followed Xu's trial in the NSW Supreme Court, and reported in *The Australian* on 19 February 2005 that after making suicide threats in 2002, Xu was admitted to the Caritas Centre, an acute-psychiatric unit in NSW.[23] It was here that the hospital noted she had 'thoughts of killing herself and her son … and sees nothing wrong with this'. An interesting aspect of this article is the way Stapleton presented evidence he sourced from the NSW Supreme Court trial. He portrayed Xu as having acted in a calculated manner when she drowned her son, and then overlooked any further discussion on the perpetrator's mental culpability in committing this crime. Stapleton reported that:

> [Xu left] a note for her mother that said they would not be returning home to their western Sydney unit. 'We are not coming back home. Please look after yourself. Just treat it as if we'd had an accident. I've really had enough', the note said.

Stapleton reported that Justice David Kirby oversaw this trial and accepted the evidence of two forensic psychiatrists that Xu 'was suffering [from] a major depressive illness' at the time of the murder. This conclusion was reported by Stapleton but not given the subsequent analysis and discussion it deserved, and that I suspect it would have received had the perpetrator been a father. Instead of a debate about the mental health of the perpetrator, as was present in the case of Arthur Freeman, Stapleton concluded by using mental illness as an explanation for the crime. Stapleton did not point out that these sorts of crimes are extremely rare, and occur in roughly one in a thousand births. He also overlooked evidence that suggests when mothers do kill their children in circumstances like that presented in the cases of Andrea Yates, Christine Gifford, and Dena Schlosser, they often experience acute psychotic symptoms.[24] One could argue that the scarcity of discussion presented in Stapleton's article reflects the Australian legal system's understanding of the killing of children by their parents. Section 6 of the Crimes Act 1958 defines infanticide as follows:[25]

> If a woman carries out conduct that causes the death of her child in circumstances that would constitute murder and, at the time of carrying out the conduct, the balance of her mind was disturbed because of- (a) her not having fully recovered from the effect of giving birth to that child within the preceding 2 years; or (b) a disorder consequent on her giving birth to that child within the preceding 2 years.

This definition is significant because it provides for a defence of infanticide only in cases involving mothers. This suggests the disparate discussions surrounding mental culpability for mothers and fathers who kill their children could be reflective of the understandings of these crimes as they are presented in court.

While there were differences in the way journalists reported on mothers and fathers who took the lives of their children, some common reporting methods were evident across these two categories. The analysis showed that journalists who write about either mothers or fathers who have killed their children tend to use additional examples of what they perceive are cases of mental-health-related violence as a means of adding interesting or valuable content/context to an article. Andrea Yates's case is not used as an exemplar, or as evidence of a broader problem involving PWMI, but the authors

of the editorial published in *The Australian* in 2001 did document other cases where mothers and/or spouses 'got off' using a 'not guilty by reason of mental impairment' defence. The editors reported:

> Lorena Bobbitt, who cut off her husband's penis, got off. Susan Smith, who drowned her two sons by strapping them into the back seat of her car and rolling it into a lake, did not.

This technique was common across many articles in the family violence sample, and I would argue that these stories are used as a means to sensationalize and dramatize a story. Their purpose appears to be not to inform the reader, but to excite and incite.[26]

This analysis of cases where mothers were said to have heard voices that compelled them to harm or kill their children illustrates a clear distinction between two types of reporting: one involving fathers who murder their children, and the other involving mothers. While mental illness was the 'default' position most frequently used by journalists to explain violent crime, the tendency to use this explanation depended on the identity of the perpetrator of the violent act. The notion of 'spousal revenge', preferable in cases involving fathers, was never used in the 22 articles that are the subject of this section of the chapter on mothers, as women were instead portrayed as generally psychotic, hearing voices, or in touch with a God who compelled them to kill their children. One could contextualize these reporting trends in the context of concrete social phenomena: first, that men are incapable of experiencing postpartum psychosis, and second, that men are more likely to be motivated by 'spousal revenge' because they are more often rejected in their quests for custody of their children.[27] But as feminist and writer Elaine Showalter argued in *The Female Malady*, attributing types of mental illness to some form of gendered psychology is a dangerous practice, one that has been common for many centuries and has disadvantaged women through the reinforcement of an 'hysterical' woman narrative.[28] [29] What an analysis of this sample has shown is that journalists have overemphasized a very rare form of psychotic disorder, one that affects women giving birth at a rate somewhere between one in five hundred and one in one thousand. One could safely assume that the percentage of these mothers who act on voices that command them to harm their children is even more rare. Slightly less than half of the 'mothers' sample accounted for women who heard voices. While these articles were accurate in their coverage of events, no piece contained a clear statement referring to the rarity of the case in question, or how it failed to reflect the broader reality of mental illness.

*   *   *

Concluding this section on 'mothers' is an analysis of three newspaper articles that told the story of 31-year-old Louise Scotchmer, who killed her two-week-old son Shane in 1994 and 13-month-old daughter Melissa in 1996.[30] Scotchmer was not charged with these murders until 2001, after she 'drunkenly confessed' the crime to her husband. The three articles that reported on this crime were published in March 2003, two in *The Australian* and one in *The Herald Sun*. An account of this story contrasts with previous articles examined in this chapter, because while the three articles stated that

Scotchmer committed the murders while in a 'disassociated trance-like state', they explored the broader social circumstances involved in the crime, and so framed the killer as a victim.

Vanda Carson wrote in *The Australian* in March 2003 that Scotchmer's brother and husband planned to continue supporting the 31-year-old perpetrator because she had experienced 'a horrible life and needed more support from mental health professionals'. Scotchmer's younger brother, Anthony Gordon, was a central figure in both articles published in *The Australian*, and Carson used Gordon's commentary to structure a large portion of the piece.

> Mr Gordon said the prison system had not been able to provide appropriate treatment for his sister's mental illness since she was detained in September last year [2002]. He said Scotchmer had been physically and sexually abused as a child and had been let down by the mental health system since her first counselling session as a five-year-old.

Vanda Carson also wrote the second article published in *The Australian*. The failing health system was the focus of this article, as the headline read: 'Mental health system "failed" mother jailed for killing babies'. *The Herald Sun* focused on Scotchmer's husband in the same way *The Australian* made use of Scotchmer's brother, Anthony Gordon.

> Mr Scotchmer, 49, said the sentence was unfair and he would support his wife, who engaged in acts of self-harm and was "quite fragile mentally". He said he was able to forgive her "because I don't believe she was in a normal frame of mind when she committed those acts". Mr Scotchmer said the surviving child, Jamie, visited his mother every fortnight.

The analysis presented here considers these three articles as an interwoven mosaic. The backdrop is the research presented to open this section concerning 'emotion work' and traditional interpretations of women's 'natural' role as nurturers and carers. These three articles, and their framing of the Scotchmer case, are placed within the context of that research. It is difficult to comprehend a mother killing her children, but the framing in these articles is such that the mother, the killer, has become the only victim. A quantitative analysis of the type of language used in these three pieces showed that a total of 26 words were dedicated to the two children who died, two-week-old son Shane and 13-month-old daughter Melissa. This is a fraction of the 1055 words devoted to this story. We hear virtually nothing about the children and learn little of their short lives. The overwhelming majority of the content presented to the reader was instead focused on Scotchmer's treatment, the support her family had and continued to provide her, her own history of physical and sexual trauma, and the fact she was 'mentally fragile' and engaging in acts of self-harm.

In cases where a parent takes the life of his/her child, there are multiple victims, yet in the three articles examined above, Scotchmer appears as the sole victim, and the perpetrator is her mental illness. The children Scotchmer killed are mentioned infrequently and are secondary in the framing of this story. This contrasts with those pieces presented in the 'fathers' sample, where the deceased are central figures, and they are remembered: Luke Batty, Darcey Freeman. The fathers are portrayed as lonely, unemployed, mentally ill, and often revenge-driven men with motive. The antithesis of a

victim. In contrast, mental illness in women appears as tragic, and this would perhaps explain the 'victim status' some have received in the articles explored in this chapter. The question 'Was she mad or bad?' is rarely raised because our socio-cultural understanding of women and mothers tells us that no woman in her 'right mind' could take the life of her child. This was most evident in the Scotchmer case, and also John Stapleton's account of Shan Shan Xu, who left a note for her family explaining that she would not return home as she intended to drown herself and her four-year-old son. The intention and calculation evident in this act did not prevent Stapleton from concluding that Shan Shan Xu was suffering from a mental illness at the time of the killing, and that this explains the crime. In men, mental illness is more appalling. Fathers are still described as 'mentally ill' by Australian journalists but are portrayed as colder and more calculated killers, and are more often defined as 'bad'.

Progeny

The final section of this chapter examines 58 articles that presented accounts of sons or daughters who killed their parents. A total of 33 articles from this 'progeny' group were dedicated to four separate murder cases, suggesting that while this sub-sample is much larger than the 'fathers' and 'mothers' groups examined earlier in this chapter, its size is reflective of a more pronounced coverage of these four particular stories in Australian newspapers. These four cases are explored in this section, and they include the stories of Mark Briscoe, a 'criminally insane killer' who took the life of his father 'with a cane knife' and five years later escaped from a Brisbane mental health facility; Kylie Fitter, the 15-year-old girl who helped her older brother and father kill her mother in the New South Wales town of Glossodia in October 2001; Malcolm Robert Potts, a 'paranoid schizophrenic' who killed his father following an argument over a birthday present; and Anthony Waterlow, another 'paranoid schizophrenic' who killed both his father and his sister. I begin with the story of Mark Briscoe, his 'escape' from a Brisbane mental health facility in January 2002, and the mostly Queensland-based reporting that followed.

In the 'fathers' section of this chapter, I examined the ways in which journalists used individual cases of extreme family violence as exemplars for broader social problems. This was particularly evident in the case of the Bribie Island father who raped and murdered his 10-year-old daughter, which was portrayed by journalists as the result of a neglected health system, one that had failed to control a violent individual. In the 'progeny' sample, one particular case mirrored this method, and it could be argued sparked a moral panic about community safety in Queensland. Between January 2002 and February 2003, eight articles reported on 'criminally insane killer' Mark Briscoe and his escape from a Brisbane mental health facility, with seven of these published in *The Courier-Mail*, and one in *The Australian*.[31] Mark Briscoe went missing on 18 January 2002 for a total of 83 hours after being last seen eating lunch at Wolston Park mental health facility in Brisbane.

Slightly short of a non-event, Briscoe never left the grounds of the facility. Wayne Smith reported for *The Courier-Mail* on 24 January 2002 that Briscoe appeared to have taken refuge in a cricket pavilion before he was found.

> A fellow patient saw him there and telephoned The Hub … where two registered nurses and an enrolled nurse were on duty. They immediately called the three rostered security staff who quickly made their way to Jacaranda House. Not finding Briscoe there, they looked outside and saw him about 100m away on a grassed area … 'Mark, where are you going?' one of them called. Briscoe stopped, turned, and then came over to them. There was no violence used by or against him and he walked meekly with nurses and security staff to the vehicle that took him to the high security unit. He told staff he was sorry he had caused them any concern but had wanted to spend some time alone.

The journalist, Wayne Smith, described the Wolston Park Hospital grounds as 320 hectares in size, and when we consider that the Melbourne Cricket Ground playing surface spans 7.25 hectares, one can appreciate the ease with which individuals could go wandering in search of solitude. Smith's account of the event suggests Briscoe meant no harm and was perhaps just seeking some time alone.

Briscoe never left the hospital's grounds, yet the coverage in response to this event was alarmist and fear inducing. Three articles published in the days following his 'escape' and 'recapture' described Briscoe as a 'criminally insane killer', three as a 'mentally ill killer', and two as 'a paranoid schizophrenic', descriptions in stark contrast with *Mindframe's* guidelines for mental health reporting.[32] To compound this prescribed identity were the descriptions of the crime committed by Briscoe in 1997, which lead to his admission to Wolston Park. Two articles published in *The Courier-Mail* in 2002 reported that 'he beheaded his father with a cane knife', Chris Jones described Briscoe as 'a paranoid schizophrenic who hacked off his clergyman father's head', while *The Australian* stated more plainly that '[Briscoe] killed his father with a cane knife'. A cane knife is similar to a machete, and to be beheaded is to have one's head completely separated from his/her body. The effect of the language used by journalists reporting on this case is to convey a barbaric and brutal crime. A description of the brutality of the crime solidifies the legitimacy of the community safety narrative being presented in these articles; the more dangerous the man who committed the murder, the more reason to fear for public safety. The language used by journalists who reported on this case reinforced the supposed danger Briscoe posed to the general public.

And so upon the descriptive foundations of a barbaric murder that took place five years earlier the journalists framed their story about Briscoe's escape from a Brisbane mental health facility around the issue of public safety. *The Courier-Mail* noted that 'understandably, the community was alarmed by Briscoe's disappearance'. Chris Jones drew on Premier Peter Beattie's response to the event, framing his comments in the context of concerns for public safety, saying 'Mr Beattie conceded there was no way to guarantee another criminally insane killer would not escape'. Paula Doneman's response in *The Courier-Mail* (2002) mirrored Jones's.

> While the Beattie Government has been using the soon-to-be implemented Mental Health Act as a shield to fend off criticism over the escapes, the truth is these provisions will not stop another determined killer from absconding.

This fear of determined killers undermining a neglected health system was drawn on and reinforced in articles examined earlier in this chapter, particularly in the cases of the unnamed Bribie Island father, who raped and murdered his daughter, and Greg Anderson, who killed his son. Wayne Smith's article published in *The Courier-Mail* in January 2002 reported that 'from the community's viewpoint, the primary issue is not how such patients are returned but how they come to be in a position to go missing'. The tone of all of these articles, coupled with descriptions of Briscoe's act as an 'escape' and 'recapture' situation, created a sense of an animal on the loose, one with the capability of inflicting indiscriminate violence on an unsuspecting public. Remember that Briscoe never left the health facility in which he spent all his time. He was not violent towards staff when he was found, nor was it necessary to use violence against him as a form of control.

To compound and reinforce this emphasis on community safety and the threat Briscoe posed, three of the eight articles from the Briscoe sample mentioned a man by the name of Claude John Gabriel, described by *The Courier-Mail* on 25 January 2002 as 'another mentally ill killer' who had escaped from a Queensland mental health facility, drew life savings from his bank account, and fled overseas.[33] Paul Wilson's piece, published in *The Courier-Mail* on 29 January 2002, entitled 'Insanity in sanity rules', is representative of the three articles that reported on Mark Briscoe's 'escape' and also mentioned Gabriel. As was a common theme in each of these articles, Wilson did not describe the murder Gabriel committed, when it happened, how it took place, who his victim/s were, or why his violent actions were relevant to the story of Mark Briscoe. Overlooking these details, Paul Wilson portrayed Gabriel as simply another mentally ill killer 'at large', posing a threat to the safety of Queenslanders, and again, further evidence of a problem with the Queensland health system and its inability to control offenders suffering from a mental illness. Wilson reported that 'only time will tell whether he [Gabriel] will act violently again', and concluded later in his article:

> The public might not care about mentally ill people in prison, believing that as they are locked up, they are not a threat. But 99 per cent of these prisoners will eventually be released, having received minimal treatment while in prison … some of these released prisoners will undoubtedly turn to committing terrible acts of violence.

Remember that this detail was presented in the context of the story of Mark Briscoe, a man who never left the grounds of Wolston Park hospital, where he had been confined since killing his father in 1997. Earlier in this chapter I included a brief account of the crime committed by Lorena Bobbitt, who 'cut off her husband's penis', and showed how this story was used in an article that reported on the crime of Andrea Yates as a means of adding interesting or sensational content to a story, perhaps for the intention of engaging, enraging, inciting, and exciting the reader. While there are some apparent similarities between the stories of Gabriel and Briscoe – both were killers confined within Queensland mental health facilities – the inclusion of Gabriel's story appeared to be for the purpose of solidifying the relevance of a community safety narrative, and, like the case of Lorena Bobbitt, for sensationalizing the story. Both were portrayed as having 'escaped' and so undermined the effectiveness of the Queensland health system, and both were presented as a danger to the general

public because they had killed before. But Briscoe never escaped from Wolston Park Hospital, in fact, he never even left its grounds.

The analysis presented in this section does not disprove the existence of any past or present issues in the Queensland mental health system. Gabriel's escape from Australia certainly raises some questions about how those diagnosed with mental illness are treated and cared for in this country, but given the lack of detail presented by journalists in the three articles where Gabriel was mentioned, one finds it difficult to make a judgment on the relevance of his story. The reality of this case is that Briscoe never left the grounds of Wolston Park. He was not violent, posed no threat, and hid in a cricket pavilion for the 83 hours he 'went missing'. Journalists took this event and turned it into a broader story about a crisis in Queensland, involving 'determined killers' absconding from mental health facilities, and the danger they pose to an unsuspecting public. The story of Claude Gabriel was presented to solidify this narrative and aid its legitimacy.

The articles published between January 2002 and February 2003 are an exhibition in the construction of newspaper reporting, and the inclination for some writers to preference certain types of information to inform a preferred narrative. There is no denying Briscoe's crime in 1997 was barbaric and abhorrent. To kill one's own father is a crime that provokes justified disbelief. But his actions five years later too quickly became a story of public safety when I argue that no threat to public safety was apparent. This argument offers support for Warwick Blood's concluding analysis relating to this period of reporting on the Briscoe case.[34] The articles analyzed above frame the broad story around notions of fear, danger, and community safety. Briscoe's crime was against his father, and it took place five years prior to these articles being published. Given the available evidence, it could be argued that Briscoe's 'escape' posed no threat to the public at all. He had shown no inclination to cause indiscriminate harm to strangers before, and his disappearance for 83 hours proved uneventful. Despite this, the journalists portrayed Briscoe as an unpredictable and dangerous PWMI. His story was used as an exemplar for a broader social concern, the same way the Bribie Island father was presented as evidence of a failing Queensland health system.

No single article in the sample mentioned that Mark Briscoe is an Indigenous Australian.[35] That he is an Aboriginal man is clearly not relevant to this story, but the exclusion of this information underlines an important aspect of mental health reporting during this period. Briscoe's Aboriginality was judged by the journalists to be superfluous to the discussion, despite it being a core part of Briscoe's identity. Despite this sensitivity, Briscoe was continually labeled a 'criminally insane killer' and 'a paranoid schizophrenic'. His Indigenous identity was replaced with a prescribed identity as an insane killer. Journalists were reluctant in this instance to explain Briscoe's violence and subsequent actions through the prism of his Aboriginality, or any other identifying characteristic relating to gender or class for instance, but were quick to point out that he was 'mentally ill'. I suspect that it is easier to draw on mental illness as a default explanatory device because those who suffer

from mental illness do not identify as a cohesive group with a collective identity. There is no broad population of Australian PWMI aware of each other and working together for common rights and values. There are community mental health organisations like *beyondblue* and *Black Dog* that represent the concerns of mental health advocates, but when a journalist reports on a 'criminally insane killer', he or she can avoid critique under the guise of dealing with one particular case, and not meaning to address PWMI broadly. In contrast, Indigenous Australians are identified as the original owners of the land once known as Gondwana, with a rich cultural history.[36] They fight for common issues and often operate as a collective. I suspect journalists are aware of this collective presence when they tell stories about Indigenous Australians. That the individual struggles privately, and is reluctant to identity as part of a broader group (often through fear of being stigmatized), can make it easier for journalists to use mental illness as an explanation for violent criminal behaviour. For who will respond for those diagnosed or being treated for mental illness?

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The second case explored in this section illustrates again how journalists seem to use mental illness to explain brutal crimes, even when this explanation appears insufficient. It also sheds light on the challenges journalists can face when constrained by sub-judice law. While the following analysis continues to explore the narratives that Australian journalists draw on or reinforce when they tell their stories about PWMI, reporters face restrictions on what they can and cannot publish when a case is before a judge, and these restrictions are explored briefly in this section as they have important implications for this second progeny case: the story of Malcolm Robert Potts.

A particular crime is considered sub-judice when it is 'before a judge', and sub-judice law is in place to prevent journalists publishing material that prejudices a fair trial, with punishment ranging from small fines to imprisonment.[37] In England and Wales, sub-judice law is applied when a case is 'imminent', so when a crime has been committed but the suspect has not been apprehended, while in Australia the threshold is 'pending', meaning that until an individual has been charged, journalists can report on a case and any relevant details without consequence. So in the days before the apprehension of a suspect, journalists are free to document background information regarding the alleged offender and any additional details, such as criminal history or mental health status, identified as in the public's interest. As soon as that individual is charged, sub-judice law applies and journalists are restricted to documenting the facts of the case as they are presented in court.

These laws can be ignored as journalists and the publications they work for often weigh up the likely consequences of publishing material that breaches sub-judice law against the boost to circulation likely to result from the story. Margaret Simons has written about this extensively, arguing that in the case of Arthur Freeman – the man charged with the murder of his four-year-old

daughter after he threw her from the West Gate Bridge in 2009 – sub-judice laws were neither considered nor applied.[38]

> News reports have identified him [Freeman] by photograph – and in some cases, address – identified the family as parties in a family court dispute, identified his remaining children, who may be witnesses in the case, speculated on his mental state.

Simons argues that a consistent application of sub-judice law is necessary to govern how all media outlets operate.[39] While journalists felt free to publish details related to Arthur Freeman while the matter was before a judge, Derryn Hinch was jailed on 3 October 2013 for breaching sub-judice law after he published details of the background and prior criminal history of Adrian Ernest Bailey, the man jailed for the murder of Jill Meagher in the early hours of 22 September 2012.[40] Pia Akerman reported in *The Australian* that Hinch published tweets and blog entries that were viewed 797 times across a four-day period, and while Hinch argued 'I don't think I've done anything wrong', Justice Kaye responded that it was 'necessary to state that trial by media is anathema to our liberal democratic democracy'.

The topic of sub-judice contempt will be revisited in this section (and in subsequent chapters) as I analyze content presented by journalists derived from court transcripts. If a case is before a judge, the journalist is restricted to reporting only on the facts presented within the courtroom. This constrains journalists from engaging in deeper discussion and speculation about possible motives and likely causes of a crime. It restricts anyone from discussing the mental health history of an alleged killer if this is not a matter raised in court proceedings. It also allows for the identification of the accused as a PWMI, but then restricts the journalist from providing additional content if it is not raised before a jury.

The one newspaper article that detailed the case of Malcolm Robert Potts contained similar reporting techniques to those that were described in the analysis of the Mark Briscoe case.[41] Brad Clifton reported for *The Daily Telegraph* in 2002 that 'an argument over a son's failure to buy his father a worthwhile birthday present ended with one of the men being stabbed to death'. The accused, Malcolm Robert Potts, was described by Clifton as a 'paranoid schizophrenic'. After giving his father an unsatisfactory birthday present, and being insulted for doing so, Potts 'threw a shopping trolley at [him]' and sprayed him with a can of insecticide.

The language used in this particular article published in *The Daily Telegraph* was detailed and unambiguous. The purpose of describing the shopping trolley and can of insecticide as weapons was unclear, but the effect was to dramatize the event that took place. The fact the argument preceding the murder was based on a birthday present trivializes the death of the father, encouraging the reader to view the event as abnormal and exceedingly violent given the circumstances. The assertion was that the killer must have been insane. The journalist concluded that 'the jury would be satisfied that Mr Potts [the perpetrator] was suffering from an abnormality of mind at the time of the

killing'. The distinction I am about to make is an important one. It is reasonable to assume that no individual is of completely sound mind when they take the life of another human being. But there is a distinction between being diagnosed with an acute psychotic disorder and acting insanely in a fit of rage. There is much grey area, and much is lost in the black and white discussion that often takes place in courtrooms around the notion of mental culpability; discussions which are then repeated in newspapers. Mr Potts took the life of his father and was clearly very angry, potentially psychotic. But whether he suffered from a mental illness at the time of the killing, and whether his story is representative of the broader experience of most PWMI, must certainly be questioned.

What was clear from the article was that more information about the circumstances surrounding the murder was required. As was evident in the articles that detailed the murders of Luke Batty and Darcey Freeman, the inclusion of one alleged diagnosis of mental illness does little to explain the extreme events that took place. In the case of Mr Potts, Brad Clifton offered a description of the trigger for the event – a disappointing birthday present – and two of the weapons involved in the attack, these being a shopping trolley and a can of insecticide. What these details suggest is a complex and tempestuous relationship between a father and his son, perhaps living on the margins of society. Certainly the presence of a shopping trolley in the family home indicates some issues within the relationship that may have class origins. More contextual information is required, and this is something lacking in Clifton's account, one suspects as a result of the restrictions placed on journalists by sub-judice law. Clifton quoted Crown Prosecutor Terry Thorpe, who stated 'Malcolm Potts is mentally ill … and has been since 1985'. The presence of a mental illness that had persisted since 1985 was insufficient to explain the death of a father at the hand of his son. One must ask, if mental illness was the primary motivation in this crime, why had it not happened sooner?

The story of Malcolm Robert Potts illustrates both the need for improvement in some reporting methods, but also the constraints that are placed on journalists telling mental health stories that are also the subject of criminal proceedings in courts. Clifton's description of Potts as a 'paranoid schizophrenic' reinforces the public's misunderstanding of mental illness as a life sentence. A more suitable choice of words might have been to describe Potts as 'an individual being treated for, or diagnosed with, paranoid schizophrenia', a description that separates the individual from their illness. Setting aside these concerns with language, Brad Clifton was clearly restricted in reporting only those facts that were subject to scrutiny within the court. I questioned earlier the lack of contextual information surrounding the murder, particularly a closer inspection of the history of the relationship between the deceased and his son. But sub-judice law constrained Clifton's ability to provide these additional details and explore this case in-depth. While the article was still sensationalized, and the focus on a birthday present trivialized the murder of a father by his son, Clifton reported the facts of the case as they were presented in court.

This analysis illustrates the subtle flaws inherent in relying on court transcripts to tell a complete story for publication in newspapers. Clifton was restricted to providing basic details regarding murder weapons, and barely any contextual or historical information. While Clifton has adhered to sub-judice guidelines, his piece represents a fitting illustration of what the finished product can look like, and its effects on broader society's perceptions of those diagnosed or being treated for mental illness.

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The third case 'progeny' case explored in this section was detailed in six articles published between August 2002 and March 2009 and described the murder of Fiona Fitter by her 'estranged husband and two teenaged children'.[42] Two of these articles were published in 2002 in the months immediately following the killing, while the other four articles were published between 2006 and 2009, and shifted the focus from the circumstances surrounding the crime to the rights of Fiona's daughter, Kylie, who was involved in the murder and had been a resident of a mental health facility since her mother's death.

Fiona Fitter's death took place in the town of Glossodia in New South Wales on 16 October 2001, and can only be described as a brutal and cruel murder of a mother at the hands of her immediate family. Both articles published in 2002, in the months immediately following the killing, presented mental illness as an explanation for the violent crime. Lorna Knowles's description of the event, published in *The Daily Telegraph*, was representative of both articles.

> The victim came home from work. Neighbours said they saw her run screaming across the road, with her son in pursuit. She sought refuge in a neighbour's house but the two men – her son holding two carving knives in the shape of a cross – kicked the front door in and chased her outside. Witnesses said they saw the trio kick her on the ground … the daughter held both her mother's legs, while the husband and son bashed and stabbed her.

This crime is unfathomable, and one can empathize with the difficulty faced by journalists who have to report on a murder this horrific. But it appears that the challenge in describing this sort of case can overwhelm a journalist's inclination to explore the broader social circumstances involved in the crime, a problem further compounded by sub-judice restrictions that were in place when Knowles wrote this article. Knowles explained that the mother was killed because her husband and two children 'believed she was a devil-worshipping witch', and all three would later plead not guilty 'by reason of mental illness' in the NSW Supreme Court. The husband was described as a 40-year-old 'cannabis dependent paranoid schizophrenic', his son, 18 years of age, 'had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and drug-induced psychosis', and his daughter 'had learning difficulties and suffered depression'.

It is unclear how relevant or reliable these diagnoses were at the time this article was published. In considering the unnamed daughter's contribution to her mother's death, 'depression and learning difficulties' are insufficient to explain such actions. For the victim's son, a diagnosis of

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder could never properly explain or justify an individual's propensity for violence, and yet mental illness was still used by Knowles to explain the murder. The last line of the 384-word piece reported that 'the hearing [would] continue on Thursday', suggesting Knowles faced the same restriction as was faced by those journalists who reported on the murder committed by Malcolm Robert Potts, described in the previous section. This is a clear example of the restrictions of sub-judice law hindering a journalist from exploring the broader social circumstances involved in a crime. The murder of a woman by her husband and two children represents the most extreme form of ritualistic violence, and could not legitimately be portrayed as a natural outcome of mental illness. Knowles alluded to the fact that both the father and the son had been abusing drugs and that this could have induced a psychosis that lead to the killing. A broader discussion of the links between drug abuse and mental illness might have been helpful for understanding why this crime took place. Its exclusion from the piece – one assumes because of sub-judice constraints – left mental illness as the only plausible explanation for the event.

Like those journalists who reported on the Mark Briscoe case, Lorna Knowles made the decision to include details of the murder weapons and how they were used by the perpetrators in the killing. These were a 'large carving knife' held by the son in the shape of a cross, and 'a pair of surgical scissors', which were inserted up the victim's nose and 'into her brain'. How useful these details were for the reader's understanding of the event is unclear and I argue that their inclusion only added to the sense of horror and terror that this story conveyed. Taken together, the events and details at the center of this article resemble the plot of a horror film. While this murder did take place, the extent to which it conveyed an image of the reality of mental illness is questionable, and Knowles appears to have been restricted by sub-judice law from engaging in a broader discussion surrounding the circumstances of the crime, and why it took place.

The four articles published between April 2006 and March 2009 shifted the focus away from the horrific murder, and focused on the rights of Kylie Fitter, the 20-year-old daughter of the deceased victim. All four of these pieces were published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, with three written by Adele Horin and one by health reporter Louise Hall. Unrestrained by the sub-judice restrictions faced by Lorna Knowles when she reported on this case in 2002, Horin's three articles described some of the broader circumstances involved in Fiona Fitter's murder, and campaigned for the rights of one of her killers, her youngest daughter. Two of Horin's articles were significant in length; one was 1162 words and the other was 2506. Both described Kylie Fitter as a 'prisoner', both of 'her past' and of 'the state'. They also portrayed the young woman as a victim.

> Kylie was as much a victim as her beloved mother. A victim three times over: of an upbringing that made her unfit for the world, of a psychotic father and brother, and now of political expediency.

Throughout the article, Horin provided the details that Knowles was unable to offer when she reported on this case during the Supreme Court trial in 2002. She explained that Kylie Fitter's father

was the primary source of her anguished upbringing, and had filled 'her head with extreme Christian beliefs'. He was described by Horin as 'passionate about God and his family', and had 'suffered mild psychosis' at different points during his life. Unrestrained by sub-judice restrictions, Horin was then able to present a fuller account of the challenges Kylie faced as a child.

> Both Kylie's parents suffered abuse as children. Out of love for their children, they kept them close and fiercely protected. They moved a lot; there were several schools, and charismatic churches. By 13 Kylie was on Prozac. She left school at 14, a social misfit, believing she was stupid, and in isolation filled her days with computer games. Her brother was spiraling into schizophrenia, hearing "demons' voices" and becoming fixated on harming his mother.

These details suggest Kylie's upbringing was abnormal, and present the reader with insight into the broader social circumstances involved in the crime that took place in October 2001. A significant portion of the article was also dedicated to the challenges faced by Kylie's father, who was portrayed as having the greatest responsibility for the murder of Fiona Fitter, his former wife. Horin explained that the unnamed father lost his job in 1999 because of a back injury and that the ongoing pain caused by this injury had informed his abuse of cannabis as a form of self-medication. Horin stated that 'for a devout Christian his heavy drug use was bizarre and it triggered outlandish behaviour'. He was known to have shared joints in the back shed of their home with his son, and he collected knives (though for what purpose was not made clear by the journalist). To consolidate the portrayal of Kylie as another victim of this crime, Horin concluded that 'there were good days and bad … [Kylie's] father and brother lived in their shared world of demons, angels and paranoid delusions'.

The piece was detailed and well written. Adele Horin used this additional contextual information about Kylie's childhood to campaign for her release. In a shorter piece she wrote for *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 18 September 2006, Horin described Fitter as being 'held prisoner by politics', and gave attention in the article to Ms Fitter's advocate, Bob Johnston, who stated that 'Kylie is a virtual political prisoner because of the minister's concern that releasing her would damage the Government in the [upcoming] election'. In March 2009, Louise Hall reported for *The Sydney Morning Herald* that the laws surrounding this issue had changed, and that 'people who are declared unfit for trial or not guilty because of mental illness will no longer be detained or released "at the Governor's pleasure", following widespread concern that patients' detention was being continued unfairly for populist or political reasons'. It would be bold to assume Horin's campaigning for Kylie Fitter's release – documented across three articles – led to this change in law, but one could assume her articles brought this issue to the attention of the public. It is also unclear why the same conversations were not applied to the brother and father, who were also described as PWMI, but were not named in later articles or given the same attention as Kylie. Adele Horin interviewed Kylie and described her in an article published on 29 April 2006 in *The Sydney Morning Herald* as follows:

> She is so gentle and polite as she offers tea and biscuits in a child-like voice that it defies imagination Kylie Fitter helped kill her mother in a crime of biblical proportions. Seated in the living room of an inner-city terrace, the willowy, 20-year-old spun-sugar blonde, sweetness itself, is out on weekend leave from jail. But in the view of her many supporters, Kylie is a political prisoner.

Remember that in later descriptions of the brother and father, also published by Horin in 2006, the two 'lived in a shared world of demons, angels and paranoid delusions'. According to Adele Horin, Kylie 'lost capacity for rational thought and came to share the delusions of her father and brother' who believed Fiona Fitter was evil, and that she 'drank babies' blood'. Kylie was presented in these articles as separate to her delusional brother and father, and the victim of their paranoid thinking.

The purpose of this analysis has been two-fold. First, it offers insight into the potentially negative consequences of the constraints placed on journalists by sub-judice law. In Lorna Knowles's article, published during the Supreme Court trial in 2002, the journalist's ability to engage in discussion and commentary was limited, and as a result, mental illness was presented as a simple explanatory device for the killing, an explanation I argue was insufficient given the nature of the crime. In contrast, the four articles published between 2006 and 2009 were not constrained by sub-judice law, and so engaged in broader questioning of the social circumstances that led to Fiona Fitter's murder, in particular, the links between religion, the abuse of illicit drugs and alcohol, and paranoid and delusional thinking. While the articles still described the perpetrators as 'mentally ill', the reader was presented with a more complex (and more thorough) account of how such an abhorrent murder could take place. Second, the four articles published between 2006 and 2009 portrayed Kylie Fitter as a 'victim' of multiple circumstances: a victim of her father's delusional thinking, a victim of her upbringing, and a victim of the state. For reasons not apparent to the researcher, no articles were published about Kylie Fitter's brother, and the effect an unsatisfactory upbringing had on his young adult life. He was presented as a problematic figure in young Kylie's life, and a 'schizophrenic' who smoked cannabis with her father in the back shed of their home in Glossodia. Kylie Fitter's status as a victim is justified, but why this description was not extended to her brother and father is difficult to say. If all three perpetrators were PWMI, and this was the principal cause of Fiona Fitter's death, then why were they not all portrayed as victims? No article in the group that reported on this case named the brother or the father, or detailed their fate. This reinforces a pattern identified earlier in the chapter, where mental illness in women is portrayed as tragic, whereas in men it is abhorrent and despicable. Certainly, Fiona Fitter's son and father were portrayed as psychotic, drug dependent, paranoid schizophrenics who acted coldly and brutally. Kylie Fitter was presented as the 15-year-old who had been seduced and hypnotized by their delusional thinking.

*   *   *

The final case explored in this section on 'progeny' is the story of Anthony Waterlow. On 9 November 2009, Sydney-based curator, gallery director, and academic, Nick Waterlow, was killed by his son Anthony, described as a 43-year-old man 'suffering from paranoid schizophrenia'. Eighteen newspaper articles reported on this case and were published between 12 November 2009 and 7 November 2014; eleven in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, four in *The Australian*, two in *The Daily Telegraph*, and one in *The Courier-Mail*.[43] This is the fourth case explored in this section of

the chapter and the purpose of the analysis that follows is to explore the tendency for journalists to document explanations for violent crime that reside outside the individual. I examine the case of Anthony Waterlow and the eighteen newspaper articles devoted to the murders he committed in 2009, and assess the extent to which journalists were willing or able to explore some of the broader social circumstances involved in violent crime committed by individuals described as 'mentally ill'.

Jodie Minus presented a full account of the two murders committed by Anthony Waterlow in a piece published in *The Australian* on 13 April 2011. Minus explained that despite the son killing both his father and sister, there was love in the Waterlow family, and a deep care for the suffering Anthony that persisted 'to the very end'.

> Just moments before his mentally ill son came lunging at him with a 34cm kitchen knife, the 68-year-old cried out "I love you". Anthony, suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, then turned the knife towards his sister, Chloe, who pleaded, "No, don't – stop," as her three young children screamed and cried. Silence descended on the Randwick house, in Sydney's east, for a brief spell as Waterlow, his shirt soaked in blood, walked out the front door … leaving Nick and 37-year-old Chloe on the floor.

A piece published just three days after the killings, at a time when Nick Waterlow had still not been apprehended by police, and so sub-judice restrictions were not applicable, sought to reduce mental health stigma by making it clear that there are no inherent links between violence and mental illness. Rick Feneley reported for *The Sydney Morning Herald* that the revelation that Waterlow 'is a schizophrenic has raised concerns that people with mental illness will be demonised'. Feneley explored some of the structural factors involved in the murders, and so looked beyond a simple explanatory link between mental illness and violence common to many of the articles explored in this chapter. He drew on SANE Australia's deputy director at the time, Paul Morgan, who explained that 'when tragic cases do occur, it perhaps leads people to a mistaken impression that people with mental illness are more violent than they are'. Feneley noted that males aged between 18 and 25 are the most violent group in Australia today, 'but people [do] not live in fear of every young man'.

That Feneley drew on the views of Paul Morgan is significant. SANE Australia is a mental health charity aimed at helping Australians affected by mental illness, both personally and through family, to lead a better life. A significant focus of their campaigning is the reduction of stigma. By including Morgan's expertise and insight, Feneley helped to balance and moderate the obviously horrific crime and its associations with mental illness. Feneley used Morgan's expertise most significantly when he placed emphasis on some of the structural factors involved in the murder.

> Mr Morgan said … there was a "very small but significant" correlation between schizophrenia and an increased risk of violence. "But that is concentrated in people who are generally younger males, who may have a propensity to violence anyway … who are not getting treatment, and especially if they are mixed up in drugs and alcohol". Anthony Waterlow has a history of drug and alcohol abuse, and violence.

This is a clear account of a complex situation. Feneley does not overlook the 'small but significant' link between schizophrenia and the risk of violence, but argues that this correlation is often conflated

with the issues of drug addiction and abuse of alcohol, avoidance of medication, a history of violence and violent episodes, and evidently, gender.

An article written by three authors, David Barrett, Rhett Watson, and Gemma Jones, published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 14 November 2009, explained that Anthony Waterlow was a 'loner' who lived in 'a lonely world'. Barrett, Watson, and Jones explored some of the broader issues involved in the crime, and looked beyond Waterlow's battle with mental illness. They documented a history of physical violence by Waterlow against his family that was compounded and exacerbated by his refusal to take anti-psychotic medication. They explained that as a young man he was officially diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, 'but friends say he refused to take medication … [and] bursts of violence against family members as the delusions gripped him eventually led to court-ordered apprehension violence orders'. His sister, Chloe, who he would later kill after murdering his father, 'had already made it known to others that she feared for the safety of her family' and that he had 'once attacked her in a hotel'. The three journalists documented more cases of violence.

> In 2007 he twice appeared in court. Once for bashing friend and prominent jewelery designer Bridie Lander. He also tried to smash down two doors of neighbours in an Elizabeth Bay block of flats … Even those who have previously been victims of Anthony's violence are loathe to blame him. Instead, there is a feeling that, like too many of the mentally ill, he fell through the cracks.

The purpose of this article, as it was in Feneley's piece, was to explore some of the broader social circumstances involved in the murders committed by Anthony Waterlow. There was some focus on mistakes made by the perpetrator, in particular, Anthony's refusal to take medication to treat his illness, but this was not portrayed so as to apportion blame, but rather, to convey the fullest account of the murders for the reader. The explanatory narrative so often reinforced in articles explored in this chapter was also tempered, with more attention given by Barrett, Watson, and Jones to Waterlow's history of violence, and reluctance to take anti-psychotic medication. This drew emphasis away from a simple cause-effect correlation between mental illness and violence. Anthony Waterlow was instead portrayed as someone who suffered greatly, and perhaps was as much a victim of this story as the deceased family members he killed. The three journalists consolidated this view when they concluded that he had fallen 'through the cracks' of the mental health system.

Conclusion

This chapter was divided into three categories based on the perpetrators of acts of violence that took place in the family setting. These categories were 'fathers', of which there were 24 articles dedicated to the stories of eleven separate men; 'mothers', where 22 articles reported on the stories of 24 mothers who harmed their children; and finally, 'progeny', where a total of 58 articles presented 17 cases of sons or daughter who killed, or planned to kill, one or both of their parents. The argument that unites these three sections is that in cases where violence occurred in the family setting, whether

the perpetrator was a father, a mother, or their sons and/or daughters, Australian journalists used mental illness to explain how and why these crimes took place. But the analysis presented in this chapter has shown that the explanatory mental health narrative, while used in the vast majority of newspaper reports on family violence, was not employed uniformly across all three categories. An analysis of the 'fathers' sample showed that the explanatory narrative was not so readily employed when fathers killed their children. Arthur Freeman threw his daughter 'like a rag doll' from Melbourne's West Gate Bridge on 29 January 2009, but was depicted by Andrea Petrie in *The Age* as 'cold' and 'motivated by spousal revenge', as opposed to suffering from a mental illness that compelled him to commit this act. Four articles that reported on the Freeman case discredited Professor Graham Burrows, described by Petrie as the only psychiatrist to argue during the Supreme Court trial into Darcey Freeman's death that her father did not know what he was doing was wrong when he killed her. Burrows was the principal defence witness in the Freeman trial, and discrediting him had the effect of reinforcing the image of Freeman as an embittered and isolated former husband whose murderous intent was motivated by spousal revenge rather than mental illness.

The 'mothers' sample contained the stories of Andrea Yates, Christine Gifford, Louise Scotchmer, Shan Shan Xu, and Dena Schlosser; women who were depicted by Australian journalists as psychotic, out of control, and even in some cases, animalistic. These were women who were reported to have heard voices and/or messages from God that had compelled them to kill their children. Unique to this 'mothers' sample, and in contrast with the findings presented regarding fathers, the mental health explanatory narrative was reinforced in all cases where mothers had killed their children, and in some instances, the mother was portrayed as the victim. Across those three articles that reported on the double murder committed by Louise Scotchmer against her children, the headlines portrayed Scotchmer as a victim. The first, published in *The Australian*, read 'Mental health system "failed" mother jailed for killing babies'. The other two headlines read: 'Husband to support child-killing wife', and 'Fears for jailed killer mother'. These headlines should be placed in the context of previous cases presented in this chapter relating to fathers who murdered their children. While journalists that reported on the Bribie Island case framed the crime as the result of a neglected health system, this system was only relevant in its inability to control, rather than support, a violent man. The health system let down the 10-year-old daughter and the broader Queensland community, but in the Scotchmer case, journalists argued that the health system 'failed' the mother, and the 'fears' were for the 'jailed killer' as opposed to others. This is a subtle shift in emphasis, and it illustrates a distinction in the way the mental health narrative can be employed when journalists report on mothers and fathers who kill their children. When mothers kill their children, journalists in this sample could not conceive of any other plausible explanation for this crime than the mental health explanation, and I argue that this view is reflective of broader social understandings of the role of women in contemporary western culture, where they are portrayed as natural nurturers and carers. Fathers who kill are portrayed as the antithesis of this ideal. Greg Anderson was alone, isolated, and jobless in the

months that preceded the murder of his son. According to John Silvester, his mental illness was a 'fog' that clouded his judgment, but he acted knowingly and deliberately when he took the life of Luke Batty.

It is the natural inclination of a researcher to consider a sample of newspaper articles as a mosaic, one where an image of a PWMI becomes clear over time. The findings presented in this chapter suggest that journalists do not see their work as part of a broader collective body, for if they did, it would be reasonable to assume that there would be fewer articles documenting the murders committed by mothers, fathers, and progeny against other members of their family. The stories told in this chapter represent a continuation of the history of confining PWMI, albeit in an invisible form. In the years preceding the fifteenth century, the mad were placed on boats and dumped on foreign lands. The seventeenth century saw institutions formerly built for lepers come to house the mad and any other minority that threatened enlightened progress. The twentieth century witnessed the four-walls confinement of the asylum overtaken by the segregation of the doctor-patient relationship and medicalization. This chapter has illustrated the emergence of a complementary form of confinement – that of the stigmatized identity – reinforced through the telling of stories that use mental illness as an explanation for violent crime. In the following chapter, I explore the final three perpetrator categories drawn from the family violence sample. These are 'spouses', 'siblings', and 'extended family'. As was the case in accounts of 'fathers', 'mothers', and 'progeny', nearly all cases involved murder, and journalists used mental illness more frequently than any other device to account for how and why these crimes took place.

[1] The 24 articles that documented stories where a father or stepfather killed or harmed his own children included the cases of eleven separate men. Four were named and these men were William McGarrity, Arthur Freeman, Greg Anderson, and Douglas D'Aloisio. The remaining seven fathers were unnamed.

[2] An amended version of this chapter was published in Jennifer Martin's *Mental Health Policy, Practice, and Service Accessibility in Contemporary Society*, in 2019. Teague, S, & Robinson, P 2019, 'Violence: mental health, family, and media reporting', in Jennifer M. Martin (ed.), *Mental Health Policy, Practice and Service Accessibility in Contemporary Society*, IGI Global, USA.

[3] The three articles published in *The Courier-Mail* were 'Bribie tragedy "not the last"', written by Margaret Wenham and Janelle Mills (published 25 April 2009); 'SYSTEM FAILURE – Warnings ignored before man raped and killed daughter', written by Margaret Wenham (published 21 April 2009); and an editorial entitled 'Sensible call on mental health policy' (published 8 January 2008); The two articles published in *The Australian* were an editorial entitled 'LESSONS MUST COME FROM TRAGEDY' (published 4 January 2008); and 'Fury over mentally ill man's release', written by Andrew Fraser (published 4 January 2008).

[4] The Victorian Law Reform Commission conducted a study in 2003 which found that the public's belief that the mental impairment defence is used both frequently and successfully is a misconception. In 2003, a total of nine Victorian cases saw a successful mental impairment defence, and in seven of these, the offender was suffering from a psychotic illness characterized by hallucinations or delusions. Wondemaghen (2013) uses the case of Arthur Freeman as an example of the difficulty faced in successfully pleading 'not guilty by reason of mental impairment', particularly when an offender is found to be depressed, but not psychotic. The details for these two studies are:
Victorian Law Reform Commission 2003, 'Defences to homicide: Options paper', Victoria, Australia, available at http://www.lawreform.vic.gov.au/sites/default/_les/OptionsPaperFINALsmallersize.pdf)
Wondemaghen, M 2013, 'Depressed but not legally mentally impaired', *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, vol. 37, pp. 160-167.

[5] Parliament of Australia 2017, 'Chapter thirteen – mental health and the criminal justice system', Available at https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Former_Committees/mentalhealth/report/c13

[6] Silvester, J 2014, 'Alone, jobless and mentally ill: a dad's road to murder', published in *The Age* on 15 February 2014.

[7] *Mindframe's* guidelines for mental health reporting recommend using language that separates an individual from their experience of mental illness. For example, describing a man as 'having been diagnosed and treated for paranoid schizophrenia' is a more sensitive description than using the description 'a paranoid schizophrenic'. In this chapter, and those that follow, where I analyze the articles that make up this sample, I have chosen to preserve the use of the phrase 'the mentally ill' when it has been used by the journalist whose reporting is the subject of examination.

[8] *The Age* 2014, 'A bereft mother's insightful message', published 15 February 2014.

[9] Three articles that reported on the death of Darcey Freeman were published in *The Age*. These were 'Fears new law will shield killers', written by Steve Lillebuen and Rania Spooner (published 22 August 2014); 'Expert witness in Freeman case should be sacked: MP',

written by Selma Milovanovic (published 12 May 2011); and 'This little girl lost', written by Andrea Petrie (published 29 March 2011). *The Herald Sun* published the fourth article in this sub-sample, entitled 'Board probes claims', written by Lucie van den Berg (published 23 June 2011).

[10] Hochschild, AR 1979, 'Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 85, no. 3, pp. 551-575; Levinger, G 1964, 'Task and social behaviour in marriage', *Sociometry*, vol. 27, pp. 433-448.

[11] Erickson, RJ 2005, 'Why emotion work matters: sex, gender, and the division of household labor', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 67, pp. 337-351.

[12] Erickson, *emotion work*, p. 338.

[13] Erickson, *emotion work*, p. 338.

[14] Erickson, *emotion work*, p. 340.

[15] Cohen, A 2012, '10 years later, the tragedy of Andrea Yates', *The Atlantic*, published 11 March 2012, Available at https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/03/10-years-later-the-tragedy-of-andrea-yates/254290/

[16] One editorial was published in *The Australian*, entitled 'Mama's deadly state of mind', (published 6 December 2001). The second article reporting on the Andrea Yates case was published in *The Herald Sun*, entitled 'Killer's husband blamed', written by Damon Johnston, (published 20 March 2002).

[17] American Psychiatric Association 2013, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*, Arlington, VA, American Psychiatric Association.

[18] The story of Farquharson's murder of his three young boys, and the subsequent trial in the Victorian Supreme Court, were detailed in Helen Garner's *This House of Grief*. Farquharson's actions were portrayed as either deliberate, or the result of an illness known as cough syncope, which Farquharson argued caused him to pass out momentarily while he was driving his car, with his sons in the back. For Helen Garner, and the Supreme Court trial, Farquharson's mental health was not relevant as a potential cause for the crime.

[19] These two articles, both written by Zoe Taylor, and published under the title 'God told me to kill daughter', were published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 31 July 2004. Both were retained in the sample because one article was 129 words and the other was 268.

[20] The article published in *The Australian* by an unnamed author was entitled 'Jesus told me to kill my baby', (published 16 December 2004).

[21] Dena Schlosser later became a roommate of Andrea Yates at North Texas State Hospital.

[22] Written by Marea le Rade, this article was published in *The Australian* under the title 'Darkness invisible', on 17 May 2003.

[23] Written by John Stapleton, this article was published in *The Australian* under the title 'Mentally ill mum cleared of murdering son', on 19 February 2005.

[24] Wondemaghen, M 2013, 'Depressed but not legally mentally impaired', *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, vol. 37, pp. 160-167.

[25] FindLaw Australia 2017, 'Infanticide', Available at www.findlaw.com.au/articles/5356/infanticide.aspx

[26] Uribe, R, & Gunter, B 2007, 'Are 'sensational' news stories more likely to trigger viewers' emotions than non-sensational news stories?', *European Journal of Communication*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 207-228. Uribe and Gunter's study found that crime stories and political stories (to a lesser extent) were more likely than other stories to elicit an emotional reaction in consumers of news. This supports my argument throughout this study that sensational news stories sells.

[27] The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that in 1997, there were 978,000 Australian children living with one natural parent and who had a natural parent living elsewhere. The vast majority (88%) lived with their natural mother in either one-parent families (68%) or in step or blended families (20%). More details can be found at http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/49D8FA47B11000CACA2570EC00111F17?opendocument

[28] Showalter, E 1987, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*, Virago, London.

[29] Scull, A 2009, *Hysteria*, Oxford University Press, New York.

[30] Two of these articles were published in *The Australian*. The first was written by Vanda Carson and published under the title 'Fears for jailed killer mother' on 28 March 2003. The second was also written by Vanda Carson, and was entitled 'Mental health system 'failed' mother for killing babies', published on 28 March 2003. The third article that documented Scotchmer's crime was published in *The Herald Sun* on 28 March 2003, under the title 'Husband to support his child-killing wife'.

[31] Seven of these eight articles were published in *The Courier Mail*: Paula Doneman's 'Great escape act', published on 23 January 2002; 'A balance between care and concern', published on 25 January 2002 (no author); Chris Jones's 'Mental patient revamp pledge', published on 26 January 2002; Chris Jones's 'Mental illness warning', published on 26 January 2002; Paul Wilson's 'Insanity in sanity rules', published on 29 January 2002; 'Mentally ill need help, not hysteria', published on 2 February 2002 (no author); and Deborah Cassrels's 'I hear voices', published on 16 February 2002. One article was published in *The Australian* on 26 January 2002, entitled 'Drug-driven insanity 'a crime threat' (no author). It is intriguing that in the fifteen months prior to Briscoe's story breaking in January 2002, *The Courier-Mail* published just five articles containing both search terms 'mental illness' and 'mentally ill'. Within three weeks, the same publication rapidly increased its involvement in state-level mental health discussion. That this media attention was built upon a persistent publication of stories involving a 'criminally insane killer' who 'beheaded his clergyman father' suggests that journalists writing for *The Courier-Mail* during this period were only inclined to discuss mental health when the story was certain to be dramatic, and based largely on violence and the threat of violent crime.

[32] *Mindframe* offers an extensive description of responsible reporting methods for articles that deal with mental health issues and topics. It also covers the techniques used by journalists that are most discriminatory and negligent. These guidelines are available at http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-media/reporting-mental-illness

[33] These three pieces were Paula Doneman's 'Great escape act', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 23 January 2002; 'A balance between care and concern', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 25 January 2002; and Paul Wilson's 'Insanity in sanity rules', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 29 January 2002.

[34] Blood, RW 2002, 'A qualitative analysis of the reporting and portrayal of mental illness in the *Courier Mail* and *Sunday Mail*, December 2001 to February 2002', *Public Advocates Office*, Melbourne.

[35] This fact was documented in Blood's analysis of this reporting period in Queensland newspapers.

[36] Blainey, G 2015, *The Story of Australia's People: The Rise and Fall of Ancient Australia*, Viking, Melbourne. Blainey's account of Indigenous Australia's rich cultural history informed the argument presented here.

[37] Pearson, M, & Polden, M 2011, *The Journalist's Guide to Media Law*, Allen & Unwin, NSW.

[38] Simons, M 2009, 'A bridge too far in sub judice contempt', *Crikey*, Available at http://www.crikey.com.au/2009/02/03/a-bridge-too-far-in-sub-judice-contempt/

[39] Simons, M 2005, 'Finally, some scrutiny of contempt law', *The Age*, Available at http://www.theage.com.au/news/business/finally-some-scrutiny-of-contempt-law/2005/10/23/1130005992533.html. Simons explains that there is great difficulty faced in teaching young journalists about contempt law, stating 'I train journalists working in the industry, and find it nearly impossible to sensibly instruct them. Teach what the textbooks say, and the reporters come back with copies of that day's newspapers in which leading journalists have done the exact opposite'. She notes that in the David Hookes

[40] Akerman, P 2013, 'Derryn Hinch found guilty of breaching court order', *The Australian*, Available at http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/media/derryn-hinch-guilty-of-breaching-court-order/news-story/ad2e4b9022e0889bcf32fbf5c9290fc5

[41] Brad Clifton's piece is entitled 'Fatal birthday stabbing – Father belittled son's presents, court told'. This article was published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 2 June 2001.

[42] Four of these articles were published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. These include 'Kylie's trauma: prisoner of state and family', written by Adele Horin (published 29 April 2006); 'At 15: Kylie killed her mother. The demons are gone, but she's still a prisoner of her past', written by Adele Horin (published 29 April 2006); 'Woman held prisoner by politics, claims carer', written by Adele Horin (published 18 September 2006); and Louise Hall's 'Fate of mentally ill taken from hands of politicians', (published 21 March 2009). One article was published in *The Daily Telegraph*, and one in *The Courier-Mail*. In order, these were: Lorna Knowles's '"Devil woman" murdered – Children, estranged husband "insane"', (published 13 August 2002); Lorna Knowles's 'Family deny ritual murder', (published 13 August 2002).

[43] This makes it the most frequently reported story in the broader sample sourced for this study. These articles were Rick Feneley's 'Experts fear backlash over killings', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 12 November 2009; 'Biennale boss admired', published in *The Courier Mail* on 13 November 2009; David Barrett, Rhett Watson, and Gemma Jones's 'Glimpse of killer's lonely world --- Waterlow family murder', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 14 November 2009; Rick Feneley's 'Loving father "never stopped trying to help Anthony"', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 21 November 2009; Jodie Minus's 'Curator's son haunted by schizophrenia killings of father and sister', published in *The Australian* on 13 April 2011; Jodie Minus's 'Waterlow still mentally ill, court told', published in *The Australian* on 15 April 2011; Louise Hall's 'Waterlow verdict: victims of a system powerless to protect', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 20 April 2011; Richard Ackland's 'Moving beyond either mad or bad', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 22 April 2011; Amy Corderoy and Nicky Phillips's 'Life sentence in the grey zone', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 18 June 2011; Amy Corderoy's 'Mentally ill to get right to appeal for treatment', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 22 August 2011; Amy Corderoy's 'Mentally ill must be treated even if they say no – expert', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 21 July 2012; Josephine Tovey's 'Treatment laws for mentally ill debated', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 5 September 2012; Amy Dale's 'INNER DEMONS Family fights for tougher laws after madness leads to tragedy', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 23 February 2013; Paul Bibby's 'Waterlow family seeks review over mental health' published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 23 February 2013; Dan Box's 'Mental illness rethink urged – EXCLUSIVE', published in *The Australian* on 30 May 2013; Jared Owens's 'Waterlow killings: call for mental health reform', published in *The Australian* on 11 January 2014; Louise Hall's 'Health system failure led to the Waterlow killings: coroner finding', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 11 January 2014; and Amy Corderoy's 'Mental health laws overhaul criticized for being cosmetic', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 7 November 2014.

Chapter Five

Family Violence II

This chapter examines the three remaining groups of articles devoted to the perpetrators of violent crimes that took place in the domestic setting. While the previous chapter analysed articles that depicted violence committed by 'fathers', 'mothers', and 'progeny', this chapter completes this analysis with an examination of those pieces that reported on violence committed by a 'spouse' (*n*= 28), 'sibling' (*n*= 29), or a member of the 'extended family' (*n*= 21).[1] As was the case in the previous chapter, the crime most frequently reported by Australian journalists across these categories was murder, and mental illness was used more frequently than any other device to explain how and why these killings took place. This chapter begins with an analysis of 28 articles that reported on murders committed by a spouse.

Spouse

The 'spouse' sample consists of 28 articles that described violent crimes committed by 20 individuals, fifteen of whom were men, and five women.[2] The journalists named eleven of the fifteen male perpetrators, and these men were Lloyd Crosbie, Ross Farrah, Marc Vincent Beatton, Matthew Newton, Rhys Austin, Oscar Pistorius, George Sliwinski, Mark Galante, Dragan Siljanoski, Colin Laycock, and Hossam Attia.[3] The remaining four men were unnamed, though all took the lives of their intimate partner. Of the five women defined in this analysis as the perpetrators of violence against a spouse, four were named. These women were Anu Singh, Danielle Stewart, Marlene Reis, and Phyllis Loomes. In all but two of the twenty cases that make up this 'spouse' sample, the crime committed by the perpetrator was murder.

This section revisits an argument central to the previous chapter, examining the differences in mental health reporting when the killer is male or female. To illustrate how distinct reporting methods can be employed in cases where a spouse has murdered his/her intimate partner, this section is structured around two stories. The first examines the case of Anu Singh, who took the life of her partner, Joe Cinque, in 1997; and the second focuses on Lloyd Crosbie, the man who stabbed to death Melissa Maahs while she slept beside him in August 2001. The articles that reported on these two cases depicted heinous and inexplicable violence, yet mental illness was employed in distinctive ways depending on the gender of the perpetrator. This section begins with the story of Anu Singh, who took the life of her boyfriend in 1997.

Anu Singh and Joe Cinque

Three articles from the sample documented the story of Anu Singh, a 27-year-old woman of Indian descent who killed her boyfriend by drugging him with the anti-insomnia medication Rohypnol and then injecting him with a fatal dose of heroin. Singh was sentenced to a minimum of four years in jail after Judge Ken Crispin found she was mentally impaired when she took the life of Joe Cinque. She was released in October 2001.

Two of the articles from this sub-sample were published in August 2004, while the third piece was published in May 2010. The majority of the analysis that follows draws on the content from the two articles published in 2004. Susan Wyndham wrote both pieces, and although they contained nearly identical content, the articles were not identified as duplicates because they were published one week apart in separate Fairfax publications. The first, published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 9 August 2004, was entitled 'On death and madness', while the second, published in *The Age* on 16 August 2004, was entitled 'Death and madness'. These headlines are significant for their reluctance to identify Singh's crime as 'murder', a point revisited later in this section.

Susan Wyndham offered a detailed account of the circumstances of this murder. She explained that in 1997, Anu Singh was a law student studying at the Australian National University and was living in Canberra with an engineer named Joe Cinque. Singh was unwell, 'suffering from welts on her skin, crawling sensations, agitation' and other symptoms that doctors were incapable of diagnosing. She was also convinced she had a 'muscle-wasting disease', and in this exceedingly paranoid and delusional state, Singh 'began to blame Cinque for telling her about a vomit-inducing drug she took to lose weight'. In an interview with Wyndham, the content from which became the foundation for these two articles, Singh explained that she came to see her boyfriend as 'to blame for everything that was wrong in my life'. Wyndham explained that with the benefit of hindsight, Singh could see she was psychologically unwell during this period, and that these thoughts about her boyfriend were unfounded.

> She argues now that she was in a deep depression for about two years, had the eating disorder bulimia and was taking recreational drugs and tranquilizers that might have worsened her mental state.

The broad focus of both pieces written by Wyndham was on Singh's present health and her future. These articles were published in 2004, roughly seven years after the crime, and so some aspects of Cinque's death were not properly explained. For instance, how Singh's thinking developed from believing her boyfriend was the source of all the anguish in her life, to deciding she would kill him, was not accounted for by the journalist. The reader also learns that Singh planned to take her own life in the process, but why this did not eventuate was also left unanswered. Wyndham described the day of the murder as follows.

> [Singh's] closest friend, the quiet and spiritual Madhavi Rao, helped Singh to buy Rohypnol and heroin and organised two "send-off" dinner parties. After the second, Singh drugged Cinque's coffee and injected him with heroin.

According to Wyndham, Cinque 'died slowly in their bed'. Despite the obvious questions that surround Cinque's death, the purpose of the two articles written by Wyndham was not to assess Singh's culpability, but rather, shed light on her current mental health and her plans for the future.

Common to each of the three articles that documented aspects of this story was the inclusion of an analysis of Helen Garner's book, published in 2001, entitled *Joe Cinque's Consolation*.[4] This book was described by Susan Wyndham as 'personal, passionate and openly biased towards the suffering of the dead man and his parents'. It is at this point in the analysis that I present the central argument of this section, one that builds on that presented in the previous chapter. Wyndham portrayed Anu Singh as a victim of a mental illness that compelled her to commit a heinous and violent crime against her partner. Her use of language in both articles was significant. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the headlines referred to 'death', but not murder or manslaughter.[5] This description is significant as it overlooks the fact Cinque's death came as the result of a violent crime. 'Death' implies a more natural end to one's life, and this word does not sufficiently acknowledge that Cinque's life was taken. Wyndham also described Helen Garner's work as 'openly biased' towards Joe Cinque and his family, and noted twice that Garner was unsuccessful in interviewing Singh and providing her side of the story for the narrative constructed in her book.

Wyndham portrayed Anu Singh as intelligent, engaging, and deserving of far less scrutiny, particularly following the publication of Garner's book, which Wyndham argued put Singh 'back in the dock of public opinion'.

> After reading Garner's portrayal of a mysterious, disturbed woman who methodically killed the man she loved, it is strange to sit opposite Singh in her parents' Strathfield living room … She is bright and opinionated, giggly and tearful as she retells the terrible story and talks about her transformation in jail, where she met her new boyfriend.

Wyndham described Singh with a tone of renewal and hope. Her image of a 'bright', 'giggly', composed young woman was set against Garner's 'strange' view of a 'mysterious' and 'disturbed' killer who was both calculated and methodical when she killed her partner. Wyndham devoted significant attention in the article's concluding paragraphs to Singh's future.

> During her time in jail and since, Singh completed a masters in criminology at Sydney University with a thesis on the causes of female crime, including abuse, mental illness and drug use. She met her present boyfriend … in the remand centre after her arrest … Having given up her earlier "superficial" goals, she plans to begin a PhD next year and is working with a filmmaker, James Ricketson, on a documentary about her story.

Susan Wyndham explained that the filmmaker, James Ricketson, also believed Garner's book was 'unfairly one-sided' and that 'she should have made more effort to include Singh'. Each of these arguments, quotes, and extracts, constitute threads that form a broader fabric central to these

articles that portray this story as one of multiple victims. As detailed in the previous chapter in my analysis of the story of Louise Scotchmer – the 31-year-old mother who killed her two children between 1994 and 1996 – Anu Singh was portrayed as a victim of her mental illness, one that compelled her to take the life of her partner. To portray a story of family violence as having multiple victims is not inaccurate or misleading, but the effect of doing so in the context of a mental health diagnosis is to apportion the majority of the explanation for these crimes on deranged, deluded, and abnormal thinking, characteristic of the mental health experience. This reinforces the belief that disorders of mental health are disorders of violence. This narrative appears to be most often employed in stories that involve women who commit violent murder.

In the following section, I compare the portrayal of Anu Singh's crime with the story of Lloyd Crosbie. The purpose of this comparison is to assess the extent to which differing narratives are employed and reproduced when journalists report on men and women described as 'mentally ill' who kill in the domestic setting.

Lloyd Crosbie and Melissa Maahs

Just one article from the sample concerned the murder of Melissa Maahs at the hand of her boyfriend, Lloyd Crosbie. This piece was written by Margaret O'Rourke and was published in *The Australian* on 3 April 2004. O'Rourke reported that on 18 August 2001, Lloyd Crosbie stayed up late watching a movie while his partner slept beside him. Crosbie and Maahs 'enjoyed a close relationship' and were living with Melissa's mother, Kay, in Morwell, Victoria. For reasons that were not reported by the journalist, Crosbie kept a knife in a scabbard attached to the front of his trousers. While watching the movie, Crosbie looked down at Melissa, and without apparent precedent or reason, removed the knife from his trousers and 'proceeded to stab her three times in the head'. He was briefly interrupted by Kay Maahs, who 'woke to her daughter's screams', and O'Rourke reported that Crosbie ambushed her in the corridor of their home and began stabbing her as well. O'Rourke detailed the severity of Crosbie's actions in the hours that followed.

> The next few hours were spent in a frenzy of violence, Crosbie moving back and forth between Melissa and Kay, pausing only for a period of time to vomit in the lounge room. When he believed Melissa was dead, he sexually assaulted her body. After showering … Crosbie took Melissa's wallet and mobile phone, hoping to blame the event on a break-and-enter, and took a train to his father's house. He was arrested two days later.

O'Rourke's piece, entitled 'Responsible for their actions?', was 2252 words in length. The following analysis examines three principal features of this article's content. First, I examine the debate surrounding mental culpability, central to this article; second, an analysis of the way the mental health narrative was employed in this piece is compared with the story of Anu Singh; and third, the use of additional cases of mental health-related violence and how these can be employed by journalists to strengthen a preferred narrative approach is examined. In conjunction with this

final point, the section analyzes the extent to which O'Rourke identified some of the broader social circumstances involved in this murder, or whether Crosbie's actions were portrayed simply as an outcome of mental illness.

As was evident in Susan Wyndham's coverage of Anu Singh's crime, the extent to which Margaret O'Rourke portrayed Lloyd Crosbie as responsible for the murder of his partner was apparent in the headline and opening sentences of this article, where open-ended questions were employed as a precursor to the discussion around mental culpability that followed. The headline read: 'Responsible for their actions?', while the opening sentence also featured a question: 'What pushes apparently sane people over the edge and causes them to kill?'. In contrast with Wyndham's depiction of Anu Singh's mental health-induced violence, O'Rourke's opening questions showed a clear intention on behalf of the journalist to debate Crosbie's culpability. The mental health explanation was not so readily employed in this case, where a man had committed a violent murder. The questions that opened the article preceded a number that followed.

> What could motivate someone to such extreme, unprovoked violence? Did Crosbie have some form of mental illness that rendered him incapable of preventing his actions, or was he simply "bad"? The only explanation the judge could find was that Crosbie "derived sexual excitement and perverted pleasure from killing his victims in a sadistic manner". So can this kind of unprovoked violence be predicted and prevented?

In the case of Anu Singh, the central source of information for O'Rourke's articles was Singh, the killer. Wyndham interviewed Singh, not Helen Garner, nor any members of Joe Cinque's family. This decision ensured the content published in these articles was supportive of Singh and her recovery, and also her argument that the 'death' of Joe Cinque was the result of severe mental illness and should not be described as 'murder'. In the Crosbie case, the principal sources drawn on to discuss the perpetrator's mental culpability were the Professor of Forensic Psychiatry at Monash University, Paul Mullen, and the Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at New York University School of Medicine, Michael Welner. O'Rourke drew on the expertise of these two figures to discuss the extent to which someone like Lloyd Crosbie could be held accountable for the unprovoked murder of his partner. I argue that this is thorough journalism. Mullen and Welner are experts in this field and the quotes used by O'Rourke illustrated their comprehensive understanding of the research relevant to murder cases of this kind.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, these discussions of mental culpability are more common in cases involving men who kill in the family setting. Lloyd Crosbie may have been mentally impaired at the time he killed his partner, but there was also the potential that he acted rationally. There is the possibility that he suffered no mental health impairment, acted maliciously and abhorrently, and O'Rourke gave this possibility sufficient attention in her article. Based on the analysis presented in this chapter, and in Chapter Four, I suspect that had Melissa Maahs taken a knife and stabbed Lloyd Crosbie multiple times in the head while he slept beside her, an alternate narrative would have been employed, one founded on a pervasive belief that a woman would be

incapable of committing such a crime. This is a central argument in this thesis, one that is supported by the analysis.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

As was the case in a number of stories examined in the previous chapter, additional cases of mental-health related violence were revisited by Margaret O'Rourke in this article to consolidate its purpose, which was to discuss whether individuals like Lloyd Crosbie should be held responsible for the crimes they commit. O'Rourke used some of these cases to discuss whether individuals like Crosbie could or should be labeled 'psychopaths'.

> A case in point is that of Robert Thompson and Jon Venables, the British 10-year-olds convicted of the torture and murder of toddler Jamie Bulger … Can children like Venables and Thompson be labeled psychopathic?

To answer this question, O'Rourke drew on the views of both Michael Welner and Paul Mullen. Welner argued that Venables and Thompson were psychopathic, and that 'callousness and emotional destructiveness were the most diagnostically significant qualities of these children'.[6] This assertion reinforces the belief that some people are 'born bad', a point Werner had argued earlier in the piece when O'Rourke quoted his view that 'some people are born with a predisposition to cruelty and violence'. Mullen disagreed, and it was at this point in the article that O'Rourke gave the first significant amount of attention to some of the broader social circumstances that can precipitate violence, beyond a simple mental health explanation. O'Rourke quoted Paul Mullen, and the following quote refers to the two young boys who killed Jamie Bulger.

> "To call these children evil or psychopathic is nonsense. These kids came from very disruptive, terrible home backgrounds. One of them was not particularly bright. Neither had much of what could even laughably be called a 'moral' education. They were just a couple of feral kids … never had a stable background or any real care."

O'Rourke paired this description with the Lloyd Crosbie case, and stated that there was 'no doubt Crosbie came from an appalling background'. Crosbie's childhood and home life was described in a psychiatric report, drawn on by O'Rourke, as a 'disorganised … environment of frank neglect'. His mother had suffered from mental illness and his father 'was a violent alcoholic'. These details are important as they illustrate some of the broader social circumstances that can be involved in murders that appear to be inexplicable, and perhaps could only conceivably be explained by the presence of mental illness. O'Rourke refrained from acknowledging that violence is not an inherent by-product of the lived experience of mental illness, and I argue it would have been an opportune time to do so as it would have reinforced the importance of exploring broader social circumstances to help examine why crimes of this nature occur.

O'Rourke instead reported on a second example in this discussion of whether it is appropriate to label individuals as 'psychopaths', and asked 'So what about a mass murderer such as Martin Bryant?'. Similar to the story of Robert Thompson and Jon Venables, the broader social

circumstances that surrounded Bryant's life, and the effect these had on his decision to commit one of modern history's worst single-person shootings, was given significant attention. O'Rourke again chose to draw on Professor Paul Mullen, and noted that 'Mullen's report describes a person with a low intelligence, a rather pathetic personality with a fascination for guns'. The journalist continued with the following.

> Like many other killers, Bryant was aggressive, destructive and cruel to other children, even as a child. According to his psychiatric assessment: "He was noted … to lack friends, to be struggling scholastically and to be persistently disruptive in class. There are references to him stealing, to him having violent outbursts and to tormenting vulnerable children. There are also references to Bryant tormenting animals.

This analysis has illustrated a contrast between the types of narratives that were drawn on in two cases of inexplicable violence, one involving a woman who took the life of her boyfriend, and the other involving a man who stabbed to death his partner as she slept beside him. In the case of Anu Singh, an exploration of the broader social factors involved in this crime was limited. There was brief mention of a restrictive upbringing involving strict parents, but nothing that would indicate a propensity for the violent murder of an unsuspecting partner. As a result, the mental health explanation for the death of Joe Cinque was privileged and reinforced. In the case of Lloyd Crosbie, the journalist applied the converse of that described for the Singh case. Crosbie was likely mentally impaired, but there was also the chance he was calculated and deliberate when he killed Melissa Maahs, and both these possibilities are discussed at length throughout the article, both in relation to that particular murder, and also the cases of Martin Bryant and the murder of Jamie Bulger at the hands of two 10-year-old boys. Consideration was also given to the social circumstances that are often involved in these sorts of crimes, and this revealed reluctance on the part of journalists to simply reinforce and employ mental illness as an explanatory device. As I have shown, this is in contrast with stories that involve females who kill in domestic settings. O'Rourke reinforced the relevance of broader social circumstances in the final two sentences of the article. The journalist drew on another expert in this field, Professor Fiona Stanley, the chief executive of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.[7]

> "Children who suffer early in life set out on difficult pathways that often lead to lifelong problems. We will all pay for it dearly through our justice system, the burden of our health and welfare systems, and in the reduction in our personal safety and security".

This information illustrates the broader circumstances beyond mental illness that are so often involved in violent crime. In the case of women who kill, and particularly the case of Anu Singh, it appears incomprehensible that a woman would murder another human being without being significantly mentally impaired. This belief is even more pronounced when the violence is against the woman's child. As a result, there is less exploration of broader social circumstances, perhaps on the assumption that these are irrelevant. This approach, common in articles that reported on family violence, disadvantages both men and women. It reinforces the misconception that women who kill only do so because of mental illness, obscuring the significant social stressors that can play a role,

particularly with mothers who have multiple young children and, for whatever reason, are raising them on their own.[8] It reinforces the belief that when men kill family members they do so in a colder and more calculated manner, undermining and obscuring broader social explanations that could precipitate violent actions. In the following section of this chapter, the analysis shifts to individuals who took the lives of their brothers and/or sisters. This sub-sample, coded 'siblings', comprises a total of 27 newspaper articles.

Siblings

The second category examined in this chapter consists of 27 articles concerning violent crimes either planned or committed by a sibling of the victim.[9] Journalists from this sub-sample reported on five separate cases, three that involved men, and two where the perpetrator was a woman. These individuals were: Anthony Waterlow ($n= 18$), who stabbed to death both his father and sister on 9 November 2009; 'Julia Wilson' ($n= 5$), the 25-year-old woman who stabbed and killed her father and 15-year-old sister on 5 July 2007; Sef Gonzalez ($n= 2$), who killed his mother, father, and sister (the date of this crime was not provided by either article that documented this case); Wayne Michael Spillett ($n= 1$), described by *The Daily Telegraph* in October 2008 as 'a mentally ill man who cut a crucifix into his brother's body with an axe after strangling him'; and Ray Gooroochurn ($n= 1$), the woman described by Mark Morri in *The Daily Telegraph* as 'willing to pay $15,000 each to have her mother, father, brother and five others, including two NSW detectives killed'. In all but one of these cases, the crime was murder and the killer took the lives (or intended to take the lives) of multiple victims.

In Chapter Four, the story of Anthony Waterlow was examined at length. A significant portion of the articles dealing with the Waterlow murders focused on the death of his father, Nicholas, but it is important to note that Anthony also took the life of his sister, Chloe. I suspect that journalists focused more comprehensively on the death of Nicholas Waterlow because of his status as a renowned curator, gallery director, and academic. Chloe, by contrast, was relatively unknown to the public, despite suffering the same fate as her father. Given this case was examined extensively in Chapter Four, it will not be re-examined in this chapter, nor will the story of Ray Gooroochurn, as it involved a planned murder rather than one that was actually committed. The following analysis of the 'siblings' sample explores, in order, the stories of 'Julia Wilson', Sef Gonzalez, and Wayne Michael Spillett.

'Julia Wilson', 'Anne', 'Patient A', and Scientology

A total of five articles published between 11 July 2007 and 13 September 2010 were devoted to a double-murder committed by an unnamed 25-year-old woman who took the life of her 53-year-old

father and 15-year-old sister. The perpetrator, defined in the five articles as 'Patient A', 'Anne', and 'Julia Wilson', committed these murders on 5 July 2007.[10] Two of the articles were published in *The Australian*, two in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and one in *The Daily Telegraph*. The publication dates of these five articles spanned more than three years, and so while each documented (either briefly or comprehensively) the crime committed by 'Julia Wilson', each employed distinct narratives. The analysis that follows considers two principal aspects of this sub-sample. First, it explores the extent to which journalists depicted the lived experience of mental illness as inherently violent; and second, it examines the narrative discrepancies present between articles published across this three-year period. I begin with an analysis of the three newspaper articles published in 2007.

A central figure discussed to varying degrees in each of the articles was the Church of Scientology, and in particular, its opposition to modern psychiatry.[11] It was portrayed in three of the five articles from this sample as a significant figure in the double-murder committed by 'Julia Wilson'. On 11 July 2007, Michelle Cazzulino reported for *The Daily Telegraph* that the church's practitioners were 'on the defensive about its teachings after it was claimed that a 25-year-old woman accused of murdering her father and sister and critically injuring her mother … had been forced to stop taking psychiatric drugs because of her family's belief in Scientology'. Entitled 'The cult of disbelief – How Scientology turns science on its head', the article opened with a similar case that took place on 15 March 1989, when 32-year-old Gary Beals stabbed to death his father and critically wounded his mother with a butcher knife. Cazzulino reported that Beals pleaded 'guilty but mentally ill' to manslaughter, and believed the Church of Scientology was responsible for his violent actions.

> Beals said he had been advised by the Church of Scientology against seeking therapy. According to him, the organisation's members talked him out of accessing psychological help while 'bleeding dry' his bank accounts. "If I wouldn't have got involved with Scientology, I wouldn't have committed this crime," he said.

The second article that reported on the 'Julia Wilson' case was published in *The Australian* the following day, on 12 July 2007. Journalist Hedley Thomas explored 'inside a man-made religion', and focused specifically on some of the stranger personality characteristics and beliefs of the late Lafayette Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology and author of the popular self-help book, *Dianetics*, upon which many of the beliefs of the Church of Scientology are based. Thomas linked Scientology with the 'Julia Wilson case'. He reported that 'a 25-year-old mentally disturbed woman whose parents were devoted Scientologists' had stabbed to death her father, 53, and sister, 15. Thomas explained that after 'receiving initial care, the Sydney woman's parents are believed to have declined to provide [her] with follow-up care because of their Scientology beliefs'.

Elizabeth Wynhausen and Dan Box reported for *The Australian* on 14 July 2007 that the unnamed 25-year-old had been charged with two counts of murder and one count of attempted

murder ('Julia Wilson' seriously wounded her mother but did not kill her). Wynhausen and Box offered a descriptive account of the events that took place on the morning of the murders.

> Andrew Galloway was mowing the grass in the back yard of his Revesby home in Sydney's west when he heard a woman screaming over the noise of his mower. Minutes later … he looked up and saw his neighbour collapsed in his driveway, blood running from multiple stab wounds to her body and deep gashes to her hands. "Help me," the woman cried out. "Call triple0." Behind her in the house were the bodies of her husband and 15-year-old daughter.

The three articles referred to above described the perpetrator as an 'unnamed 25-year-old woman', and each reinforced the relationship between the crime she committed and the religious affiliation favoured by her parents. All four journalists – Hedley Thomas, Michelle Cazzulino, Elisabeth Wynhausen and Dan Box – ridiculed Scientology. Cazzulino reported that the history of Scientology began with 'a galactic dictator named Xenu, who lived approximately 75 million years ago'. Xenu tricked billions of aliens into travelling to Earth 'where he blew them up with hydrogen bombs'. Elisabeth Wynhausen and Dan Box were more facetious in their critique of the religion.

> Scientologists reject psychiatry, claim that psychiatric drugs "create insanity and cause violence" and refuse to believe mental illness has a biological basis. On the other hand, they do believe that past experiences and previous lives are wired into the brain as "engrams" (the supposed source of unhappiness and self-defeating behaviour) and that these engrams can be cleared from the brain using something called an e-meter.

The authors of these three articles discredited Scientology and ridiculed the beliefs that are central to this religion. They reported that it was the family's Scientology beliefs that led them to refuse psychoactive treatment for their daughter, and that the result of this refusal was the violent murder of 'Julia Wilson's' father and sister. To support this association, Michelle Cazzulino reported on a similar case that took place in 1989, where a young man named Gary Beals refused to take antidepressant medication because of his religious beliefs and ended up taking the life of his father and critically wounding his mother.

The effect of this correlation is to reinforce the image of mental illness as an inherently violent experience, and that without proper treatment and medication, PWMI are a danger to those around them, including loved ones. While antidepressant medication is often a helpful and necessary part of mental health treatment for those suffering from severe mental illness, the implication of this focus on medication is to reinforce the belief that mental illness and violence are intrinsically linked and that the panacea for this natural tendency towards violence is a medication that controls the individual. The case of 'Julia Wilson' is one where mental health treatment appeared essential, and could have altered the course of events that resulted in the deaths of two members of her family. But whether the case is representative of the broader mental health experience must certainly be questioned. In the articles explored above, the means for controlling violent PWMI have broken down, and journalists have attempted to apportion blame. In this circumstance, the perpetrator was the Church of Scientology, and the link between mental illness and violence was portrayed as unquestionable.

<center>*   *   *</center>

In the final two articles, explanations for this double-murder shifted away from the Church of Scientology and towards Yolande Lucire, 'Julia Wilson's' treating psychiatrist at the time she killed two members of her family on 5 July 2007. Both pieces were written by Kim Arlington, and published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 2010. The first was published on 11 June 2010, and was entitled 'Psychiatrist's patient care questioned', while the second article was published on 13 September 2010 and was entitled 'Killer's family sue 'negligent' doctor'. While Scientology was mentioned briefly in these articles, the contents of the story and the explanations provided for 'Wilson's' violent actions had transformed significantly.

In the three articles published in 2007, the Church of Scientology and the belief system followed by 'Julia Wilson's' parents were the foundation for their refusal to give their daughter psychotropic medication, and subsequently, were the principal explanation for the brutal murders she committed. Kim Arlington told a different story.

> Three years after the fatal stabbings that shattered her family, [Julia Wilson's mother] and her surviving children are suing her daughter's psychiatrist for negligence, saying Yolande Lucire failed to diagnose her psychotic condition. According to a statement of claim filed in the Supreme Court, Dr Lucire withdrew the patient's psychotropic medication without reasonable grounds and prescribed ineffective medication.

This is a significant shift in the use of explanatory narratives. In the articles published in 2007, it was the family's refusal to give their daughter medication that led to the murders. In September 2010, Arlington reported that Dr Lucire withdrew 'Wilson's' psychotropic medication 'without reasonable grounds and prescribed ineffective medication'. Arlington continued with the following.

> Dr Lucire ought to have appreciated the patient was at risk of self-harm or violence to others, and warranted detention or admission to a mental health facility, the family claims.

This account suggests that Dr Lucire was negligent, and as a result, would have a case to answer in the NSW Supreme Court. Disorders of mental health are still portrayed as disorders of violence, but the apportioning of blame for not controlling 'Wilson' had shifted. Arlington portrayed the murders that took place as foreseeable, and preventable, even just hours before the killings took place.

> When she saw psychiatrist Yolande Lucire on July 5, 2007, she had a feeling "of impending doom … that something dreadful would happen". Within hours, the 25-year-old had stabbed her father and 15-year-old sister to death at the family home.

This apparent shift in explanatory narratives, from the Church of Scientology to Yolande Lucire, offers supporting evidence for an argument central to this thesis, which is that journalists employ and reinforce certain narratives when they tell their stories about PWMI. In both cases, mental illness was depicted as an inherently violent experience, one where unsuspecting loved ones could be in danger. But in both portrayals, the figure responsible for not controlling this violence was different. In the first three articles, the Church of Scientology was portrayed as promoting beliefs

that led to 'Julia Wilson's' parents refusing necessary medication. While in the two articles published in 2010, this was ignored almost entirely, and 'Wilson's' treating psychiatrist became the figure of blame. Both accounts could be accurate, and certainly in murder cases of this kind, there are multiple truths of varying complexity. Yet regardless of which account is more likely to be true, the same relationship was reinforced: mental illness is a violent experience that, if untreated, leads to violent death. In the following section, the stories of Wayne Michael Spillett and Sef Gonzalez are explored.

Wayne Michael Spillett & Sef Gonzalez

Just one article from the sample reported on the crime committed by Wayne Michael Spillett. In one of the shortest articles sourced for this thesis, published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 11 October 2008, the unnamed journalist reported in 119 words that 'a mentally ill man cut a crucifix into his brother's body with an axe after strangling him'. The deceased had been 'throttled' by Wayne Michael Spillett, and while not documented in the article, it appeared that the perpetrator attempted to burn his brother's body, as the unnamed journalist reported that the deceased's 'charred remains were found in a burnt-out cottage in Narromine, in NSW's west'. The journalist reported that Wayne Michael Spillett had bipolar disorder, and that his lawyer, John Stratton SC, had urged the NSW Supreme Court to find his client 'not guilty on the grounds of mental illness'.

This short piece suffered from the same problem that was central to a number of articles examined in the previous chapter. Sub-judice law restricts a journalist to reporting only the bare facts of a case as they are presented in court, so as not to prejudice a fair trial, and this explains the scarcity of informative content presented in this piece. Additional details relating to the relationship between Spillett and his brother, any history of violence between the two, or the potential presence of drug and alcohol addiction, were not reported by the journalist presumably because they were not raised in court. But sub-judice law does not explain why the unnamed journalist did not report that individuals diagnosed and being treated for bipolar disorder are not inherently violent, nor that those diagnosed with this condition are more likely to harm themselves than others.[12] When reporting on a case of this kind, these are important details, and ones that are possible to include in an article of this nature without breaking sub-judice law. The inclusion of these details in newspaper articles that are as brief as the one being examined in this section is important because without them, the only memorable aspects of this piece are that a man diagnosed with bipolar disorder strangled his brother to death and then carved a crucifix into his body. Without any additional exploration of context or circumstance, the scarcity of details in this piece could reinforce the belief that individuals who are diagnosed with mental illness are prone to violence, and that mental illness is a reliable explanation for why violent and horrific crimes of this nature occur.

The extent to which a link between mental illness and violence is entrenched in both the reporting by journalists, and the court transcripts from which they draw their content, was also evident in the case of Sef Gonzalez. Kara Lawrence reported for *The Daily Telegraph* on 18 September 2004 that Gonzalez had received three life sentences and would spend the rest of his life in a high security jail for the murder of his father Teddy, his mother Loiva, and his 18-year-old sister Clodine. Kara Lawrence detailed this horrific crime as follows.

> Justice James found Sef had killed his family members over a 2 ½ hour period and had been planning the murder for months. He tried to poison his mother with the extract of a poisonous seed he ordered but that failed and he resorted to stabbing her, his father and sister with a knife or knives from the family kitchen. His sister had also been strangled and bashed with a bat.

The details of this account appeared to come from transcripts from the NSW Supreme Court trial into these murders. Lawrence reproduced an account that illustrated just how entrenched the perception is that mental illness and violence are inherently linked. She reported that Justice Bruce James found Gonzalez to be a remorseless killer who 'did not suffer mental illness but simply wanted to maintain his privileged life and become sole heir to his parents' $1.5 million fortune'. While mental illness was not presented by the journalist as an explanation for the crime, it was still mentioned frequently throughout the article, and as such, its relevance reinforced implicitly to cases that resemble this one.

> Justice James yesterday said, based on a psychiatric report tendered to the court, he did not find Sef was mentally ill or suffering a personality disorder. There was no post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, or some as-yet undiagnosed mental condition. "I find that, at the time of committing the murders, the prisoner was not suffering from mental illness or any mental disorder or any mental abnormality which might, to some degree, mitigate his objective criminality," he said.

The stories of 'Julia Wilson', Wayne Michael Spillett, and Sef Gonzalez illustrate the extent to which Australian journalists can feel inclined to draw on mental illness to explain violent murder. In all three cases, disorders of mental health were depicted as disorders of violence, and not one article from this sample of 27 reported that those diagnosed with mental illness are more likely to harm themselves than others. In the final section of this chapter, 21 articles are examined which documented the violent crimes committed by eight men, all identified by the journalists as 'mentally ill', and all falling into the category of 'extended family'.

Extended Family

The final sub-sample addressed in this chapter consists of 21 articles that documented the violent crimes committed by eight men, all identified by the journalists as 'mentally ill'.[13] Five of the men were named, and these men were Kevin William Presland (*n*= 11), Jayant Kumar Singh (*n*= 3), Nour Assafiri (*n*= 1), Dwayne Lancaster (*n*= 1), and Osman Softic (*n*= 1). Three men were unnamed, but were described by the journalists as a 42-year-old 'Toowoomba man'; a spiritual 'man of peace'; and an 'unnamed paranoid schizophrenic flatmate'. Seven of the eight men killed a

member of their 'extended family', a category which in this chapter included blood relatives as well as housemates and other living companions. One man was charged with the attempted murder of his sister-in-law.

The final section of this chapter examines the story of Jayant Kumar Singh and the extent to which the journalists who documented his crime drew on mental illness to explain it. Singh's story, detailed across three articles, is representative of the broader sub-sample of eight 'extended family' cases. This section is divided into two parts. The first examines the use of descriptive and graphic language to sensationalise the murder that took place, and the effect this had on other content published in the articles; while the second and final section explores the topic of community fear and safety and the ways in which it was drawn on and reinforced by the journalists who reported on Singh's actions.

Jayant Kumar Singh

The murder of a 10-month-old girl by 53-year-old 'family friend' Jayant Kumar Singh in Sydney's inner-west was documented across three articles published between July 2007 and June 2010. Lillian Saleh and Bruce McDougall reported for *The Daily Telegraph* on 8 January 2007 that the 10-month-old victim's throat was 'slit with a meat cleaver just three days before Christmas', in December 2006. The perpetrator – Jayant Kumar Singh – had been 'released from a psychiatric hospital just days before'. Many months later, and after his trial, *The Courier-Mail* reported on 30 June 2010 that Singh had been found not guilty of the baby's murder 'on the grounds of mental illness', and this publication's coverage of the murder also contained graphic content, along with reference to Singh's recent stay in a mental health facility.

> Singh had recently been released from a mental health institution. A post-mortem report said the baby had brain injuries and extensive skull fractures, and her neck had been cut deeply resulting in "near decapitation".

Jodie Minus's article, published in *The Australian* on 30 June 2010, examined the state of Singh's health in the months leading up to the murder. Minus explained that six months before the killing, Singh was admitted to Rozelle Mental Hospital in Sydney, 'where he told psychiatrists on three occasions that he had thoughts about killing or strangling the baby and believed this was "not right"'. Of the three articles, Minus's piece was the only one that referred to Singh's mental health condition, which was described as 'severe depression with psychotic features'.

Each of these three pieces contained graphic descriptions of both the murder, and the weapons Singh employed to commit the crime. Jodie Minus reported that the 10-month-old was 'beaten with a crutch before having her throat cut with a cleaver'; Lillian Saleh and Bruce McDougall reported that the 10-month-old had 'her throat … slit with a meat cleaver'; while *The Courier-Mail* described Singh's actions as so severe and violent that the result nearly constituted

'decapitation'. The opening sentence of *The Courier-Mail's* 169-word editorial of the murder explained that 'a Sydney man who hit a baby with a crutch before almost cutting her head off with a meat cleaver has been found not guilty of her murder on the grounds of mental illness'. The inclusion of these graphic details served to convey the barbaric nature of the 10-month-old baby's death. While the details provided were accurate, and drawn from evidence described in the NSW Supreme Court trial that followed, one questions the necessity of providing such graphic imagery. The purpose of describing the murder weapons as a 'crutch' and a 'meat cleaver' may be to convey that the crime was gruesome and barbaric. Another effect of these descriptors can be to reinforce that the perpetrator was barbaric, vicious, and out of control, and that these characteristics are reflective of the broader lived experience of mental illness.

Lillian Saleh and Bruce McDougall used these graphic details as the basis for an examination of a broader problem facing the mental health system, and the dangers posed by PWMI. This correlation between one inexplicable crime, and a dysfunctional mental health system, was also evident in the coverage of the Bribie Island murder, explored in the previous chapter. Saleh and McDougall's piece, entitled 'TEARS FOR A SISTER – Family tragedy exposes mental health crisis – EXCLUSIVE', presented the murder as the result of a deficient mental health system. They reported that Jayant Kumar Singh had been released from a psychiatric hospital just days before the murder, and that his release was the result of a shortage of beds in the mental health sector.

> A Daily Telegraph investigation … has found the number of mental health hospital beds needs to double to cope with rising demand. That bed shortage has prompted police fears that the number of mentally ill on the streets is increasing at an alarming rate, putting the public at risk. Now the child's family are demanding to know why her alleged killer was allowed back on the street when he was still a danger.

Saleh and McDougall included in their article figures relating to the shortage of beds, which served to solidify the importance, legitimacy, and urgency of this problem. They explained that more than 100,000 people use NSW mental health services annually, and that while there are 2200 acute and sub-acute care beds available, 'health officials say at least 5000 are needed'. These details are accurate, and constitute comprehensive coverage of the broader 'mental health crisis' that was taking place in New South Wales during this period. But these statistics, and the framing of this bed-shortage problem, are portrayed in the context of a brutal murder by Jayant Kumar Singh, who killed a 10-month-old baby of a family friend with a 'crutch' and a 'meat clever'. It could be argued that this correlation can be both stigmatizing and misleading. Certainly, a shortage of beds needed for acute mental health care can result in many individuals that require proper treatment ending up on the streets, staying with family, or incarcerated in prison. But these journalists have linked this problem in the mental health system with a most vicious crime, and portrayed it as its cause. Singh's crime may have been prevented had he sought and gained access to mental health services, but his actions are not representative of the lived experience of mental illness more

broadly, and nor should they be portrayed as an exemplar for outcomes that can be associated with a shortage of beds in mental health facilities. Saleh and McDougall make clear that a shortage in beds leads to violent crime.

> Despite being dangerously ill, many people are unable to get a hospital bed and are languishing under a shortage of community care facilities. Some patients have harmed others within hours of being discharged from hospital.

Problems in the mental health system are often complex, and Lillian Saleh and Bruce McDougall allude to this once in their article when they identify a 'new breed of patients', described as 'those aged from their teens to their mid-20s suffering from drug-induced psychosis'. This is an important detail, and while the phrase 'new breed' invokes an image of eugenics, the identification of the effects of drug use on mental health acknowledges that when crimes of this nature are committed, there are often multiple social circumstances and factors involved that exist outside a simple mental health diagnosis. As was the case with the Bribie Island story, where the rape and murder of a 10-year-old girl at the hands of her father was portrayed as an outcome of a flawed mental health system, Saleh and McDougall have reinforced this mental health explanatory narrative in a way that I argue is too simplistic and does not fully appreciate or consider the broader social circumstances that can be involved in violent crime.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the three remaining groups of articles devoted to the perpetrators of violent crimes that took place in the domestic setting. These groups were 'spouse', 'siblings', and 'extended family'. The stories of Anu Singh and Lloyd Crosbie were representative of the broader 'spouse' sample, and the reason for comparing how their cases were reported was to assess the extent to which the mental health explanatory narrative was used distinctively depending on the gender of the perpetrator. In the case of Anu Singh, where three articles published between August 2004 and May 2010 reported on the death of her partner Joe Cinque, Singh's actions were portrayed as an outcome of mental illness. Singh drugged her partner's coffee and injected him with heroin because she had become convinced Cinque was the source of all her life's anguish. He died slowly in their bed. The journalists that reported on this case referred to Cinque's passing as a 'death', and refused to described Singh's actions as murder. The two articles published in August 2004, written by Susan Wyndham, contained content derived from an interview with Singh. Wyndham did not interview Joe Cinque's family, nor Helen Garner, but instead focused on Singh's recovery, her release from jail, and her hopes for the future. The decision to centre the articles on Singh's lived experience and her interpretation of the 'deep depression' that both precipitated and explained her fatal actions could be understood as legitimizing Singh's account, framing Cinque's death as the result of mental illness. There was little engagement with, or debate about Singh's

mental culpability. Helen Garner's examination of the case in *Joe Cinque's Consolation* was subtly discredited by the journalists, particularly Susan Wyndham, who reported that after reading Garner's portrayal of 'a mysterious, disturbed woman who methodically killed the man she loved', it appeared 'strange' to sit opposite a woman that was so composed; 'she is bright and opinionated … as she retells her terrible story and talks about her transformation in jail'.

In the case of Lloyd Crosbie, the man who stabbed to death his girlfriend while she slept beside him, the perpetrator was depicted as more calculated in his actions. Margaret O'Rourke's account of this story, published in *The Australian* in April 2004, questioned whether mental illness could be used to explain Crosbie's actions. O'Rourke pondered the following question: 'did Crosbie have some form of mental illness that rendered him incapable of preventing his actions, or was he simply "bad"?' Where Susan Wyndham interviewed Anu Singh for the majority of the content published in her two articles, Margaret O'Rourke drew on the Professor of Forensic Psychiatry at Monash University, Paul Mullen, and the Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at New York University School of Medicine, Michael Welner. These two figures were employed to aid O'Rourke's debate surrounding mental culpability, and the author drew on the additional stories of the Port Arthur Massacre and the Jamie Bulger killing to give weight and significance to this discussion. The analysis central to both this chapter and the previous has shown that the mental health explanatory narrative is more frequently employed in cases involving women who kill in the domestic setting. Where men have committed violent murder against a family member, there is a tendency on the part of some journalists towards debate and speculation. This was the case with Arthur Freeman, who threw his daughter Darcey off Melbourne's West Gate Bridge, and also in the story of Lloyd Crosbie. Where women have killed, such as in the cases of Andrea Yates, Louise Scotchmer, and Anu Singh, the mental health narrative is readily employed as an explanatory device. I argue that this inclination is a product of prevailing socio-cultural expectations around the role of women as nurturers and carers, considered incapable of violent and malicious action, particularly against members of their own family. These expectations and interpretations of the actions of men and women are disadvantageous to both groups. It reinforces the misconception that women only kill because of psychotic disorder, and voices that compel them to harm others, a view that I argue obscures and ignores the broader social circumstances so often involved in criminal action. It reinforces that when men kill family members, they only do so because they are cold and calculated, or embittered ex-husbands seeking spousal revenge, again undermining and obscuring broader social explanations for violent crime.

For those 29 articles that made up the 'sibling' sub-sample, this chapter explored the case of 'Julia Wilson' as it was representative of this group. A total of five articles documented the killing of 'Wilson's' father and 15-year-old sister in July 2007. This sub-sample was significant for

two reasons. First, it portrayed mental illness and violence as inherently linked, and second, it used two distinct and contradictory explanations to account for the violence that took place.

Three articles from this sub-sample were published in 2007, and two in 2010. In the earlier group, 'Julia Wilson' was portrayed as the 'mentally ill' daughter of devout Scientologists whose refusal to allow her to take anti-psychotic medication resulted in the double-murder. The Church of Scientology, described by Michelle Cazzulino in *The Daily Telegraph* as a 'cult of disbelief', was ridiculed by all four journalists that reported on this case in 2007. Elisabeth Wynhausen and Dan Box reported that 'Scientologists reject psychiatry … and refuse to believe mental illness has a biological basis. On the other hand, they do believe that past experiences and previous lives are wired into the brain as "engrams"'. For these journalists, disorders of the mind are portrayed as disorders of violence, and in the case of 'Julia Wilson', the medication that would have otherwise controlled her had been deprived, resulting in the murder of two family members. While it was unquestioned in these articles whether mental illness and violence are inherently linked, the perpetrator and figure of blame was the Church of Scientology.

In the two articles published between June and September 2010, disorders of the mind were still portrayed as disorders of violence, but the figure of blame had shifted, illustrating the extent to which journalists can draw on and reinforce specific narratives when telling their stories about PWMI. In this small sub-sample of articles from 2010, the explanation for the double-murder shifted from the Church of Scientology to Yolande Lucire, the perpetrator's treating psychiatrist at the time she killed her father and sister. These distinct and contradictory explanations, presented by journalists who reported on the same broad case three years apart, suggests a complexity to murders of this kind that frequently goes unacknowledged when journalists seek to explain why they take place. More often than not, these abhorrent examples of violence appear to occur because of a broad array of social factors, in this case, those related to religious beliefs and psychiatric care. When journalists employ mental illness as an explanatory device they inform a narrative of mental-health-related violence that is both inaccurate and stigmatizing.

The third and final section of this chapter examined the story of Jayant Kumar Singh, with particular attention given to journalists' use of descriptive language to describe the crime he committed. Descriptive and graphic accounts of both the murder weapons and the type of murder committed were documented across all three articles that described the Singh case. The extent to which these descriptions are helpful for the reader in understanding the nature of the crime must certainly be questioned as their only tangible purpose appears to be to convey to the reader the barbaric nature of the perpetrator's actions. I suspect that this is a convenient way to carve a distance between the reader and the perpetrator, for if Singh's actions are far beyond the realms of human possibility, and he has been found not guilty on the grounds of mental illness, his actions can be attributed to a violent and psychotic mental health disorder.

The correlation between mental illness and violence has been a continuing theme throughout the articles examined in both this and the previous chapter. In the following chapter, focus shifts to acts of indiscriminant violence; those crimes committed by individuals described as 'mentally ill' against strangers and fellow citizens.

[1] The 'extended family' category described in this section includes all blood relatives as well as housemates and other living companions. It was felt that violence that takes place between two housemates still essentially constitutes domestic/family violence as its primary site is the family home.

[2] These articles were Deborah Cassrels's 'I hear voices', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 16 February 2002; 'Australian's 15 years in Thai jail for murder', published in *The Australian* on 12 April 2002; Anna Patty's 'The system failure that is beyond all reason', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 1 August 2002; Lorna Knowles's ''Devil woman' murdered – Children, estranged husband 'insane'', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 13 August 2002; Lorna Knowles's 'Family deny ritual murder', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 13 August 2002; Anna Patty's 'Ill-treated for daring to care', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 19 January 2004; Margaret O'Rourke's 'RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS?', published in *The Australian* on 3 April 2004; Susan Wyndham's 'On death and madness', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 9 August 2004; Susan Wyndham's 'Death and madness', published in *The Age* on 16 August 2004; Mark Oberhardt's 'Husband jailed for running down wife', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 9 March 2006; Steven Wardill's 'Mother slams naming', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 27 May 2006; Bruce McDougall's 'Family living in fear of stalker', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 9 January 2007; Steve Dow's 'New grading, new role', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 31 May 2007; 'VIP JUSTICE – Courts smile on stars in trouble', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 18 July 2007; Nick McKenzie and Christian Catalano's 'Home, bleak home?', published in *The Age* on 3 September 2007; Gemma Jones's 'Accused wife killer's mental health defence', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 15 September 2007; Natasha Wallace's 'This psychiatrist killed his wife. So why haven't his patients been told?', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 7 June 2008; Bellinda Kontominas's 'Wife told psychiatrist she was forced to have sex with boss', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 July 2008; Kate Hagan's 'Woman cleared of baby sister's 1961 killing', published in *The Age* on 22 January 2009; Geesche Jacobsen's 'The clincher argument that calls for courage', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 May 2010; Lisa Davies and Annette Sharp's ''Mentally ill' Newton living in fear', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 3 March 2011; Margaret Scheikowski's 'Ailing actor 'living in utter fear'', published in *The Herald Sun* on 3 March 2011; Fiona Byrne's 'Matthew Newton tells of fear, terror and a death wish I was ready to explode', published in *The Herald Sun* on 22 November 2011; Andrew Bolt's 'Newtons betrayed again', published in *The Herald Sun* on 23 November 2011; Alice Costar, Kate McMahon, and Jackie Epstein's 'Matt's lawyer says violence not sexist', published in *The Herald Sun* on 28 November 2011; Caroline Marcus's 'Are these boys really mad or just plain bad', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 19 February 2013; Henrietta Cook's 'Tragic link to early releases', published in *The Age* on 21 October 2013; and David Murray's 'Mentally ill Rhys took drug rather than medication', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 2 June 2014.

[3] Matthew Newton's physical abuse of former partner Rachael Taylor is well documented across these articles. Along with Siljanovski, Newton is one of only two cases explored in this chapter where the crime was not murder. Dragan Siljanovski tried to kill his former wife by running her over. He is the first of only two cases in this 'spouse' sample where the crime was not murder.

[4] Garner, H 2004, *Joe Cinque's Consolation: A True Story of Death, Grief and the Law*, Picador, Melbourne.

[5] Singh was ultimately charged with manslaughter, but I argue that Susan Wyndham could have used either this verdict, or 'murder' to describe the taking of Joe Cinque's life. Both would have been accurate.

[6] *The Guardian* reported on 26 November 1993 that two 10-year-old boys, Jon Venables and Robert Thompson lured toddler James Bulger away from a Liverpool shopping centre before attempting to drown him in a nearby canal. The articles reported that 'they carried, dragged and kicked [James] along a two and a half mile journey, at times swinging him violently in the air or dropping him against the road, until they reached the railway where they stoned him with bricks, bashed his head with a 22lb iron bar, and left him dead across the tracks to be cut in half by a passing goods train'.

[7] The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth is an organisation committed to ensuring the wellbeing of Australians aged 0-24. Its principal objective is to identify the problems facing children and young people in Australia, and target those that are most urgent.

[8] Helen Garner's 'Why she broke' was published in *The Monthly* in June 2017. It detailed the story of Akon Guode, a South-Sudanese refugee, widow, and mother of seven children, who drove her car into a lake in the Melbourne suburb of Wyndham Vale in April 2015. Garner's piece offered insight into the broader social stressors that can be involved in taking the lives of those we care about the most.

[9] These articles were Kara Lawrence's 'WELCOME HOME – 24-year-old killer's three life sentences', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 18 September 2004; Kara Lawrence's 'WELCOME HOME – Family killer will die behind bars', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 18 September 2004; Michelle Cazzulino's 'The cult of disbelief – How Scientology turns science on its head', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 11 July 2007; Hedley Thomas's 'Inside a man-made religion', published in *The Australian* on 12 July 2007; Elisabeth Wynhausen and Dan Box's 'Religious mind games', published in *The Australian* on 14 July 2007; 'Mental illness plea', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 11 October 2008; Rick Feneley's 'Experts fear backlash over killings', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 12 November 2009; 'Biennale boss admired', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 13 November 2009; David Barrett, Rhett Watson, and Gemma Jones's 'Glimpse of killer's lonely world --- Waterlow family murder', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 14 November 2009; Rick Feneley's 'Loving father 'never stopped trying to help Anthony'', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 21 November 2009; Kim Arlington's 'Psychiatrist's patient care questioned', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 11 June 2010; Kim Arlington's 'Killer's family sue 'negligent' doctor', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 13 September 2010; Jodie Minus's 'Curator's son haunted by schizophrenia killings of father, sister', published in *The Australian* on 13 April 2011; Jodie Minus's 'Waterlow still mentally ill, court told', published in *The Australian* on 15 April 2011; Louise Hall's 'Waterlow verdict: victims of a system powerless to protect', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 20 April 2011; Richard Ackland's 'Moving beyond either bad or mad', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 22 April 2011; Amy Corderoy and Nicky Phillips's 'Life sentence in the grey zone', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 18 June 2011; Amy Corderoy's 'Mentally ill to get right to appeal for treatment', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 22 August 2011; Mark Morri's ''Mentally ill' crims fooling the courts', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 26 December 2011; Amy Corderoy's 'Mentally ill must be treated even if they say no – expert', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 21 July 2012; Josephine Tovey's 'Treatment laws for mentally ill debated', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 5 September 2012; 'INNER DEMONS Family fights for tougher laws after madness leads to tragedy', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 23 February 2013; Paul Bibby's 'Waterlow family seeks review over mental health', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 23 February 2013; Dan Box's 'Mental illness rethink urged – EXCLUSIVE', published in *The Australian* on 30

May 2013; Jared Owens's 'Waterlow killings: call for mental health reform', published in *The Australian* on 11 January 2014; Louise Hall's 'Health system failure led to the Waterlow killings: coroner finding', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 11 January 2014; and Amy Corderoy's 'Mental health laws overhaul criticized for being cosmetic', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 7 November 2014.

[10] For legal reasons, journalists reporting on this case were forced to use pseudonyms to describe the victims and the perpetrator.

[11] Kent, SA, & Manca, TA 2014, 'A war over mental health professionalism: Scientology versus psychiatry', *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 1-23. Kent and Manca examine the ways in which Scientology attempted to present itself as 'a rival profession to psychiatry', at a time when broader challenges to the psychiatric profession were taking place. Scientology's broad opposition to psychiatry continues.

[12] Stuart, H 2003, 'Violence and mental illness: an overview', *World Psychiatry*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 121-124. Stuart's research is based on three separate research questions: 'Are the mentally ill violent? Are the mentally ill at increased risk of violence? Are the public at risk'. Stuart found that the most reliable determinants of violence are socio-demographic and economic factors, and that 'the mentally ill are more often victims than perpetrators of violence'.

[13] These articles were Leonie Lamont's 'Patient sues hospital for letting him out on night of killing', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 15 October 2002; Brooke Williamson's 'Court to award compo to killer', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 20 August 2003; Brooke Williamson's 'HOW CAN THAT BE JUSTICE – Court awards $300,000 payout to the man who killed Kelley-Anne', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 20 August 2003; Brooke Williamson's 'Court awards $300,000 payout to the man who killed Kelley-Anne – HOW CAN THAT BE JUSTICE', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 20 August 2003; Brooke Williamson's 'Brutal killer to get $300,000 payout', published in *The Herald Sun* on 20 August 2003; Frances O'Shea's 'Killer's freedom cut short – Presland detained in psychiatric unit', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 25 September 2003; Frances O'Shea's 'Killer's freedom cut short - $300,000 payout but back in custody', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 25 September 2003; France's O'Shea's 'Murder family in limbo – Parents await court's finding on compensation for killer', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 25 August 2004; 'Hospital appeals Presland payout', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 16 November 2004; Vanda Carson's 'Compo for killer cut on appeal', published in *The Australian* on 22 April 2005; Simon Benson's 'Law tightens on insane loophole', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 15 September 2005; Amanda Gearing's 'Man charged over double killing', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 4 January 2006; Lillian Saleh and Bruce McDougall's 'TEARS FOR A SISTER – Family tragedy exposes mental health crisis', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 8 January 2007; Geesche Jacobsen's 'Accused was a man of peace, court told', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 22 July 2008; Ian Munro's 'Killing highlights a system 'in crisis'', published in *The Age* on 27 June 2009; Kate Benson's 'Prisoner reforms leave victims' families in fear', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 September 2009; Ian Munro's 'BEYOND CARE', published in *The Age* on 21 December 2009; Jodie Minus's 'Psychotic killer warned hospital', published in *The Australian* on 30 June 2010; 'Judge rules baby killer mentally ill', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 30 June 2010; 'Mental illness behind murder, court told', published in *The Burnie Advocate* on 26 August 2011; and 'YOUR STATE – NSW & ACT', published in *The Australian* on 11 April 2013.

Chapter Six

Indiscriminate Violence

> Terrorism is an anxiety inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by … individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly … and serve as message generators.[1]

A total of 86 articles told stories of indiscriminate violence committed by individuals that Australian journalists defined as 'mentally ill'. Distinct from the content examined in Chapters Four and Five, these stories did not take place in the family setting. Rather, the group contains stories of random violence committed against persons unknown to the perpetrator. The articles examined in this chapter include reports on events which took place overseas, as well violent crime which occurred outside the date parameters set for sourcing articles for this study. These stories include the World Trade Centre attacks in New York City on 11 September 2001, the Lindt Café 'Sydney Siege' on 15 December 2014, the 1996 Port Arthur Massacre, the 2007 Virginia Tech school shooting in the United States, and Anders Behring Breivik's massacre of 76 civilians in Norway in 2011.

An analysis of these 86 newspaper articles yielded a total of four sub-categories, each examined in this chapter. These were 'terrorism', of which 27 articles comprised stories of what western culture refers to as 'acts of terror'; 'mass shootings', where 13 articles documented mostly North American cases of gun violence; 'knife attacks', comprising three articles devoted to a series of attacks on children at schools across China; and 'murder', where 43 articles comprised stories of murders committed against victims unknown to the perpetrator. The analysis that follows illustrates the extent to which Australian journalists continue to portray these acts of horrific violence as the product of mental illness. I begin with stories of terror.

Terrorism

The sub-category coded 'terrorism' contains 27 articles that documented sixteen individual stories of either threatened, perceived, or deliberate violence committed against unsuspecting persons by an individual Australian journalists described as 'mentally ill'. These articles were published between September 2001 and December 2014, with ten in *The Australian*, five in *The Age*, four in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, three each in *The Herald Sun* and *The Daily Telegraph*, and two in *The Courier-Mail*.

In all but one of these sixteen cases, the perpetrator was named in the article reporting on the crime. All sixteen individuals were male, and they were: Man Horan Monis (*n*= 5), who took hostages at the Lindt Café in Martin Place, Sydney, on 15 December 2014; John Hinckley (*n*= 3), who on 30 March 1981 attempted to assassinate the then United States President Ronald Reagan; Edward Coburn

(*n*= 3), who in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City, attempted to force his way into the cockpit of an American Airlines plane bound for Chicago on 9 October 2001; Khaled Sharrouf (*n*= 3), a 24-year-old man who, along with seven others, allegedly planned terrorist attacks on Australian soil; Kim Dae-hwan (*n*= 2), a 56-year-old man responsible for the deaths of 'at least 125 people' when he lit a flammable drink carton and tossed it into a train carriage at a busy downtown subway station in Daegu, South Korea, in February 2003; Hasan Akbar (*n*= 2), a United States soldier sentenced to death for killing two officers in a grenade and rifle attack on his own platoon during the Iraq War; Wail Ali al-Shehri (*n*= 1), a 26-year-old Saudi man described by Michael Theodoulou in an article published in *The Australian* as a 'mentally ill' man suspected of hijacking one of the planes that were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001; Goran Ivan Batori (*n*= 1), 30 years of age, charged with threatening to endanger a Virgin Airlines flight from Melbourne to Brisbane on 5 June 2003; David Kang (*n*= 1), who fired a 'starter pistol' at Prince Charles when he visited Darling Harbour in 1994; Mathew Stewart (*n*= 1), described as 'just an ordinary guy who loved surfing and a barbie', but who had left Australia to join al-Qaeda; David Mark Robinson (*n*= 1), found not guilty by reason of mental impairment of charges related to hijacking a plane between Melbourne and Launceston in May 2003; Rigoberto Alpizar (*n*= 1), who shocked neighbours when news reports confirmed he had planted a bomb at Miami Airport; and finally, Shane Kent (*n*= 1), a Melburnian alleged to have joined the Taliban. One article reported on 'the London bombers', who on 7 July 2006, coordinated a series of attacks on London's public transport system during the morning rush-hour.

Consistent with the articles explored in previous analysis chapters, each of these men were described by Australian journalists as 'mentally ill'. If the list above seems exhaustive, then it should be understood as reflective of the broader content of the sample. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the extent to which mental illness was used as an explanatory narrative in these articles, and whether alternative explanations for violent crime were included. The section is divided into three parts. The first examines six articles that reported on real or planned terrorist attacks that involved passenger planes. The second explores five articles that reported on the 'Sydney Siege' hostage situation, while the third is devoted to two stories where Australians joined al-Qaeda and the Taliban respectively. I begin with an examination of one piece, published in *The Australian*, which explained the September 11 terrorist attacks as an outcome of mental illness.

New York City: 11 September 2001

At approximately 8am on 11 September 2001, terrorists associated with al-Qaeda seized control of two commercial passenger jets minutes after take-off from Logan Airport in Boston. A third passenger aircraft that had been hijacked had also just left Boston, while a fourth was travelling from New Jersey. At 9.30am one of these planes hit the Pentagon in Washington. Between 9.50am and 10.27am, both

towers of the World Trade Centre in New York City collapsed. Julian Borger, Duncan Campbell, Charlie Porter, and Stuart Miller wrote for *The Guardian* the following day that the tragedy was an 'unprecedented full-frontal attack on America and its people'.[1] The consequences of 9/11 are numerous, and stretch well beyond the great loss of human life. The months that followed that day saw the United Kingdom and Australia join the United States in a 'Coalition of the Willing', and the subsequent invasions of both Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 resulted in the deaths and displacement of thousands of innocent civilians, as well as the killing of more than 6000 American soldiers.[2]

One article from the sample associated the terrorist attack with mental illness. Writing for *The Australian* on 18 September 2001, Michael Theodoulou reported that 'one of two Saudi brothers suspected of hijacking one of the aircraft that smashed into the World Trade Centre in New York was mentally ill, their father said'. Following this opening paragraph was a short, 191-word summary of Wail Ali al-Shehri's alleged movements in the months leading up to the attack, and his supposed treatment for 'psychological problems'. Theodoulou drew on information provided by the alleged perpetrator's father, a source that provided the bulk of content published in this article. The father was uncertain as to whether two of the Saudi terrorists were his offspring, yet Theodoulou used his account regardless.

> "I thought they were away for such a long period because of treatment, especially since Wail's illness was mental," he told the Saudi daily … he said he was not certain that the two men on the list of suspected hijackers released by the FBI on Friday were his sons.

Theodoulou's was the only article in the sample published between 2000 and 2014 that addressed 9/11 and claimed that one of the hijackers was a PWMI. The piece contained a dramatic headline that featured several capitalized words: 'Suspect was mentally ill – WAR OF TERROR – HUNTING THE KILLERS'. *Mindframe*'s guidelines for mental health reporting recommend that journalists avoid using 'mentally ill' or referring to mental illness in the headline of a piece containing a story of violent crime unless the journalist is compelled to do so. The reason for this is two-fold. First, mentioning an individual's mental illness in the headline can sensationalize the illness and reinforce stigma. Second, and specifically with relation to Theodoulou's article, it can have the effect of exaggerating the role mental illness played in the crime being described.[3] Did Theodoulou believe mental illness played a significant role in the 9/11 attacks? Associating mental illness with the most significant terrorist attack in modern history would at best appear highly speculative. The effect of Theodoulou's attempt to provide a clearer picture of the background and mental health history of one of the alleged terrorists was to reinforce the explanatory mental health narrative.

This tendency of journalists to draw on mental illness as an explanation for violent behaviour was evident in three more articles published in October 2001 when journalists reported on a man's thwarted attempt to hijack a Chicago-bound flight.[4] *The Herald Sun* explained that flight crew and passengers helped to 'subdue a mentally ill man who forced his way into the cockpit. The FBI said

Edward Coburn ... had a history of mental illness'. Reporting for *The Courier-Mail*, Darren Giles painted a more vivid description of the danger this individual posed, stating that Coburn 'violently forced his way' towards the cockpit. *The Australian* also opened with an alarming tone.

> US military jets scrambled yesterday to escort a commercial jetliner to a safe landing after passengers helped the crew subdue a mentally ill man who forced his way into the cockpit.

In each of these three articles, mental illness was presented as the principal factor precipitating Coburn's actions. *The Australian* reported that the suspect had been 'acting strangely and could pose a problem', while Darren Giles noted for *The Courier-Mail* that 'other passengers said they had heard Coburn screaming that he wanted to crash the plane into Chicago's Sears Tower'. Giles's article ran with the headline: 'Mentally ill man tries to hijack flight'. One possible problem with these articles was not that they were inaccurate, but that they portrayed an image of the lived experience of mental illness that is far removed from reality. The assumption that appears to underpin the articles that reported on Edward Coburn's crime was that one must be suffering from a mental illness to attempt to hijack a passenger jet. In this particular case, the details provided appear accurate. But one must question the extent to which this kind of reporting informs and encourages the mental health explanatory narrative, linking every attempted hijacking of a passenger plane to mental illness, and so many of the killings explored in Chapters Four and Five. In the following section, I examine those articles that reported on the story of Man Horan Monis; the Iranian-born refugee and Australian citizen responsible for the 'Sydney Siege'.

Sydney: 15 December 2014

Five articles reported on the 'Sydney Siege' hostage situation, which took place at the Lindt Café in Martin Place, Sydney, on 15 December 2014.[5] The 'Sydney Siege' was a 16-hour standoff between a lone gunman, Man Horan Monis, and police officers from the NSW Tactical Operations Unit. In the early hours of 16 December, Monis was killed, while two hostages also lost their lives in the attack.[6] This group of five articles includes one piece each from *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Courier-Mail*, and *The Australian*, and all were published between 18-23 December 2014. The overarching theme uniting this group was a focus on Australia's collective desire to understand how an event of this nature could occur. This section examines four of these five pieces because of the commonalities that existed between them. The fifth article, published in *The Australian*, focused on the ABC's reluctance to correlate the Sydney Siege with Islamic terrorism. This article was not included in the analysis because its focus was on journalism and language as opposed to mental illness and its relationship with violence.[7]

The first article to appear in the sample, chronologically, was Julie Szego's 'The deadly pack of loners', published in *The Age* on 18 December 2014. Szego reported that there was 'lingering doubt'

as to whether the Sydney Siege should be labelled a terrorist attack, or rather, a crime perpetrated by a 'lone nut'. This 944-word discussion mirrored a similar article published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* where Julie Lewis quoted members of the general public in order to explore the following question: 'was he [Monis] a terrorist? If not, what?' The purpose of both articles seemed to be to engage in a discussion of the factors that underpinned the Sydney Siege. Significant was the apparent willingness of both journalists to regard the event as either the outcome of mental illness or terrorism. This was most evident when Julie Lewis quoted one man from the ACT, who stated that 'a violent mentally ill man acted out his horrible delusions in the worst way possible', and then followed this quote with another from a Wollongong man, who argued that 'by portraying [Monis] as mentally ill we stigmatize people with mental illness'.

Aside from Szego's use of the terms 'lone nut' and 'lone madman' – language that was not hers, but rather, quotes from unnamed sources – the language used in both pieces was mostly sensitive to people diagnosed or being treated for mental illness. This contrasted with the content in Samantha Maiden's article, published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 21 December 2014. Maiden sought to ease some of the confusion that surrounded the circumstances leading up to the Sydney Siege. Her principal claim was that questions as to why Man Horan Monis was not on a 'terror watchlist' were misguided, given no such list exists. When Maiden did refer to mental illness, the language she used was unsophisticated and discriminatory. Monis was described as a 'terrorist and madman', and in conjunction with this identity, Maiden made it clear that mental illness underpinned the attack.

> The terrible truth is ASIO simply does not have the resources to keep an eye on every nutter in Australia downloading jihadist death videos at any moment in time. This is the entire reason "lone wolf" terrorists such as Monis – who are violent, dangerous, mentally ill and inspired by jihadist material now so freely available online – are so dangerous.

Maiden documented some of the broader social factors outside mental illness that she argued underpinned the attack, and argued that authorities 'should have been monitoring his [Monis's] propensity towards domestic and sexual violence'. Though in concluding the article, Maiden drew the reader's focus back to mental health.

> Many experts now believe the combination of mental illness and domestic violence can be a very serious indicator of an extremists' capacity to engage in acts of violence.

The 'many experts' that Maiden drew on to make this claim were not named in the piece, and so this point remained unsubstantiated. The article concluded with a quote from the then Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, who described Monis as 'a sick and disturbed individual', the effect of which was to reinforce the significant role mental illness played in this event.

Maiden's article was published on 21 December 2014. The following day, Karen Brooks, an associate professor at the University of Queensland's Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies, published a 687-word piece in *The Courier-Mail* that sought to do the opposite of Maiden's work and place

distance between mental illness and all cases of horrific violence. Brooks opened the piece with the following:

> Whenever an atrocity leaves the community reeling, whether it be the stabbing of eight children in Cairns, the tragic siege at the Lindt café in Sydney last week … mass shootings in Norway, Sandy Hook or Port Arthur, there's a rush to understand the motivation and mindset of the perpetrators in order to reassure ourselves they were either "mad" or "bad". In other words, not like us. In trying to make sense of the senseless, these acts of violence are often blamed on the perpetrators' mental health.

The content in Brooks's article contrasted distinctly with the language used by Maiden, who described those who struggle with mental illness (and go on to commit violent crimes) as 'nutters' and 'madmen'. Brooks addressed this kind of language in her piece – though not Maiden directly – and stated that words such as 'unstable', 'nutcase' and 'madmen' have the effect of positioning individuals who are being treated for mental illness as a distinct 'other'. This offers supporting evidence for my claim that language is used today as a means of confining those being diagnosed and treated for mental illness. These individuals are confined to a stigmatized identity: a subtle continuation of the confinement narrative explored in Chapter Two of this thesis. The following argument would appear to be the central philosophical foundation of Brooks's piece:

> Having a mental illness doesn't automatically mean a person cannot differentiate between right and wrong. Statistically, those with a legitimate mental illness are more likely to be recipients of violence than the perpetrators.

Setting aside the fifth article in this group, the four pieces analysed in this section could be understood as representative of so much of the coverage that follows events of this kind, where mental health is a significant focus and is frequently used to explain violent crime. The first two articles examined in this section, written by Szego and Lewis, engaged in a discussion that sought to shed light on some of the factors that underpin an event like the Sydney Siege. No definitive statements were made concerning whether the event constituted a terrorist attack or an outcome of mental illness, but it was clear in both pieces that these were the only likely means of explaining an event of this kind. In contrast, Samantha Maiden's article reinforced a direct correlation between mental illness and violence, and contributed to mental health stigma through the use of language such as 'nutter' and 'madmen'. Maiden also reinforced a link between mental illness, domestic/sexual violence, and terrorist attacks of this kind, citing 'some experts' to support this claim. The final article analysed in this section could be seen as representing the voice of reason. After the public discussion of the involvement of mental illness in the Sydney Siege, Karen Brooks reasoned that a diagnosis of mental illness does not automatically offer an explanation for violent crime, pointing out that 'it is possible to behave in a violent, abusive and socially abhorrent way without possessing any mental illness whatsoever'. While Brooks's commentary is not representative of the broader sample of newspaper articles that examined horrific acts of terror through the lens of mental illness, it illustrates the alternative ways Australian journalists can construct mental-health-related news content, remaining mindful of the effect correlating mental illness and violence can have on the public's understanding of PWMI. What the mental health explanatory narrative also does

is obscure any broader exploration of other social factors that inevitably underpin these types of criminal actions.

The following section examines two stories of Australian men who joined extremist groups in the Middle East. I examine the blurred line between religious zealotry and madness, and the ways Australian journalists attempted to understand the relationship between the two.

The Taliban and al-Qaeda

> Cultural and socioeconomic factors must be considered, particularly when the individual and the clinician do not share the same cultural and socioeconomic background. Ideas that appear to be delusional in one culture (e.g., witchcraft) may be commonly held in another. In some cultures, visual or auditory hallucinations with a religious content (e.g., hearing God's voice) are a normal part of religious experience.[8]

The fifth edition of *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* advises clinicians to assess different styles of emotional expression in the context of that individual's cultural and socioeconomic background. This idea – that even one's emotional expression can be understood as a product of socio-cultural norms – is central to this thesis, and was explored in Chapter Two. How one interprets that emotional expression is also based on prevailing norms. In this section, I assess the extent to which Australian journalists who reported on two separate stories imposed western cultural norms, beliefs and attitudes onto a complex situation in order to help understand it. Two separate stories, documented across two articles, form the focus of this section.[9] The first concerned 'surf-loving' Mathew Stewart, who joined al-Qaeda between 2001 and 2005; while the second was the story of Shane Kent, who had been linked with the Taliban after a CD seized from the 'Melbourne terror cell member' in 2003 was found to have contained an al-Qaeda training manual and movie files of Taliban executions. The analysis that follows examines the extent to which two Australian journalists explained a white Australian's religious zealotry and extremism as mental illness. In doing so, they seem to have set aside a discussion of broader socio-cultural factors that necessarily underpin these kinds of stories, and instead focused on western cultural ideals of normality and abnormality.

The first article to appear in this sample was Luke McIlveen's 'MADE IN AUSTRALIA', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 13 August 2003. In this piece, McIlveen reported on the story of Mathew Stewart, a 25-year-old former Australian Army soldier who had joined al-Qaeda. The piece was 1768 words in length, and after detailing Stewart's story, it explored similar cases where Australian men had travelled to Afghanistan and joined al-Qaeda following the 9/11 attacks in New York City. Stewart was described by the journalist as a once fun-loving Aussie larrikin turned 'ranting militant'.

An analysis of this piece yielded three significant findings. The first concerns the way McIlveen used language familiar to – and representative of – Australian values to contrast with Mathew Stewart's decision to join al-Qaeda and the fight against the west. The piece opened as follows: 'Mathew Stewart was just another ordinary guy who loved surfing and a barbie', and two paragraphs later, McIlveen

described Stewart again as 'surf-loving'. McIlveen quoted Stewart's 'childhood friend' Adam Miechel, who explained that he 'had no doubt the ranting militant in the [al-Qaeda propaganda] video was the mate he knocked around with while growing up on the Sunshine Coast'. The effect of this language, and in particular, the phrase 'knocked around with', was to contrast Mathew Stewart's decision to join al-Qaeda with images of an idyllic upbringing in what is widely regarded as 'the lucky country'.[10] Australians are portrayed as fun-loving people who enjoy barbecues, surfing, and 'knocking around' with their mates. I argue that these descriptors were used purposefully by McIlveen to contrast with Stewart's decision to leave the country for Afghanistan. At this point in the article, Stewart's decision to fight for al-Qaeda had not yet been explained as a product of mental illness, and so the first 500 words lay the foundation for this argument by describing an 'ordinary guy who loved surfing and a barbie' as having left the Sunshine Coast for radicalized Islam.

The second finding follows on from the first, and is one that has been identified in all analysis sections of this thesis. McIlveen explained Stewart's decision to join al-Qaeda as a product of his mental illness. He detailed Stewart's discharge from the Australian Army on mental health grounds.

> In 1999, Stewart was conducting a routine patrol in East Timor with his 2nd Royal Australian Regiment when he made a gruesome discovery. The body of a Dutch journalist lay in the gutter … his chest riddled with bullets and his face hacked away with a knife. When he returned from his tour of duty to Queensland's Sunshine Coast, Stewart grew withdrawn and morose. After just six months in service, the army decided he was no longer fit to wear the uniform and discharged him on psychological grounds, sending him into a spiral of depression.

By 2002, US forces would identify Stewart as an al-Qaeda recruit after a video released by the terrorist group featured Stewart bellowing the words: 'as we are killed, you will be killed'. McIlveen drew on a number of sources to confirm the mental health challenges Stewart had faced following his time in East Timor. He stated that Stewart's friends believed he was 'a troubled but harmless young man who did not know his own mind', while Anne Degotardi, a friend who attended college with Stewart in 1992, described him as 'a nice guy who had some problems'.

Stewart's mother was also drawn on to confirm this narrative. While in the opening paragraphs of this piece, McIlveen had reported that 'Vicki Stewart strongly denied her son was the masked man' pictured in the al-Qaeda video, Stewart was later employed to reinforce the link between her son's actions and his battle with mental illness. McIlveen explained that Stewart had lost contact with her son and had almost given him 'up for dead', but remained adamant that 'her boy [was] mentally ill, not an Islamic terrorist'. In an interview that took place in 2004, which McIlveen drew on and paraphrased, Vicki Stewart portrayed her son's actions as the outcome of mental illness, and specifically, depression.

> "I don't think it's a case of blame. I couldn't have loved him any more than I loved him. I would do nothing different, but if someone came to me now I would recognize it [depression]".

The presence of Vicki Stewart added a confusing element to this article. There was an obvious discrepancy in the reporting of Stewart's beliefs around the whereabouts of her son. She was described in the opening paragraphs of the article as not believing her son had joined al-Qaeda at all, and later in

the piece, without explanation, McIlveen confirmed that Vicki Stewart was 'a campaigner for the prevention of mental illness in young people' after her son had become 'an Islamic terrorist'.

The details of Stewart's time in East Timor and his experience of seeing the 'gruesome' body of a Dutch journalist lying in the gutter of the capital Dili were detailed accurately by the journalist. McIlveen documented the difficulties Stewart faced upon returning to the Sunshine Coast, and how these led to his being discharged from the Australian Army on psychological grounds. There is little room to argue against the presence of mental illness in this particular case, but one can certainly question the way McIlveen used depression to explain a young man's decision to leave Australia for Afghanistan to join al-Qaeda.

The same narrative was employed in the second article examined in this section, Kate Hagan's 'Portrait of the terrorist as a Melbourne man', published in *The Age* on 19 August 2009. Similar to McIlveen's coverage of the story of Mathew Stewart, Hagan's focus was on Australian-born terrorists. The article opened as follows:

> This photograph of Shane Kent posing with an AK-47 assault rifle was on a CD seized from the Melbourne terror cell member in 2003, in a folder titled "Taliban".

Shane Kent, 33 years of age, pleaded guilty in July 2009 to the charge of being a member of a Melbourne terror cell 'between July 2004 and November 2005, and recklessly making a document (a propaganda video) connected with a terrorist act'. Similar to reports on the story of Mathew Stewart, Shane Kent's actions were portrayed as the product of mental illness.

> John Champion, SC, who also represented Kent, said his client – who is married with three children – was mentally ill at the time of the offending and a psychiatrist believed it was "highly likely his ability to make decisions and exercise sound judgement was compromised. He said Kent had a family history of mental illness.

And so we reach a margin filled with questions for which we have few answers. The margin is the divide between fanaticism/religious zealotry and mental illness; the question is whether these two overlap and intersect, and whether one can be explained by the presence of the other. The journalists who reported on the cases of Mathew Stewart and Shane Kent dedicated a portion of their articles to reinforcing the mental health explanatory narrative. They portrayed the actions of both men as seriously abnormal, but better understood in light of their mental health struggles. When we consider these articles in the context of the results presented in the two chapters preceding this one, we can reflect on a persistent narrative where violence and the threat of violence are described as the product of an abnormality of mind. While Mathew Stewart and Shane Kent might have been suffering from a mental illness at the time they committed their respective offences, an examination of other social causes for the problem of 'home-grown' terrorism was surely warranted. Both of these pieces sought to understand how an Australian-born citizen could stray so far as to join an Islamic terrorist organisation, but little attention was given to some of the social factors that could underpin this kind of problem. Mental illness was mentioned and reinforced as playing an important role in this story, and this obscured a broader

exploration of the important role socio-economic circumstances, social support, community cohesion, and the use of the Internet and access to propaganda material via the web, can play in stories of this kind. These were set aside in favour of a simpler equation: mental illness leads to violence.

Mass Shootings

This section examines thirteen articles published between 18 June 2004 and 28 April 2014 that reported on mass shootings committed by seven individuals described by journalists as 'mentally ill'.[11] Similar to the cases explored in the previous section, all the perpetrators were male, and they were Martin Bryant (*n*= 4), who killed 35 people in Port Arthur, Tasmania, in 1996, in what was then the world's worst single person mass shooting; Cho Seung-Hui (*n*= 2), described by *The Herald Sun* as 'a mentally ill 23-year-old student' who killed 32 people and then himself at Virginia Tech University in the United States in April 2007; Jared Loughner (*n*= 2), a lone gunman responsible for the deaths of sixteen people in Tucson, Arizona on 8 January 2011; Anders Behring Breivik (*n*= 2), who committed the 2011 Norway attacks that killed 77 people; Huan Yun Xiang (*n*= 1), who shot dead two classmates at Monash University on 21 October 2001 and was later found not guilty by reason of mental impairment; Isaac Zamora (*n*= 1), who killed six people in a shooting rampage in Washington on 2 September 2008; and James Holmes (*n*= 1), responsible for the 12 July 2012 Colorado 'Batman' shooting that saw 12 people killed and 58 others injured.

In this section, these seven cases have been separated into two groups. The first examines those four cases of North American gun violence that involved James Holmes, Jared Loughner, Isaac Zamora, and Cho Seung-Hui. The second explores coverage of the stories of Anders Behring Breivik and Martin Bryant, two individuals often cited in discussions of 'the world's worst massacre by a single gunman'.[12] The discussion and analysis of this second group of articles is limited to the story of Anders Behring Breivik, whose crime and the reporting that followed are representative of both cases. Each of the crimes examined in this section were committed by men, and constituted indiscriminate violence against persons unrelated to the perpetrator. A closer examination of specific cases, such as the Virginia Tech school shooting, has been justified on the basis that these examples were representative of the broader group of articles.

Virginia, United States: 16 April 2007

Examination of the reporting on four individual cases of North American gun violence begins with the school shooting at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University on 16 April 2007. The perpetrator, Cho Seung-Hui, was described by *The Herald Sun* as a 'mentally ill 23-year-old student', who killed 32 people and then himself in what was, at that time, the deadliest mass shooting by a lone gunman in America's history.[13] The argument that underpins this section on North American gun violence is that the Australian journalists who wrote these six articles presented mental illness as the principal factor

underpinning these massacres, and promoted the mental health explanation at the expense of a broader appreciation of problems relating to gun control and the ease with which Americans can legally purchase semi-automatic handguns and bulk ammunition. On 23 April 2007, *The Herald Sun* reported the following:

> As the 27 students and five teachers the South Korea-born, US-raised Cho killed were buried, police were investigating how he bought two handguns despite being judged mentally ill. Even under Virginia's lenient gun laws, a judge's finding two years ago that Cho was "an imminent danger to himself as a result of mental illness" should have prevented him from buying guns.

This extract reveals a great deal about how the American judicial system understands and appreciates the social factors that underpin violent crime. According to police, the problem was not that Cho Seung-Hui purchased two handguns, but that he was able to do so 'despite being judged mentally ill'. One interpretation of the article published in *The Herald Sun* is that those diagnosed with mental illness have an intrinsic propensity towards violence, are irrational and uncontrollable, while those who could be described as mentally well are assumed to be incapable of the same sort of criminal action. In short, mental illness informs violence and violent crime. I argue that this narrative is informed by a deeply ingrained American attitude towards Second Amendment rights – specifically, 'the right of the people to keep and bear Arms' – and a refusal among large segments of the country's population to set aside this deeply entrenched value and acknowledge that there is a problem in the United States with gun control, access to bulk ammunition, and violence.[14]

Patrick Bishop's 950-word *Courier-Mail* piece published in the aftermath of the Virginia Tech shooting engaged in a realistic discussion of the policy changes that were likely to follow the massacre. Bishop was the head of Politics and Public Policy at Griffith University in Queensland, and had spent six months at Virginia Tech in 2003 as a visiting scholar. Based on his experience working in the North American education system, Bishop reported the following:

> On the likely policy outcomes, despite talk of increased gun control … I don't anticipate there will be a co-ordinated national or federal response. Attempts to bring about national legislation after the Columbine massacre in Colorado eight years ago have lapsed.

Bishop suggested later in the article that the most probable response would relate to 'how mental illness is understood, treated, and managed'. Again, the implicit assumption embedded in these quotes is that if mental illness were to be addressed, then massacres of the kind seen at Virginia Tech and Columbine would be rare, or at the very least, far less likely. This obscures what could be argued is a much more pressing and necessary discussion related to gun control.

The same narrative was present in two other cases; that of Isaac Zamora and James Holmes. Twenty-eight-year old Isaac Zamora killed six people in a 'shooting spree' that 'stretched from a small north-west Washington town on to the state's busiest highway' according to an article published in *The Australian* on 4 September 2008. While the unnamed author mentioned a previous six-month jail sentence served by Zamora for drug possession, mental illness was still employed as the principal

narrative explaining the crime. The journalist explained that 'Zamora's mother said she had tried repeatedly to get help for her son, whom she described as "desperately mentally ill"', and also cited a connection between the perpetrator and one of his victims.

> The dead included a Skagit County sheriff deputy … the slain deputy was identified as Anne Jackson, 40, whom Ms Zamora described as a sympathetic figure who had tried to help the family in the past. "She was very gracious … she knew exactly what we were going through, said her brother was going through some similar stuff".

One can assume that what the Zamora family 'were going through', that the slain sheriff's brother had also experienced, was mental illness. In this article, it was mental illness that led to the deaths of six innocent people, and this narrative had also been employed in the *Burnie Advocate* coverage of the James Holmes Colorado 'Batman' shooting, published in August 2012.

What unites the group of articles examined in this section is a collective acknowledgment of each shooting as the result of mental illness, as opposed to a problem with laws relating to gun control. This narrative was most evident in an article published in *The Australian* on 18 January 2011 which reported on the 'Arizona shooting rampage' committed by 22-year-old Jared Loughner. The unnamed journalist opened the piece by stating that the massacre had 'exposed a gaping hole in the US mental healthcare system … with numerous red flags going unheeded before the tragedy'. Jared Loughner shot dead 19 people, and wounded congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, on 8 January 2011. He killed six of those victims outside a supermarket. What was ironic about the analysis provided by this unnamed journalist was that the report acknowledged that Loughner committed the massacre 'using a legally purchased Glock semi-automatic handgun'. Instead of using this as the foundation for a discussion of the need for tougher restrictions on citizens being able to legally purchase semi-automatic weapons, the journalist instead quoted Dr Fuller Torrey, founder of the Treatment Advocacy Centre, who reinforced the explanatory mental health narrative.

> "I think the system failed miserably … this is a psychiatric failure; it's not a political failure … it's a failure of our ability to provide basic care for people who have brain diseases who are seriously mentally ill".

The unnamed author drew on two more figures to reinforce this narrative. First, the executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Michael Fitzpatrick, stated that 'nationwide, the mental healthcare system is broken'. This was followed by a short quote from the former New York major, Rudy Guiliani, which provided the conclusion to the piece.

> Former New York major Rudy Guiliani yesterday blasted the nation's "inability to deal with mental illness and our inability to deal with it as a society. This man was crying out … to be treated," he told CBS News. "You would think, at some point along the way, he'd have been evaluated".

The notion that a direct correlation exists between mass shootings and mental illness, was also reinforced by Tanveer Ahmed, who reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 2 February 2011 that those being treated for mental illness 'are more prone to aberrant behaviour'. Ahmed supported this assertion with the following:

> The recent attacks in Tucson in the US exposed how much difficulty there is in dealing with the mentally ill as they effect other sectors of our society. The killer had previously appeared somewhat deranged in interactions with police and even video-game websites proclaiming his wishes to kill and maim.

Ahmed reported that Arizona had 'the lowest allocation for mental health of any US state' and that in Canada, Britain, New Zealand, and the US, 'there is a growing debate about how better to equip police to deal with the mentally ill'.

In each of these cases of North American gun violence, problems of mental illness were portrayed by Australian journalists as problems of violence. While all four shootings may have been perpetrated by individuals struggling with mental illness, this should not obscure a broader exploration of other social causes when they are so obviously relevant. The presence of a firearm has significant power to alter any social situation, and as Tim Winton argued in *The Boy Behind the Curtain*, the effect is most often dangerous.

> Most Australians have never owned a firearm. Few will ever handle or discharge one, and I think this is something to be glad of. In moments of turmoil the mere presence of a gun alters the atmosphere. In a domestic dispute, a roadside altercation or a bout of depression, the thing most likely to push the scene out of shape beyond saving is a firearm. It so often gets the wrong job done.[15]

Between 1982 and 28 June 2018, the United States have endured 101 mass shootings.[16] Between 1 January 2014 and May 2019, the number of deaths as a result of gun violence in America totals 64480.[17] An analysis of the events described in these newspaper articles should account for mental healthcare, funding allocations, and government policy, but I argue that a comprehensive analysis of gun violence in the United States must necessarily begin with a discussion of the issue of gun control. This was not apparent in this group of articles, which instead reinforced the mental health narrative to explain violence.

Earlier in this chapter articles were examined that reported on terrorist attacks and I south to illustrate the extent to which journalists portrayed these events as mental health stories. The second section, comprising accounts of mass shootings in the United States, yielded a similar finding, but also illustrated Australian journalists' reluctance to engage in a discussion of the prevalence of American gun violence and whether a debate on tighter gun control laws might be necessary. The crimes committed by Jared Loughner, Isaac Zamora, James Holmes, and Cho Seung-Hui, were portrayed as the result of mental illness. This turned stories of gun violence into mental health stories, a shift that I argue creates a comfortable distance between the reader and a distinct abnormal 'other'. The purpose of othering in this case could be understood as contributing to the maintenance of a status quo on laws relating to gun control, for acknowledging our collective and individual capacity for inhumane acts might necessitate a change to Second Amendment rights so deeply valued by a vast majority of Americans. It is easier to blame mental illness, and there is evidence that Australian journalists in this particular group have done just that. In the following section, I examine two articles that reported on the crime of Norwegian mass shooter Anders Behring Breivik. One more article formed part of this small sample, and it was devoted to the mass shooting committed by Martin Bryant at Port Arthur

Historic Site, Tasmania, in 1996. The following analysis focuses on the coverage of Breivik's actions, representative of both stories.

Norway: 2011

Just two articles reported on the killing of 76 Norwegians by Anders Behring Breivik. These were both written by Des Houghton, and published in *The Courier-Mail* on 30 July 2011. Both pieces were structured and organised a similar way; Houghton drew on interviews with a 'leading' health professional to underpin a broad discussion of the mental health status of Breivik, and why crimes of this nature occur. These two articles are contrasted for the differing narratives employed by Houghton to explain this singular event.

In the first piece, Houghton interviewed 'leading psychiatrist Dr Philip Morris'. This article was short – just 343 words – and Houghton drew on quotes from Morris to reinforce the argument that mental health disorders very rarely become disorders of violence. The purpose of this article appeared to be to explore Breivik's character, and mental health status, without reinforcing the stereotype of the violent psychotic killer. After opening the piece by suggesting Breivik 'may be mentally ill – or just plain evil', Houghton cited the following argument from Dr Philip Morris.

> "By far the vast majority of mentally ill people are of no risk to the rest of the population … Individuals with psychiatric problems are frequently anxious, withdrawn, shy and avoidant. They are hardly individuals likely to engage in threatening behaviour."

This quote is significant because it contrasts with the explanatory mental health narrative employed in so many of the articles examined for this thesis. Morris's views, paraphrased by Houghton, are representative of a very small minority of articles from the sample that discussed mental illness in the context of violence, but refused to employ mental illness as a device for explaining the crime. Houghton quoted Morris towards the conclusion of the piece, stating that PWMI with dangerous tendencies are 'only a tiny proportion of individuals suffering from mental illness'. In addition to this portrayal of the lived experience of mental illness, Houghton briefly examined other potential factors that may have played a role in the massacre, stating that Breivik could have been 'on stimulants or other drugs at the time of the carnage'.

Houghton's second article drew on the views of a psychiatric nurse to understand Breivik's actions, but in contrast to the first piece, these views were employed to reinforce a link between mental illness and violence. The article, titled 'The many faces of evil', was based on an extensive interview with Peter Neame, 60 years of age, described by Houghton as 'president of the Goodna branch of the Queensland Nurses' Union … an office bearer with the anti-suicide lobby White Wreath', and 'one of Australia's most experienced psychiatric nurses and author of books on suicide and the predatory behaviour of the criminally insane'. Neame's central argument, conveyed to the reader by Houghton,

was that deinstitutionalisation of PWMI had gone too far, and as a result, the community had been exposed to 'dangerous lunatics like Breivik'. Houghton paraphrased Neame as follows:

> "People think that mentally ill patients are better off at home in the care of their families, and for 90 per cent of sufferers that is so … the other 10 per cent need long-term care and need to be committed – whether their families like it or not. The community has to be protected from them".

The claim that one in ten 'mentally ill patients' need to be confined because of the dangers they pose to the community is both significant and unfounded. This argument carries the subtle insinuation that mental health disorders are frequently disorders of violence, and that many of these violent individuals are so deranged and dangerous that the community must be protected from them. The reader does well to remember that Houghton's article is about the crime committed by Anders Behring Breivik. One can assume Neame believed Breivik was one of those ten violent individuals that needed to be 'committed' to institutions to keep the community safe. The problem with this argument is obvious: it implies that one in ten individuals suffering from mental illness have the capacity to commit a violent crime. This narrative was reinforced in the opening two sentences of the article.

> Anders Behring Breivik, the supercilious psycho who calmly slaughtered 76 innocents in Norway, is not a one-off. In fact, there are an unknown number in Australia who could be like him.

The term 'supercilious psycho' was representative of the largely emotive tone employed by Houghton in this piece. Houghton used the following phrases in the context of both Breivik's crime, and a discussion with Peter Neame as to the likelihood of an event of this kind happening in Australia: 'supercilious psycho', 'dangerous lunatics', 'misfits and loners sitting quietly at home, nursing grandiose, destructive delusions', 'killing machine', 'why hunt tigers when there are so many lambs for slaughter?', and 'depressed loner'. As discussed earlier in this thesis, this kind of emotive language has no apparent effect other than dramatizing and sensationalising the story being described, and the likelihood of Breivik's crime being repeated.

Neame made two disturbing claims in this article. The first was the argument that a percentage of PWMI are inherently violent, or, in Neame's words, 'programmed to kill'. What follows is a detailed account of this view.

> "They might appear normal but a small percentage of mentally ill people are programmed to kill … the ancient Greeks have a word for it: Thanatos, meaning death force. It's completely opposite to normal behaviour. Remember that most of us want to live happily and enjoy our lives. We are intrinsically programmed to live. Even if we are badly hurt in a road accident and are unconscious, our bodies will fight to stay alive. Some seriously paranoid, delusional people are exactly the opposite. They have no scruples, they are hard-wired to kill from conception. I imagine Breivik is like that".

This claim is disturbing because it reinforces the notion that some people are 'born evil', which is an othering mechanism that encourages one to overlook the broader social causes that underpin criminal action of the kind examined in this chapter. It might provide comfort to say that some people are 'born to kill', but rarely is this accurate. Asne Seierstad's account of the Norway massacre described Breivik's upbringing as characterised by dysfunction, isolation, a breakdown in his parents' marriage, a tempestuous relationship with most people he met through school, bullying, and violence.[18] Similarly,

those men who entered primary schools in certain Chinese provinces and attacked young children – coverage of which is examined in the following section – can be understood as the product of a culture and a time, and their actions the fruit of many social factors, one of which could be mental illness. Neame's argument that some people are 'programmed to kill' obscures any broader discussion of the causes of crimes of this nature, and consigns the actions of Martin Bryant, Anders Breivik and other individuals like them, to the realms of biological evil and depravity.

The second and perhaps more troubling claim made by Neame was the linking of Breivik's crime with those committed by other mass killers, and then portraying their actions collectively as the product of mental illness. Neame stated that 'killers learn from other killers, and mass killers learn from other mass killers', and argued on this basis that there were similarities between Breivik, Martin Bryant, Timothy McVeigh, and the crimes they committed. But rather than the product of broader social causes, which Houghton suggested were relevant, Neame employed the mental health explanatory narrative to explain this type of crime. The following is Houghton's brief and largely unintentional exploration of broader social factors that could have played a role in the Norway massacre.

> Breivik described himself as a Knight Crusader against multiculturalism but was a depressed loner who, like Bryant, had troubles while growing up. Breivik appears to have been deeply influenced by a small group of American bloggers and writers who have warned for years about Islam's supposed threat to Western civilisation.

This excerpt constitutes a discussion of social factors underpinning the actions of Breivik and others like him. Houghton then quoted Neame, who reinforced the antithesis of this view.

> "It has nothing to do with Islam or multiculturalism … I detect a lack of lines in his facial expressions. That indicates to me he has severe neurological problems. That is the key to mental illness".

This is Neame's most perplexing claim; one that perhaps has its origins in the now archaic study of phrenology.[19] The assertion that mental illness can be detected in the face of someone with wrinkles imposes a problematic identity on those committed to frequent Botox treatments with a view to slowing the ageing process. The following quote from Houghton offers an appropriate summation of the principal arguments presented by Peter Neame in this article.

> [Neame] says studies from the US to Sweden have found that 0.5 per cent of any population are chronically violent and psychiatrically disturbed. They should be identified and held indefinitely.

This final claim that those identified as chronically violent should be 'identified and held indefinitely' constitutes an obvious invasion of human rights. Neame's views in this article were many, varied, and largely unfounded. But what was most unclear was why Des Houghton chose to privilege Neame's understanding of mental illness. In the penultimate section of this chapter, I examine three articles that reported on random attacks on children at schools in China.

Random, unprovoked attacks on children at schools in China

In this section, three newspaper articles that reported on a number of attacks that had taken place at primary schools and kindergartens across China between July 2007 and May 2010 are examined. The three articles were published between 25 March 2010 and 13 May 2010, with one each from *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Australian*, and *The Age*. Similar to previous groups of articles examined in this chapter, the purpose of the following analysis was to assess the extent to which these three Australian journalists drew on mental illness as an explanatory device to account for this series of attacks. The three cases that form the majority of the analysis that follows are: Zheng Minsheng (*n*= 1), who killed eight young children in a knife attack at a primary school in Beijing; Wang Yonglai (*n*= 1), a farmer who attacked children with a hammer at a school in Beijing (no fatalities); and finally, Wu Huanmin (*n*= 1), who 'hacked' to death 7 children in another knife attack at a Chinese school.

Each of the three articles examined in this section were similar in both length and content. But each dealt with different attacks at schools in China, and such was the extensive nature of the content published, that it was hard for the reader to keep track of how many attacks had taken place in the months preceding publication. The first piece from this group was published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 25 March 2010, and was 404 words in length. The unnamed journalist reported on a crime committed by 41-year-old Zheng Minsheng, who had 'mingled with parents at the school gates' of a primary school in Beijing before pulling out a knife and 'slashing' a number of young children. *The Daily Telegraph* reported that Minsheng had killed eight children and wounded five others. A common element across all three articles from this group was the reference to other similar attacks that had taken place in China before the one that was the focus of the article. *The Daily Telegraph* reported on three more cases involving individuals described by journalists as 'mentally ill' attacking children at a school.

> Recent school attacks include a July 2007 assault in which a mentally ill man wielding a wrench wounded 18 children and a teacher in a kindergarten in southern China before fleeing on a motorcycle and trying to stab himself to death. In June the same year, a man slashed four students, wounding one seriously, in a high school in the southeastern city of Fuzhou while elsewhere police shot dead a suspected mentally ill man after he had threatened to blow up a school in southern China with dynamite.

The unnamed journalist portrayed each of these cases as relevant to the mental health status of the perpetrator. Zheng Minsheng had 'worked as a doctor in a community clinic before resigning last year and was known to have a history of mental illness'. In this particular article, this is all the reader learns about Minsheng. The series of attacks outlined in the excerpt above were also aligned with the same mental health explanatory narrative as was employed to explain Minsheng's actions, as the unnamed journalist stated that most attacks of this nature in China were being 'blamed on people with personal grudges or suffering from mental illness'. At no point in the article did the journalist explore extenuating circumstances and/or additional underlying social factors that could have contributed to a series of attacks of this kind.

The second article from this group, published in *The Australian* on 1 May 2010, reported on a hammer attack that had taken place at Shangzhuang Primary School in Shandong Province, Beijing.

The unnamed journalist reported that 'farmer Wang Yonglai broke through a gate … with his motorcycle and began hitting children with the hammer'. The attack left five children injured and a teacher 'hurt but in a stable condition'. Yonglai died during the attack after he poured petrol on himself and set his body alight while holding two children. *The Australian* noted that 'teachers pulled the children to safety and [Yonglai] died at the scene'. Similar to *The Daily Telegraph* piece that reported on the crime committed by Zheng Minsheng, *The Australian* documented a number of other attacks that had recently taken place at schools across China.

> Before the [Yonglai] incident, China had suffered three stabbing frenzies at schools in the past month, including two this week alone, by mentally disturbed adults … On Thursday, a jobless man injured 29 children and three adults with a knife used to slaughter pigs in an attack at a kindergarten in the eastern city of Taixing. Police said the man was angry about a "series of business and personal humiliations". A day earlier, a 33-year-old teacher on sick leave because of mental problems injured 15 students and a teacher in a knife attack at a primary school in southern Guangdong province.

As mentioned earlier in this analysis, numerous attacks were reported in the three articles that make up this group. The purpose of such extensive coverage appeared to be to illustrate the extent of the problem which had threatened some Chinese provinces. This problem was then portrayed as the result of mental illness. *The Australian* reported that the 'attacks underscore how China … faces a growing public safety threat from disgruntled individuals amid rising mental illness rates'. The article concluded with a report on the implementation of tighter security at schools across China, 'increasing police patrols near schools, and tighter monitoring of people known to be mentally ill'.

Like the mass shootings examined earlier in this chapter, it would be reasonable to assume that significant social factors underpin a series of attacks of this kind. These factors were not explored in any of the articles examined in this section. Instead, mental illness was drawn on to explain each of the attacks, reinforcing the view that problems of violence can be explained by the presence of a mental health diagnosis. Interestingly, the mental health explanatory narrative was not applied consistently across all cases. While the first article examined in this section, published in *The Daily Telegraph*, portrayed Zheng Minsheng's violent crime as the result of mental illness, *The Australian* offered a different explanation in its report on the attack. Minsheng's crime had resulted in the deaths of eight children. He was executed just days after the 23 March attack, and on 1 May, *The Australian* reported the following:

> Authorities in Fujian province in the southeast executed former doctor [Minsheng] for stabbing to death eight children and injuring five others on March 23 in a fit of rage after he split with his girlfriend.

These two articles were published eight days apart, yet both explained the Minsheng attack using different narratives, each of which seems insufficient to account for such a horrific crime. In *The Daily Telegraph* article, Minsheng's actions were portrayed as the result of 'a history of mental illness', while in *The Australian*, they were the direct outcome of a 'fit of rage' following separation from his partner. At no point in either article did the journalist attempt to account for broader social factors that underpin crimes of this kind, which was surprising given how frequent these attacks had become. What this

discrepancy illustrates is the extent to which journalists can construct and reconstruct the narratives they present in mental health stories to help explain violent behaviour.

The final article from this group of three was John Garnaut's 425-word piece titled 'China rocked as man kills seven children, teacher', published on 13 May 2010. Garnaut reported on the crime committed by 48-year-old Wu Huanmin, and described it as the 'massacre' of 'five boys, two girls and their kindergarten teacher' before Huanmin returned to his home in Shaanxi province and took his own life. The article also reported on the cases explored earlier in this section, including the 'farmer in Shandong' who attacked five kindergarten students with a hammer before burning himself to death.

Garnaut's piece was similar to those analysed in this section in that it documented an abhorrent crime, provided details of similar killings that had taken place recently, and then linked them to mental illness. Early in the article, Garnaut quoted one 'local man' named Zheng Xiulan who said that he was uncertain why Huanmin had committed the crime because he 'hadn't heard he was mentally ill' and 'he wasn't poor either'. This suggests that for some local residents, two factors provide possible explanations for a crime of this kind: first, mental illness, and second, poverty. The chief difference in Garnaut's piece was that it did offer a brief discussion of other possible social explanations for this series of attacks. Garnaut referred to 'social ills' and 'social pressure' that could have potentially underpinned the violence, as well as the potential for 'copycat' killings.

> The series has spread panic among China's predominantly one-child families and further fuelled debate about China's social ills and lack of release valves for social pressure. Chinese leaders again stepped up school security across the country … and they have tightly censored and "guided" media coverage of what officials call "copycat" killings.

This tendency towards a broader discussion continued in the two paragraphs that closed this article. Garnaut reported that authorities were doing their best to 'ascertain and analyse what combination of private grievances, mental illness and social discontent may be behind [the killings]', and then concluded with the following:

> Other Chinese commentators have criticized Beijing for continuing to clamp down on lawyers, journalists and civil society organisations who typically help reduce "venting" incidents by assisting people to redress complaints and hold officials accountable.

This commentary and discussion were not comprehensive, but were certainly more extensive than the articles published in *The Australian* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Across 425 words, Garnaut had mentioned 'social ills', 'lack of release valves for social pressure', 'copycat' killings, 'private grievances', 'social discontent', and 'mental illness'. While some of these phrases were in need of expansion and elaboration, Garnaut avoided a simple mental health explanatory narrative that was present in the other two articles examined in this section. This could be seen as constituting not only more responsible reporting, but more accurate news coverage. A series of attacks at random primary schools and kindergartens in China, committed exclusively by men, cannot sufficiently be explained by the presence of a mental health diagnosis in each of these individuals. The nature of these crimes, and

the fact that they became a 'series', suggests the presence of deeper 'social ills' and 'pressures' that Garnaut alluded to but failed to expand on. Nonetheless, by avoiding a simple mental health explanatory narrative, Garnaut allowed room for broader social explanations and a more nuanced discussion of possible causes for this particular series of crimes. This analysis suggests a commonality between reporting on North American gun violence and these attacks in China, evident in a collective reluctance to explore broader underlying social factors to help explain criminal behaviour, and instead, simply reinforce the mental health explanatory narrative. The final section of this chapter examines 43 articles comprising stories of murders committed against victims unknown to the perpetrator.

Murder

This section briefly examines 35 articles that comprised stories of indiscriminate murder.[20] This group covers a number of principal themes that were analysed in the family violence chapters, where I explored a number of murder cases that took place in the family home. The main difference with the group examined in this section is that there was no relationship between the killer and his victim/victims, and so these articles were coded as part of the 'indiscriminate' violence group. Very little additional analysis can be yielded from an extensive examination of these 35 articles, and so this section is limited to a description of the group, its content, as well as a reprise of some of the findings that have been consistent across all 'murder' articles, both those defined as 'indiscriminate' and those that took place in the family home.

The 35 articles that make up this section comprised stories of 21 individual killers, all of whom were men described by the journalist as 'mentally ill'. Eight of these articles were published in *The Australian*, a total of seven each were printed in *The Courier-Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, four were sourced from *The Age*, and two were published in *The Herald Sun*. These 21 men were Timothy Edward Kosowicz, who killed a five-year-old girl after she accidentally knocked over a bowl of cannabis in his caravan in New South Wales; Scott Simpson, who stomped to death a fellow prison cellmate in 2003; Samuel Benjamin, who stabbed to death a Noble Park GP on 16 June 2006; Russell Laurence Arnott, who shot dead an Altona Gate shopping centre security guard on 3 March 1985; Robert Clive Napper, who sexually assaulted and stabbed to death Rachel Nickell in front of her two-year-old son in a London park in 1992; Peter James Knight, who killed abortion clinic security guard Steven Rogers in East Melbourne on 16 July 2001; Michael Sorrell, who slashed Michael Furlong's throat and left him to bleed to death in 2002; Maurizio Perini, who in March 2008 raped and murdered 77-year-old Gold Coast woman Carmel Wuth; Joseph Garrett Button, who strangled 13-year-old Russell Griffin and nine-year-old Kimberley Griffin in Rockhampton on 15 October 2001; James Andrew Mitchell, who ran down John Foss in his car on 3 January 2012 on the northern coast of NSW; Ian Huntley, the 'child killer' who took the lives of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in England on 4

August 2002; Francis Michael Fahey, who stabbed two women to death; Deyan Deyanov, who beheaded 60-year-old Jennifer Mills-Westley in a Spanish supermarket in 2011; David Rodriquez, who killed mental health worker Michael Corkhill on 27 June 2009; Daniel Pattel, who stabbed to death John Simpson while he was asleep in Brisbane's Botanical Gardens on 3 June 2005; Craig William Wheatley, who pushed WWII veteran Robert Narramore in front of oncoming traffic in 2006; Christopher Alan Daniels, who killed homeless man Anthony Wood with a sledgehammer at Wynyard Station, NSW, in 2003; Brendan Sokaluk, the 2009 Black Saturday arsonist; Benjie Lozada, the Manila man who killed Charlie Agustino in November 2011 after he teased him about his haircut; Anthony Sowell, who was arrested in October 2009 for the murders of eleven different women, most of whom were homeless, living alone, or addicted to drugs; and Adam Kosian, who shot dead 44-year-old Goran Vasic and 60-year-old Boris Kostov at a Carlton gambling venue in August 2010.

The narrative that unites each of the three chapters in this thesis is that mental illness can explain stories of violent crime and why they occur. This was persistent in both stories of indiscriminate violence and family violence. The purpose of this thesis is not to debate the presence of a mental health diagnosis in each of these cases, but to suggest that the journalists who wrote these articles consistently employed the mental health explanatory narrative at the expense of a broader examination of other social causes of crime. Consider the list of 21 individual killers described above, or the context of the killings explored in this chapter. All were men, and not a single female perpetrator was present in this 'indiscriminate' group. Even in the cases of family violence, there was a discrepancy across genders, where men killed more often than women. Despite this trend, these articles were not examined by Australian journalists in the context of gender-based violence. They were not explained as examples of men violently killing, assaulting, and raping other human beings, particularly women, but they were examined predominantly through the lens of mental illness. Again, this is not to suggest we should resort to explaining every incident of family violence as squarely a gender-based issue. These are gender-based issues, but they are also frequently issues of class, unemployment, homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, and mental illness, and it could be argued that these all-or-nothing explanatory approaches obscure a more nuanced account of why crimes and violence take place.

Conclusion

A journalist is charged with examining and reporting the 'what', 'how', 'when', and sometimes 'why' of a particular story. But as suggested in these last three chapters, the way journalists do this is subject to a certain amount of choice; choice about which explanatory devices to employ, choice about the content presented in headlines and lead paragraphs, and choice about the particular framing of such stories. These are not easy decisions to make, and more often than not journalists do their very best in the limited time they have before deadline. Was Man Horan Monis mentally impaired when he held

hostages at the *Lindt* café in Martin Place? Should his mental health history be given precedent in a newspaper article published about the crime, or his history of domestic violence against women and social isolation? Was Greg Anderson's killing of his son Luke Batty a story of domestic abuse, or a story of mental illness? And consider Arthur Freeman, who dropped his daughter Darcey off Melbourne's West Gate Bridge in 2004. Was this a case of 'spousal revenge', or the actions of a deluded and impaired mentally ill man? Was it both? The analysis presented in the last three chapters has shown that despite these choices, Australian journalists continue to employ the mental health narrative as a device to explain violent crime. This was again consistent in the 35 articles accounted for in the final section of this chapter. Across all three chapters, the formula has been the same: Man Horan Monis was mentally ill, so was Greg Anderson, and so was one of the hijackers of a passenger plane flown into the twin towers in New York City on 11 September 2001. In the penultimate chapter of this thesis, 86 articles are examined that comprised stories of violence against the self. These articles were coded 'suicide'.

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[2] Statista, 2018, 'Number of U.S. soldiers killed in the Iraq war from 2003 to 2018*', Available at https://www.statista.com/statistics/263798/american-soldiers-killed-in-iraq/ (This website also contains statistics confirming the loss of American life in the Afghanistan war).

[3] Mindframe, 2018, 'Reporting suicide and mental illness: a *Mindframe* resource for media professionals', Available at http://www.mindframe-media.info/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/9983/Mindframe-for-media-book.pdf

[4] These three articles were *The Australian*'s 'Scramble as cockpit is raided – WAR ON TERROR', published on 10 October 2001; Darren Giles's 'Mentally ill man tries to hijack flight', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 10 October 2001; and *The Herald Sun*'s 'Cockpit invasion', published on 10 October 2001.

[5] These five articles were, in chronological order, Julie Szego's 'The deadly pack of loners', published in *The Age* on 18 December 2014; Julie Lewis's 'Postscript', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 20 December 2014; Samantha Maiden's 'Red-flag list doesn't exist', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 21 December 2014; Karen Brooks's ''Mad' and 'bad' don't always go together during tragedy', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 22 December 2014; and Nick Cater's 'ABC STRUGGLES WITH I-WORD', published in *The Australian* on 23 December 2014.

[6] Two females who were held hostage by Monis lost their lives during the siege. Tori Johnson was killed by Monis, while Katrina Dawson was killed by an errant police bullet that was fired during the police effort to capture the lone gunman.

[7] Nick Cater's piece was a strong critique of ABC's PM program and the ways in which it refused to mention the word Islam in its coverage of the Sydney Siege.

[8] American Psychiatric Association, 2013, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.), Arlington, VA, quote from page 103.

[9] These two articles were Luke McIlveen's 'MADE IN AUSTRALIA', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 13 August 2003, and Kate Hagan's 'Portrait of the terrorist as a Melbourne man', published in *The Age* on 19 August 2009.

[10] The phrase 'the Lucky Country' was first used by author Donald Horne in his 1964 book of the same name, and while it carried a negative connotation in his work, it is now used favourably.

[11] These articles were Jewel Topsfield's 'Monash Gunman Not Guilty, Sent to Hospital', published in *The Age* on 18 June 2004; Philippa Duncan's 'Killer does easy time Bryant can come and go as he likes', published in *The Herald Sun* on 18 November 2006; 'Massacre victims buried', published in *The Herald Sun* on 23 April 2007; 'Suspect surrenders after six die in shooting spree', published in *The Australian* on 4 September 2008; Patrick Bishop's 'Spirit of hope lives on', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 26 April 2007; Patrick McGorry's 'Young need better mental health care', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 27 April 2009; 'Youngsters killed in doc's knife rampage', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 25 March 2010; 'Chinese farmer attacks children', published in *The Australian* on 1 May 2010; John Garnaut's 'China rocked as man kills seven children, teacher', published in *The Age* on 13 May 2010; 'US 'cannot cope with mental illness'', published in *The Australian* on 18 January 2011; Tanveer Ahmed's 'Lack of funds hits not only mentally ill', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 2 February 2011; Ramin Setoodeh's 'Going mad for a gong', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 5 February 2011; Des Houghton's 'The many faces of evil', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 30 July 2011; Des Houghton's 'The truly wicked are few', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 30 July 2011; 'Holmes mentally ill, say his lawyers', published in *The Advocate* on 11 August 2012; and Rick Feneley's 'Retreat on gun laws destroyed my family', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 28 April 2014.

[12] In this particular case, I have quoted an article from the sample: Philippa Duncan's 'Killer does easy time Bryant can come and go as he likes', published in *The Herald Sun* in November 2006.

[13] This shooting has since been overtaken by two more recent massacres; the Las Vegas music festival shooting by Stephen Craig Paddock on 1 October 2017, which saw 50 lives lost and more than 500 injured; and second, the Orlando nightclub massacre, where 49 individuals were killed by Omar Mateen.

[14] Henry Porter wrote about this problem in *The Guardian* on 22 September 2013. He likened the death toll from firearms in the United States to a civil war.

[15] Winton, T 2016, *The Boy Behind the Curtain*, Penguin Random House, Melbourne, p. 11.

[16] Statista, 2018, Number of mass shootings in the United States between 1982 and June 2018, Available at https://www.statista.com/statistics/811487/number-of-mass-shootings-in-the-us/

[17] Gun Violence Archive, 2018, Available at https://www.statista.com/statistics/811487/number-of-mass-shootings-in-the-us/

[18] Seierstad, A 2013, *One of Us: The Story of Anders Breivik and the Massacre in Norway*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.

[19] Phrenology is the study of the ways in which the shape or one's head can be interpreted as a determinant of personality characteristics. It was developed German physician Franz Joseph Gall in 1796, and is commonly referred to today as a branch pseudo-medicine.

[20] These 35 articles were Peter Gregory's 'Knight driven by delusions, court told', published in *The Age* on 26 July 2002; Peter Gregory's 'Third view sought on killer', published in *The Age* on 9 August 2002; Matthew Hickley's 'Psychiatric scrutiny – mad or bad', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 23 August 2002; Maurice Chittenden and Dipesh Gadher's 'Silence of accused thwarts doctors', published in *The Australian* on 2 September 2002; Geesche Jacobsen's 'Kitten led girl to violent death', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 11 March 2005; Natasha Wallace's 'Judge says system failed killed girl', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 25 March 2005; Geesche Jacobsen's 'Killer was mentally ill', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 23 July 2005; Tuck Thompson's 'System fails to protect or cure', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 17 October 2005; Amanda Watt and Leanne Edmistone's 'Warning signs blazed in child killer's tortured past', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 26 November 2005; Elisabeth Wynhausen's 'Psychotic prisoner killed himself after two-year wait for care', published in *The Australian* on 6 March 2006; Elisabeth Wynhausen's 'Mentally ill prisoners badly treated: coroner', published in *The Australian* on 18 July 2006; Natasha Wallace's 'String of errors that ended in two deaths', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 18 July 2006; Elisabeth Wynhausen's 'Jailed in body and mind', published in *The Australian* on 28 August 2006; Nicolette Casella's 'Suspect in vet killing mentally ill', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 4 October 2006; Bruce McDougall's 'Family living in fear of stalker', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 9 January 2007; Elisabeth Wynhausen's 'Disturbing neglect visible only when the mentally ill turn to crime', published in *The Australian* on 20 January 2007; Katie Bice's 'Guard's killer jailed at last', published in *The Herald Sun* on 20 September 2007; Rosemary Odgers and Jeremy Pierce's 'Psychiatric staff knew kill suspect', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 1 April 2008; Margaret Wenham and Janelle Mills's 'The murder of the innocents', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 5 April 2008; Leanne Rowe's 'Murder shifts focus on the mentally ill', published in *The Australian* on 5 April 2008; Janet Fife-Yeomans and Kelvin Bissett's 'The invisible killers', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 16 June 2008; Janet Fife-Yeomans and Kelvin Bissett's 'Please to punish invisible killers – EXCLUSIVE', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 16 June 2008; Jill Stark's 'Safety plan proposed to protect doctors', published in *The Age* on 30 June 2008; Margaret Wenham's 'Inmate said he'd kill – But prison service still let him go free', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 8 November 2008; Stephen Wright's 'Killer caged, ending 16 years of blunders', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 20 December 2008; 'The good that can be salvaged from the ashes', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 14 February 2009; Margaret Wenham's 'Mental health disarray – Inmate out to 'achieve' a killing', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 7 April 2009; 'Mass kill insanity claim Not guilty plea to 11 murder charges', published in *The Herald Sun* on 5 December 2009; Amanda Watt and Margaret Wenham's 'No prison help for disturbed murderer – Coroner condemns 'totally inadequate' funding for mental health', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 17 September 2010; Kim Arlington's 'Left to go it alone, they pay with their lives', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 19 February 2011; 'Briton sought refuge before being beheaded', published in *The Australian* on 16 May 2011; 'Very bad hair day', published in *The Daily Telegraph* on 8 December 2011; 'Revenge instead of illness 'led to double killing', published in *The Australian* on 16 May 2012; Louise Hall's 'Killing show mental plight', published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 22 November 2012; and finally, Steve Lillebuen and Rania Spooner's 'Fears new law will shield killers', published in *The Age* on 22 August 2014.

Chapter Seven

Suicide and self-harm

The pain of severe depression is quite unimaginable to those who have not suffered it, and it kills in many instances because its anguish can no longer be borne. The prevention of many suicides will continue to be hindered until there is a general awareness of the nature of this pain.[1]

The three chapters prior to this one were devoted to an analysis of newspaper articles that reported on violent crimes committed by individuals that Australian journalists described as 'mentally ill'. These articles were divided into two groups: the first covered cases of family violence, while the second examined violence committed against individuals unknown to the alleged offender. The focus on narratives of violence continues in this chapter with an examination of those pieces that reported on violence against the self, that is, cases of suicide and self-harm.

The sample of 1302 newspaper articles used for this research contained 250 pieces coded 'suicide'. This represents slightly less than one fifth of the entire sample, meaning that if this were generalised nationally, when Australian journalists write mental health stories, one in five discuss a suicide attempt, or address suicide as a social issue. These 250 articles focused to varying degrees on stories of suicide and/or suicide attempts. Some were exclusively about self-harm and portrayed suicide as a major social issue in need of increased public scrutiny and awareness, while others reported on one particular death/personal story and gave it exclusive coverage. Many constituted broader mental health-related articles that presented suicide and self-harm as a consequence of an ailing health system in need of increased funding, while a significant portion of the 250 pieces only briefly mentioned suicide, with discussion limited to one paragraph.

As discussed in Chapter Three, many of the articles were coded under the five major themes identified through analysis; these being 'violence', 'suicide', 'homelessness', 'prisons', and 'drugs'. One example was a 1834-word piece written by Deborah Cassrels and published in *The Courier-Mail* on 23 June 2001. This piece asked whether 'Charles Manson was temporarily insane when he led a wild killing rampage in the US in 1963?', and the article was subsequently coded under three themes: 'violence', 'suicide', and 'prisons'. Each of these three topics were covered by the journalist, and this warranted the identification of multiple codes. Similarly, Margaret Wenham's 'Psychiatrist guilty of misconduct', published in *The Courier-Mail* on 2 November 2000, was coded 'violence', 'suicide', and 'drugs' because of its extensive coverage of all three topics. That some articles were coded under multiple themes was common across the sample, with the longer pieces more likely to contain this multi-faceted type of coverage. And this same trend was evident in those 250 newspaper articles coded 'suicide'. Of this group, a total of 164 were coded 'suicide' *and* one or more of 'violence', 'prisons', 'homelessness', and 'drugs'.

The analysis that follows examines just those 86 articles that were exclusively coded 'suicide'. These were articles where journalists were able to employ mental health narratives related primarily to self-harm, making them suitable for qualitative analysis of suicide reporting in this sample of eight east-coast Australian newspapers. An analysis of these 86 articles yielded four major sub-themes: 'problem-focused' reporting (n= 29),[2] where journalists examined broad systemic problems in Australia's healthcare system and presented suicide as a major consequence of our failure to address them; 'personal stories' (n= 22),[3] where individual cases of suicide and/or self-harm were examined closely by the journalist; 'euthanasia' (n= 5),[4] where discussions related to assisted dying were explored; and finally, 'minor' (n= 30),[5] for those articles that focused on suicide briefly, but not extensively enough to warrant analysis.[6] The 'minor' and 'euthanasia' sub-themes are set aside in this chapter, and what follows is an examination of the two principal themes identified above: 'problem-focused' reporting and 'personal stories'. The chapter begins with a review of *Mindframe*'s guidelines for mental health reporting, specifically related to suicide, and this is followed by a brief quantitative analysis of the content presented in the lead paragraphs and headlines of each of these articles. The remainder of the chapter is then devoted to an analysis of the 'problem-focused' and 'personal stories' themes.

Reviewing Mindframe guidelines for mental health reporting

Mindframe's guidelines have been employed in this thesis to aid a structured examination of the stories journalists tell, how they tell them, and the ways in which mental illness can be used to explain violence. The philosophy that appears to underpin these guidelines is the notion that even small components of language can be powerful. An 'individual diagnosed or being treated for paranoid schizophrenia' is a more inclusive and far less stigmatizing description than defining someone simply as 'a paranoid schizophrenic'.[7] *Mindframe* encourages the separation of illness and identity, as this promotes the possibility for recovery, while describing someone as 'a paranoid schizophrenic' portrays mental illness as a life sentence. Recommendations of this kind guided the examination of articles devoted to violence against family members and individuals unknown to the alleged offender, detailed across Chapters Four, Five, and Six. In this chapter, *Mindframe*'s guidelines are employed more stringently.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, published in 1774, offers a cautionary tale concerning the potential effect of stories of suicide and self-harm.[8] Goethe's story depicts a young artist named Werther, who falls in love with Charlotte, a woman engaged to another man. Werther's unrequited love leaves him so distraught that he sees no alternative but to take his own life. This story promoted Goethe to literary fame, but a series of copycat suicides following the publication of his work left a more powerful legacy. Broadly termed 'Werther Fever', men throughout Europe, dressed in the style favoured by the young artist, took their lives in the same way as this

principal character, and were often found with von Goethe's book at the scene.[9] For these young men, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* offered comfort and a blueprint for liberation from suffering.

In 2018, the same consequence informs *Mindframe*'s guidelines for journalists who report on suicide and self-harm. *Mindframe* reports that rates of completed suicide and attempted suicide increase following suicide-based coverage, and that this trend is more pronounced when the method and location of the death are documented.[10] This trend is compounded further in cases where the deceased was a celebrity. What is perhaps most concerning is the scarcity of research supporting a link between suicide reporting and positive social outcomes. While one would assume sensitive, informative reporting about mental health policy, research, suicide rates and trends can all contribute to better mental health literacy, *Mindframe*'s guidelines suggest that those who appear most receptive to this type of coverage are those already experiencing suicidal thoughts and ideation. This explains why reporting that documents the method and location of a completed suicide can be most harmful, as it places tools in the hands of those most vulnerable.

Mindframe's recommendations for coverage of issues related to suicide are extensive. The analysis presented in this chapter employs three specific guidelines. The first is the notion that it is preferable to avoid using the word 'suicide' in a headline or lead paragraph of an article, as the placement of this word can attract vulnerable readers to the story. The second guideline asks journalists to refrain from reporting on the method and location of the death, while the third and final recommendation promotes the use of 'appropriate language' by journalists reporting on suicide, as well as the inclusion of help-seeking information at the conclusion of each piece. *Mindframe* recommends journalists replace 'committed suicide' and 'successful/unsuccessful suicide' with terms less associated with sin, crime, and/or desirable outcomes. 'Successful suicide' could be replaced with 'ended their own life', while 'committed suicide' could become 'died by suicide'. *Mindframe* argues that these small shifts in language can have a powerful effect on the way readers understand suicide and mental illness more broadly.

A brief note on headlines, lead paragraphs, and help-seeking information

Mindframe recommends that journalists avoid using the word 'suicide' in the headline and lead paragraph of articles that tell mental health stories because they can have the effect of attracting vulnerable readers to the piece. Journalists are therefore tasked with balancing these concerns while also providing comprehensive coverage of a major public health issue. They must refrain from sensationalising suicide, give sufficient attention to a significant social problem, and at the same time, obscure and downplay details that glorify the deceased or offer a blueprint for the taking of one's life. The ethical responsibilities journalists bear in reporting suicide are explored in this chapter.

Some circumstances necessitate mention of the word 'suicide' in the opening paragraph of a newspaper article. For the sample of 'personal stories' examined in this chapter, it could be argued that these pieces opened with reference to an individual's suicide attempt because leading with suicide in these kinds of stories is unavoidable. Setting aside these specific cases, a short quantitative analysis of the suicide sample illustrated the extent to which Australian journalists are aware of the effect this particular reporting method can have on some readers. Of the 86 articles examined in this chapter, just ten mentioned 'suicide' in the headline. A total of 31 articles contained the word 'suicide' in the first paragraph of the piece, and of this group, 25 mentioned suicide in the first line. Finally, of the 31 articles that mentioned suicide in the opening paragraph, a total of 17 included contact details for *Beyond Blue*, Lifeline, or other support/counselling services at the conclusion of the piece.

Although it could be argued that every article leading with the word 'suicide' in its first paragraph should include contact details for mental health services, the quantitative analysis detailed above suggests Australian journalists are sensitive to the effect of language when reporting on stories involving suicide and self-harm. This chapter will examine the extent to which the *types* of suicide stories told by Australian journalists are problematic. The following section comprises an examination of 22 articles coded 'personal stories'.

Personal stories and their effects

Of the 22 articles that examined a personal story related to suicide, just two reported on cases of recovery. These were Craig Sherborne's 'PHOENIX OF THE SENATE', published in *The Herald Sun* in June 2002, and Chris Garry's 'Response has blown Tune away', published in *The Courier-Mail* in May 2013. Both of these pieces mentioned the word 'suicide' in the opening sentence, and then told the story of an individual who had struggled with severe mental illness, made an attempt on his life, and then recovered.

Craig Sherborne's 2212-word article comprised a story of recovery from a major mental illness. Sherborne reported that the then Labor Party senator, Nick Sherry, had 'shocked everyone when he tried to commit suicide'. The following sentence reported that 'now he relishes life'. While 'tried to commit suicide' could have been replaced with 'attempted to take his own life', Sherborne's lead paragraph emphasized the ability for individuals to overcome serious mental health challenges. This was not a common story told by the journalists whose reporting is examined in this chapter.

The opening paragraphs of Sherborne's piece described how Nick Sherry's mental health had deteriorated across the spring of 1997. He reported on the political turmoil that had informed Sherry's 'state of mental and emotional breakdown', the 'travel rorts scandal' he had become embroiled in, and the suicide note he left for the media in his Canberra apartment on 3 October 1997. Sherborne was

careful not to mention the method Sherry employed to make an attempt on his own life, and instead stated simply:

> The [suicide] note probably saved his life. He had arranged for it to be delivered that morning to the media agency AAP. The police were called. They broke down the door to Sherry's flat. He was in a bad way but alive.

In the context of *Mindframe*'s guidelines, Sherborne's description represents an exemplary approach to coverage of a suicide attempt. The use of the word 'commit' in the opening paragraph of the piece can be understood as problematic because it associates the taking of one's life with criminality and immorality, and *Mindframe* suggests that this can easily be replaced with 'attempt'. Nonetheless, Sherborne addressed suicide in a way that normalised the ability for individuals to recover. He did not minimise the seriousness of the challenge Sherry had faced, but he was careful not to dramatise or glorify his story either. No suicide methods were reported, but enough detail was offered for the reader to gain an impression of what took place in Sherry's apartment on 3 October 1997.

The remainder of the article examined Nick Sherry's complete recovery and return to politics. Sherborne reported that while one might expect Sherry to acquiesce a stressful political 'spotlight of allegations and mockery', he had instead embraced the pressure.

> He spent the morning in a pale wooden room in Parliament House taking evidence from corporate tax experts … he's had half a salad roll for a rushed lunch and backed up [Simon] Crean at a doorstop media conference … by 4pm he has to be on a plane to his Tasmanian base to spend the weekend with his second wife, Sally, whom he married in 1998, and their daughter Miah, 20 months.

Sherborne portrayed Sherry as a thriving member of the Australian political scene, as well as a devoted family man with a partner and a young child. Sherry's wife described her husband as a 'phoenix from the ashes story', and this image was employed in the headline of the piece; 'PHOENIX OF THE SENATE'. This metaphor is significant because it associates a positive image with a story of mental health recovery following a suicide attempt. Sherborne also reported that Sherry's recovery from severe mental illness, and his ability to stay well, had been dependent on attaining a healthier balance between his work circumstances and life at home.

> These days [Sherry] makes sure he shuts his inner motor off and spends a full politics-free weekend with his family every second week. 'Politics is not the be-all and end-all like it was,' he says. 'I lead a much more balanced life'.

Sherborne's article was powerful for two reasons. First, it offered an example of an individual speaking openly and honestly about the mental health challenges they had faced and overcome. Sherborne noted that he had found Sherry's frankness about his suicide attempt 'disarming', and this openness had underpinned Sherborne's portrayal of a positive mental health story. Second, Sherborne considered significant factors involved in Sherry's recovery, specifically, his ability to forge a healthier balance between work and life at home with his family. Sherry described his 'over-obsession with politics' as a principal contributor to his struggle with severe depression, and the attention Sherborne gave to this aspect of Sherry's story reinforced the effect of broader social causes on the mental health of individuals, particularly those in western countries where a culture of long working hours prevails.[11]

This can influence the reader's understanding of mental illness as socially dependent, as opposed to consigned to the fallibility of certain individuals.

Chris Garry's piece was the second and final article in the sample of 22 'personal stories' that reported on an individual making a full recovery from a major mental illness and a suicide attempt. Similar to the reporting examined above, Chris Garry refrained from explicitly discussing the method former Australian rugby player Ben Tune had employed to make an attempt on his own life. Instead, the 353-word piece was dedicated to coverage of Tune's continuing work with *Beyond Blue*, and his campaign to reduce mental health stigma. Garry reported that the former 'World Cup-winning wallaby' remained the public face of mental health recovery as he worked with *Beyond Blue* to ensure his message was 'relayed across the country'. Garry mentioned 'suicide' in the lead paragraph, but like Sherborne's coverage of Nick Sherry's suicide attempt, he focused thereafter on Ben Tune's recovery and the contribution he continued to make to mental health literacy. Neither journalist understated the seriousness of Tune or Sherry's suicide attempts, but both found ways to draw on positive mental health narratives, avoided detailing suicide methods, and reinforced the significance of Australia's problem with suicide and mental health issues more broadly.

The content of these two articles contrasted significantly with the remaining 20 pieces that comprise the 'personal stories' sub-sample. These stories were published between August 2001 and September 2011. Six reported the method employed by the individual who had attempted to take his/her own life. Clare Masters reported for *The Daily Telegraph* that Jason Szcepek had thrown 'himself in front of a train', while Freya Petersen reported for the same publication that Brent Williamson had also been 'hit by a train'. Andra Jackson reported for *The Age* in December 2005 that conditions faced by detainees in South Australia's Baxter Detention Centre were so poor that one individual had taken 'an overdose' and 'jumped off the roof'. Published in *The Age* on 1 March 2008, Peter Gregory reported that 37-year-old Ronald Veenstra 'had contemplated doing something "stupid" with [his] car's exhaust pipe', while Jewel Topsfield reported for *The Age* in March 2007 that an unnamed 'Mr X' had 'expressed the desire to commit suicide on a number of occasions, at one time setting fire to a bed and lying down on it while it was burning'.

Stuart Rintoul's 'Age-old fear, leaving a broken mind', published in *The Australian* on 6 April 2006, contained the most descriptive account of suicide methods published in any article from the 'suicide' sample. Rintoul told the story of Sydney-based mother Hilary Weisser, and her son, Mark. The following excerpt contains both descriptions of suicide methods employed by Mark and a quote from Hilary Weisser regarding her son's suicide attempts.

> Mark, who has schizophrenia, had spent most of the day trying to commit suicide in front of his parents by slicing at his throat with a sharp knife and attempting to jump off the balcony of their suburban home. When she finally talked her son into the car he threw himself out of the moving vehicle … "[The hospital] wouldn't admit Mark. After a long discussion [the doctor] finally conceded. (Mark) then made another two serious suicide attempts – one by trying to hang himself with his pyjama cord and another by throwing himself into the harbour".

In just 96 words, Rintoul documented four methods for taking one's life. These were included in the piece to illustrate what Rintoul argued was a need for improved mental health services in Australia. But one could argue that it would have been sufficient to simply explain that Mark had made four attempts on his life and that these attempts had been the direct result of an ailing healthcare system. It was necessary to report that Mark had sought admission to hospital, but had been turned away because of a lack of available beds dedicated to acute mental health care. Though in the context of the *Mindframe* guidelines for optimal coverage of suicide-related stories, it was not necessary to provide detailed descriptions of Mark's subsequent attempts. By excluding these descriptions, the journalist could be seen to protect those readers who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts and/or ideation. Their exclusion does not detract from the seriousness of the issue being examined in the piece, nor the urgency with which it needs to be addressed.

Sixteen-year-old Hannah Mulcahy's mental illness was portrayed just as vividly in Julie-Anne Davies's piece, published in *The Australian* in March 2008. In this article, Davies explored the consequences of the over-prescription of anti-depressant medication, reporting that Hannah Mulcahy's first 'suicidal rage' had begun with the antidepressant known as Zoloft.

> Hannah became suddenly mentally ill and suicidal after taking the antidepressant Zoloft for just four days in September last year. She wound up in the adolescent psychiatric ward at the Royal Children's Hospital. She was given Prozac and the sleeping drug Stilnox and her condition deteriorated further.

Davies reported that Hannah began to recover after Nicola Mulcahy took her daughter home from the hospital and threw away the medication she had been prescribed. At this point in the article, the significance of the situation faced by Hannah Mulcahy and her family had been described comprehensively. But like Stuart Rintoul's coverage of another young Australian suffering from severe mental illness, Julie-Anne Davies detailed graphically the sixteen-year-old's suicide attempt.

> The night she first "lost it" the police were called and Hannah was taken to the emergency department of the Royal Children's Hospital by ambulance. She was discharged a few hours later. "The next day she drank 454mg of eucalyptus oil, grabbed a knife and ran up our hallway threatening to kill herself".

Hannah Mulcahy's mother was drawn on extensively throughout this piece, and the excerpt above, which features her account, represents an example of the two-fold effect of reporting of this kind. The depiction of Hannah Mulcahy drinking 454mg of eucalyptus oil and running down the hallway in a 'suicidal rage' conveys the seriousness of what took place. But these details could be seen to dramatise and glorify the story as well. One must question the extent to which such graphic descriptions raise awareness of the mental health challenges faced by many Australian families.

In the previous chapter, I argued that journalists can choose the sorts of stories they wish to tell about PWMI, and the narratives they employ when they do so. I drew on two examples to support this claim. The first related to gun violence and gun control legislation in the United States. Though journalists were afforded the space to discuss gun control and access to bulk ammunition, those examined in this sample privileged the role of mental illness in this series of mass shootings. The effect

of this coverage was to portray an event like the Virginia Tech school shooting as a mental health story, as opposed to another tale of gun violence in the United States. The second example concerned the narrative of gender-based violence. While all the perpetrators of the crimes examined in Chapter Six were male, journalists still used the mental health explanatory narrative to explain why these murders took place.

This pattern was also present in the sample of 22 'personal stories' examined in this section. While a reality of stories of suicide and suicide attempts is that many individuals take their own lives, there are a number of stories of individuals who recover from severe mental illness, and suicide attempts. I argue that these stories are worthy of publication. Are these not two realities of the story of suicide; that some people take their own lives while others survive and recover? A balance between these two narratives could contribute to more balanced and comprehensive mental health coverage because while the stories of completed suicide illustrate the devastation mental illness can cause, the stories of recovery can have the effect of normalizing one's ability to face mental health challenges, endure, seek treatment, develop resilience, and recover from them. The analysis presented in this section illustrates an imbalance between these two types of reporting, where a violent death is considered more newsworthy than a story of mental health recovery.

Journalists are in a difficult position when telling these stories. To remain silent is to ignore a significant social issue. To report descriptively and extensively can mean delving too deeply into areas relating to suicide methods and locations; descriptions that can be attractive to vulnerable readers. One thing that can be controlled though are the types of stories journalists tell. In the following section, I examine 28 articles that comprised the sub-sample of 'problem-focused' reporting.

Problem-focused reporting

This section examines 28 articles that were identified as comprising 'problem-focused' reporting. In contrast to those pieces coded 'personal stories', this group examined various problems within Australia's healthcare system, and suicide was portrayed as either a major component of that problem, or a consequence. A number of these pieces detailed personal stories related to suicide, but not as a primary focus of the article, and their inclusion was often employed more as a means for detailing the consequences of the government's failure to fund, reform, and support an ailing healthcare system.[12]

These 28 articles were published between April 2002 and October 2014. Nine were published in *The Age*, six in *The Courier-Mail*, four each in *The Australian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Herald Sun*, while one was published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. The length of these articles ranged from 131 words to 2378, and a total of ten detailed the methods employed by those individuals who were reported to have made an attempt on their life. Contrary to the sample of 'personal stories' examined in the previous section, the articles examined in this section tended to focus on specific problems within

Australia's mental health system. An analysis of these 28 pieces yielded coverage of ten specific problems, with suicide presented as a consequence of this problem, or the problem itself. These were: articles related to the care and treatment of PWMI; presenting mental illness and suicide as reaching 'crisis' levels; the lack of mental health funding and other budget concerns; problems within Australia's immigration detention centres; issues relating to the increasing rates of suicide among Australian men; the effects of mental health stigma; reporting that campaigned for a better mental healthcare system; coverage that focused on the issues faced by returning war veterans; and the growing rate of mental illness among young people.

This section begins with an examination of two articles from this sample, whose coverage was representative of a pattern where journalists reported on one significant issue within Australia's healthcare system, and then documented suicide statistics and/or a personal story of suicide as a means to illustrate the consequences of our collective failure (or the Australian government's failure) to address that problem. This pattern was evident in Robyn Ironside's 'Tragic toll of "revolving door" – Mental patients letting themselves out of hospital, claims nurse', published in *The Courier-Mail* in September 2007. Ironside reported that a significant lack of secure beds in Queensland's Princess Alexandra Hospital had ensured a number of 'mental health patients charged with crimes' had simply been walking out of the hospital. Drawing on claims from a 'former psychiatric nurse' and employee of the hospital, Ironside reported that the Queensland Government had adopted a 'revolving door' policy with regards to its treatment of PWMI, one that involved police arresting potentially psychotic patients, taking them to hospital, and then seeing them 'back on the streets creating further disturbances the same day'. Ironside detailed the extent of this problem and one particular government initiative that would attempt to address it.

> Health Minister Stephen Robertson said the Government had initiated the Mental Health Intervention Project to train police and ambulance officers to deal with mentally ill people. He said 3500 police had a training session but police yesterday said people with mental illness were also suffering as a result of the shortage of long term care.

Problems related to Australia's healthcare system are often multi-faceted and complex. Ironside described how the lack of beds at Princess Alexandra Hospital had underpinned the growing number of individuals stranded on the streets and in frequent trouble with police. Ironside presented suicide as one major consequence of this ailing system.

> A senior [police] officer said a patient who had attempted suicide several times was taken to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital psychiatric unit, only to be released shortly after. "A few days after being released, he threw himself in front of a train in Fortitude Valley," the officer said.

The pattern employed in this article was common across this sample of 'problem-focused' reporting, and can be understood as made up of three components. Ironside documented the 'revolving door' problem, described a government initiative designed to address the issue, and then presented suicide as a consequence of our failure to provide better care for those struggling with mental illness. The suicide

method employed by the individual was described, and this inclusion was common in articles that followed the structure detailed here.

This coverage of a suffering mental health system was not exclusive to Queensland, and nor was Ironside's method of reporting. An editorial published in *The Herald Sun* in October 2012 reported that Victoria's 'health services are stretched, often beyond their capacity because of financial constraints'. The editors argued that the voices of those most affected by this flawed system were often unheard, and suicide was then portrayed as one consequence of this problem. *The Herald Sun* documented the story of 'Grant', who died in 2006, aged 30.

> This disturbed young man died after walking out of a psychiatric unit where he was supposed to be under observation every 15 minutes. He climbed over a fence and died on railway tracks in Glenroy.

Mindframe states that where possible journalists should refrain from mentioning suicide methods as those readers vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and ideation can be drawn to these articles. In *The Herald Sun*'s editorial coverage of a healthcare system 'stretched' to 'capacity', and perhaps in the editors determination to provide comprehensive coverage of this major issue, these guidelines were ignored and a number of personal stories of suicide and the methods employed by the deceased individuals were documented and expanded on. With regards to the death of an individual on 'railway tracks', the editors reported the following:

> This is a common method of suicide among the mentally ill. All four patients in the cases detailed in the Herald Sun report were found dead on Melbourne's suburban railway tracks. This is almost certainly the way they chose to escape their depression. Simon, who died in 2008, was 34 when he was found dead on the tracks … Travis was only 18 when he died on the tracks in 2010.

As argued in the section dedicated to the 'personal stories' sub-sample, journalists can find themselves in an unenviable position with regards to this type of reporting. This extract offers the reader an understanding of the seriousness of the problem, perhaps in a way that statistics cannot. While the description of suicide methods is discouraged, one questions the extent to which statistics can convey the extent of a problem related to suicide. One could argue that the inclusion of 'personal stories' of suicide is necessary to provide a complete picture of the problems we collectively face, and the consequences of not addressing them.

Statistics were employed in most of these 'problem-focused' articles. Bruce McDougall reported for *The Courier-Mail* in August 2013 that 'every Year 12 class in Australia has at least one student who has attempted suicide', while Elizabeth Allen reported for the same publication in August 2006 that 'more Australians commit suicide every year than die on the roads … seven people a day take their own lives'. An unnamed journalist reported for *The Daily Telegraph* in April 2007 that 'about one male farmer [dies] from suicide every four days'. Helen Tobler opened with the following lead paragraph in her article published in *The Australian* in August 2002:

> The number of people with schizophrenia who commit suicide has risen 400 per cent in the past 40 years … and five to 10 per cent of all suicides are a result of schizophrenia, which affects 37,000 Australians.

Helen Tobler argued that as a result of this increase, 'more funding [is] crucial for better mental health services and early prevention'.

As explained earlier in this section, what characterised these problem-focused articles was their specific focus on issues within Australia's healthcare system. The journalists examined problems related to care and treatment in private and public hospitals, funding/budget promises made by impending or current governments, and problems whereby individuals struggling with mental illness had found themselves rotating between the streets, police custody, and the hospital. Journalists then employed statistics to illustrate the significance of these problems, and the consequences of our failure to address them.

But like so many of the articles examined in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, journalists whose articles were included in this sample only rarely examined some of the broader social causes of these trends and problems. One could argue that journalists are not afforded the space necessary to engage in a discussion of the broader social issues that underpin these mental health concerns, but I argue that it is this additional contextual information that constitutes comprehensive news coverage. Young men in Australia find themselves more and more isolated to identities that conform to masculine images of dominance and power.[13] That there are so few identities available to young men surely explains, at least in part, the growing rate of mental illness among this group. An article that reports on the increasing rates of suicide among young men in Australia and then explains that 'more funding is crucial for better mental health services and early prevention' does not address or examine the socio-cultural factors that underpin and inform this issue. Traditional media has no legitimate way of matching the pace of the online platform in its ability to deliver news minute-to-minute. But this reality presents an opportunity for hard-copy newspapers to provide deeper contextual analysis; to explore beyond individualistic interpretations of what constitutes mental illness and examine broader socio-cultural factors.

Statistics of the kind referred to above were, in some cases, used in conjunction with an exploration of broader social forces. Lauren Wilson reported for *The Australian* in August 2008 that while the national suicide rate had dropped 40 per cent between 1997 and 2006, 'Australian men remain overwhelmingly more likely to take their own lives than women'. Drawing on the expertise of Professor John Macdonald – the director of the University of Western Sydney's Men's Health Information and Resource Centre – Wilson drew attention to the mental health crisis facing all Australians, and particularly, men. Wilson quoted Professor Macdonald, who explained that 'on average five men and one woman kill themselves every day in Australia'.

As opposed to leaving these statistics to speak for themselves, Wilson expanded her coverage to account for some of the broader social forces that could explain this trend. She privileged Professor Macdonald's view that 'a lot of people come to despair through a combination of factors including

separation from spouses and children, job losses, drug and alcohol use'. Wilson also emphasized the importance of social support for individuals being treated for mental illness.

> Professor Macdonald attributed the exceptionally high suicide rate among elderly men to the despair that comes with losing contact with the world. "I think it is a lack of social support. If you have lost contact with your partner and children and no longer have work as a social context, it can be a very grim life," he said.

Despite this piece being just 486 words in length, Wilson was still able to account for some of these broader social factors. Steve Waldon also addressed the issue of Australian men taking their own lives in a 2160-word article published in *The Age* in 2006, and like Wilson's coverage, Waldon included statistics related to suicide rates in his account. But he underpinned these with a description of some of the broader social forces that inform this problem.

> That [men take their lives] in alarming numbers between 25 and 44, or from 75 on, is known. Although no one is claiming the list is definitive, also known are the many triggers: alcoholism, gambling issues, relationship breakdowns, job loss. Men are not immune from the attendant repercussions: depression, loneliness, or the erosion of self-esteem.

Waldon reported that 'of the 2098 Australian suicides annually, 80 per cent are male' and roughly half are between the ages of 25 and 44. He then used these statistics as the basis for a broader discussion about masculinity in Australia. Waldon drew on the views of Ian Webster – the chairman of the National Advisory Council on Suicide Prevention.

> "Society expects much of men and the tests of performance are pretty stiff and uncompromising," he says. "We expect leadership, toughness, resilience, physical and emotional strength, warm and loving relationships, a stiff upper lip, productive work, and the ability to provide for a family. A challenge indeed."

This coverage could be interpreted as offering a comprehensive image of the problem of suicide in Australia. Waldon's piece contained no personal stories of suicide, and as such, did not include a description of methods that can be employed in the taking of one's life. The piece was no less informative as a result, but still offered a comprehensive description of the problem Australia faces with regards to the mental health of young men.

Conclusion

The overarching question that has guided the analysis presented in this chapter concerns what details are necessary to present in an article published about suicide. *Mindframe* reports that rates of completed suicide and suicide attempts increase following suicide-based coverage, and that this trend is more pronounced when the method and location of the death are documented. One could argue that this makes reporting on suicide more problematic than the coverage examined in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, where violence was committed against family members or indiscriminate others by an individual described by Australian journalists as 'mentally ill'. But suicide constitutes a significant social issue, one that warrants continued scrutiny and discussion. The analysis presented in this chapter uncovered two principal ways in which journalists address the issue of suicide: the first being through the telling of 'personal stories', and the second constituting 'problem-focused' reporting. Of the 22 personal stories

identified in the suicide sub-sample, just two were stories of recovery. While a reality of stories of suicide and suicide attempts is that many individuals take their own lives, there are a number of stories of individuals who recover from severe mental illness, and suicide attempts. These stories are worthy of publication. I argue that a greater balance between these two kinds of stories could contribute to more comprehensive and accurate mental health coverage. The current balance suggests that the story of a violent death is considered more newsworthy than a story of mental health recovery. In the conclusion of this thesis, I re-examine the threads that tie these four chapters together, and present recommendations based on this analysis for ways mental health coverage can be improved.

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[1] Styron, W 1991, *Depression*, Vintage, United Kingdom, p. 28.

[2] These articles were Michael Gordon's 'IN HARM'S WAY', *The Age*, 29 October 2011; Richard Baker and Nick McKenzie's 'Mentally ill living conditions 'Third World', *The Age*, 7 September 2011; *The Herald Sun*'s ED, 22 October 2012; Philip Nitschke's 'We need a new word for suicide', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 April 2014; Alice Clarke's 'System is failing those who struggle on the edge of life', *The Herald Sun*, 20 October 2014; Chris Fotinopoulos's 'Troubled teenagers need you to listen', *The Age*, 18 December 2009; *The Age*'s '[HOT BUTTON]', 29 August 2013; Robyn Ironside's 'Tragic toll of "revolving door" – Mental patients letting themselves out of hospital, claims nurse', *The Courier-Mail*, 17 September 2007; Bruce McDougall's 'True toll of youth suicide revealed', *The Courier-Mail*, 9 August 2013; Lauren Wilson's 'Fewer committing suicide but elderly men at greatest risk', *The Australian*, 1 August 2008; *The Age*'s 'What we owe to those we send to fight our wars', 10 March 2008; Elizabeth Allen's 'Mentally ill turned away', *The Courier-Mail*, 26 August 2006; Elizabeth Allen's 'Searching for answers', *The Courier-Mail*, 19 August 2006; *The Australian*'s 'This cry for help must be heard', 21 June 2010; Andrew MacDonald's 'Mental health in tragic decline', *The Courier-Mail*, 4 November 2011; Alex White's 'Surge in crisis calls', *The Herald Sun*, 5 October 2013; Janelle Miles's 'Inclusion key for health strategy', *The Courier-Mail*, 9 October 2014; Sue Dunlevy's 'Mental illness a hidden killer', *The Herald Sun*, 8 October 2014; Bruce McDougall's 'Young minds in crisis – Children at risk as mental illness epidemic sweeps our classrooms', *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 August 2006; Sue Dunlevy's 'Mentally ill crisis from bad to worse', *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 October 2014; Adam Cresswell's 'States "flunk" mental health needs – COAG 2006', *The Australian*, 15 July 2006; Ruth Pollard's 'Alarm at lack of treatment for mental illness sufferers', *The Age*, 19 April 2005; *The Daily Telegraph*'s 'Mentally ill fear stigma', 23 April 2007; Helen Tobler's 'Mentally ill suicide on the rise', *The Australian*, 6 August 2002; Steve Waldon's 'UNACCEPTABLE', *The Age*, 15 May 2006; Carol Nader's 'Hospitals Say Chief Psychiatrist "out Of Touch"', *The Age*, 20 February 2004; Anna Patty's 'System fails as suicides double', *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 April 2002; Anna Cock and Mark Scala's 'Urgent search for the solution – Ryan joins growing toll of tragedy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 June 2001; Tom Arup and Mark Metherell's '$227m mental health plan "not enough"', *The Age*, 28 July 2010; and Tom Arup, Mark Metherell, and Kate Benson's 'ALP's mental health plans under attack', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 July 2010.

[3] These articles were Julie Robotham's 'Depression's silent victims', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November 2008; Julie-Anne Davies's 'Cure worse than the ill', *The Australian*, 20 March 2008; Richard Baker and Nick McKenzie's 'Another way of thinking', *The Age*, 6 September 2011; Kate Hagan's 'Scripting mental illness into everyday life', *The Age*, 27 April 2011; Alexander Smith's 'From one who knows: mentally ill judges deserve a fair go', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 June 2011; Lanai Vasek's '"No votes" in changing system', *The Australian*, 21 June 2010; Jewel Topsfield's 'Minister ignores plea on sick detainee', *The Age*, 23 March 2007; Lanai Vasek's 'Carers plead for long-term help', *The Australian*, 10 July 2010; Peter Gregory's 'Court victory in suicide case', *The Age*, 1 March 2008; Chris Beck's 'GILLIAN BOURAS', *The Age*, 29 July 2006; *The Australian*'s 'On the death of Josefa Rauluni', 22 September 2010; Chris Garry's 'Response has blown Tune away', *The Courier-Mail*, 15 May 2013; Stuart Rintoul's 'Age-old fear, leaving a broken mind', *The Australian*, 6 April 2006; Clare Masters's 'Death a symptom of mental health failings – EXCLUSIVE', *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 July 2006; Andra Jackson's 'Suicide bid on return to Baxter', *The Age*, 29 December 2005; *The Sydney Morning Herald*'s 'Rivkin's fate is evidence of the law's failure', 15 May 2006; Craig Sherborne's 'PHEONIX OF THE SENATE', *The Herald Sun*; 1 June 2002; Zoe Taylor's 'Ward can't cope with suicidal teens', *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 May 2003; Margaret Wenham's 'How to survive the blues', *The Courier-Mail*, 16 August 2003; Freya Petersen's 'News And Features – Beds pledge too late for grieving mother', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 August 2002; and Donne Morgan's 'Living with depression', *The Herald Sun*, 14 August 2001.

[4] These articles were Penelope Debelle's 'Democrat may defy suicide advice law', *The Age*, 31 August 2006; Sev Ozdowski 'Pleas to release children ignored', *The Courier-Mail*, 10 June 2004; Brett Foley's 'Euthanasia Groups Cool On Suicide Pill', *The Age*, 3 August 2001; and *The Australian*'s 'Dutch death law a reality', 3 January 2002.

[5] These articles were Michael Short's 'Painting your feelings', *The Age*, 10 June 2013; Ian Munro's 'Change in mind', *The Age*, 17 October 2009; Claire Sutherland's 'Stirring the plot', *The Herald Sun*, 20 October 2007; Sebastian Smee's 'IN THE MIND'S EYE', *The Australian*, 21 October 2006; Richard Lloyd Parry's 'Drawing on a fine madness', *The Australian*, 8 February 2012; Lanai Vasek's 'McGorry attacks 'reprehensible' detention', *The Australian*, 10 January 2011; Paige Taylor's 'Mental illness and visa woes stir unrest', *The Australian*, 21 July 2011; Concetta Ferravanti-Wells's 'THE MENTAL HEALTH REFORM THAT WASN'T: WHY EXPERTS ARE UP IN ARMS', *The Australian*, 10 October 2012; Frank Furedi's 'Individual difference suffers in the never-ending explosion of mental illness', *The Australian*, 18 February 2012; Debbie Guest and Tony Barrass's 'Police face sack in murder review', *The Australian*, 8 October 2008; Debbie Lustig's 'Even those fighting demons need some cheap laughs', *The Age*, 23 April 2009; Cheryl Critchley's 'It'll be fine, honestly', *The Herald Sun*, 4 October 2008; Fran Molloy's 'Find a cure for the stigma', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 February 2008; Ian McPhedran's 'Protecting our defenders', *The Courier-Mail*, 2 May 2007; Alan Buckley-Carr's 'Mallard "badgered until he confessed"', *The Australian*, 8 August 2007; Ian McPhedran's 'Apologise to hidden casualties', *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2007; *The Herald Sun*'s 'Art that's worth giving', 9 October 2009; Ruth Pollard's 'Light on the hill fails to shine', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 April 2006; Chris Johnston's 'Painting can be just the right medicine ART AND SOCIETY', *The Age*, 30 September 2005; Rod Minchin's 'Creative tension does wonders for your sex life', *The Age*, 30 November 2005; Carol Nader's 'State looks at private bed cure for shortage', *The Age*, 22 February 2005; Natasha Wallace's 'The brothers grim', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 July 2005; Debra Aldred's 'A night of song to support the mentally ill', *The Courier-Mail*, 5 February 2004; *The Sydney Morning Herald*'s 'Breaking The Drugs Routine', 22 December 2003; Aaron Timms's

'Creative process brings the black dog to heel', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 April 2005; Michael McKenna's 'Bay of dismay', *The Courier-Mail*, 3 May 2003; *The Age*'s 'Searching For Mental Health Beds', 24 February 2004; Julie-Anne Davies's 'A Chilling Account Of Adult Neglect And Innocence Lost', *The Age*, 20 October 2001; Chloe Saltau's 'Depressed Children Missing Out On Treatment', *The Age*, 13 August 2001; and Sarah Stock's 'Help at hand for kids who cope with problem parents', *The Australian*, 23 June 2001.

[6] This was a common trend across the sample of 1410 newspaper articles. Michael Short's 'Painting your feelings', published in *The Age* on 10 June 2013 was one such example of an article that examined the correlation between mental wellbeing and painting/art, but also mentioned briefly suicide and self-harm as part of this broader discussion. This mention extended across two paragraphs and was extensive enough to warrant the coding of 'suicide', but not extensive enough to warrant examination.

[7] In Brad Clifton's coverage of the murder committed by Malcolm Robert Potts, he referred to Potts as 'a paranoid schizophrenic'. This case, examined in Chapter Four, offers an example of this kind of language.

[8] Von Goethe, JW 2003, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Dover Publications Inc., New York.

[9] Jack, B 2014, 'Goethe's *Werther* and its effects', *The Lancet*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 18-19.

[10] Mindframe, 2019, 'Reporting and portrayal of suicide', Available at http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-media/reporting-suicide

[11] Burke, RJ, & Cooper, CL 2008, *The Long Work Hours Culture: Causes, Consequences and Choices*, Bingley, United Kingdom.

[12] While the scope of this study precludes a thorough examination of Australia's healthcare system, some of the literature in this area has informed the researcher's understanding of the problems we currently face. Important were Collyer et al's (2015) examination of the notion of 'healthcare choice', and a recent analysis of Australia's healthcare system, published in *Inside Story*: Doggett, J 2018, 'Do it better or do it differently', *Inside Story*, Available at https://insidestory.org.au/do-it-better-or-do-it-differently/

[13] Connell, RW 2005, *Masculinities*, Polity Press, Chicago.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

> The more mental illness can be humanized by its disclosure and "telling" in everyday narratives, the more that members of the populace can come to understand the underlying humanity of people and families who cope with its challenges ... realistic, humanizing portrayals cannot substitute for face-to-face contact, but they may set the stage for such contact by enhancing interest and motivation.[1]

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the mental health stories told by journalists who published articles in eight east-coast Australian newspapers between 2000 and 2014. The study examined the extent to which mental illness had been stigmatised by journalists through the correlation of PWMI with violence, dangerousness, and violent crime. Three principal assumptions underpinned the analysis: first, that PWMI are more likely to be the victims of violent crime than the perpetrators;[2] second, that media coverage of mental health stories is the population's primary source for information regarding mental illness;[3] and third, that there would be some role for anti-stigma campaigns to reduce stigma, meaning that their potential for enhancing mental health literacy could be undermined by the telling of stories that correlate mental illness with violence.[4] This chapter is divided into three parts. The first revisits the content and findings presented in each chapter. The second summarises both the concluding arguments and the implications of the study's findings, while the final section explores the limitations of the research.

The chapters revisited

This study began with an account of the history of madness. Chapter Two was devoted to charting this history, as it had been presented by Michel Foucault, Andrew Scull, Roy Porter, Erving Goffman, Peter Conrad, and Elaine Showalter. The overarching narrative that continues to inform this history is 'confinement', from the physical confinement of seventeenth century madhouses to what could be understood as the invisible walls of modern medicalization. This study reinforced a tendency for state and religious institutions of western nations to confine and control a group considered 'abnormal'. I found that Foucault's image of a 'fearsome figure' who could be carefully excluded from society 'after a sacred circle had been drawn around him' persisted beyond the leprosaria of fifteenth-century France and into the present in perhaps more insidious forms of control, namely, medicalization and stigmatisation.[5] The structures formerly built to house lepers in the thirteenth century became the madhouses of the 1700s. The European *madhouse* – the defining image of Foucault's 'Great Confinement' – became the *asylum* of the nineteenth century, a transformation Porter argued was reflective of the interests of commercial and professional society, who financially benefited from persuading the public that services delivered in the asylum were therapeutic. Sigmund Freud's 'talking

cure', the precursor to modern medicalization, represented a modern form of confinement because it concentrated the treatment of mental health issues within the doctor-patient relationship. This relationship took on a more significant role when asylums were closed in the 1980s, and the responsibility for the care and treatment of PWMI fell on the community more broadly. Chapter Two concluded with the claim that while some bureaucrats and health professionals had heralded deinstitutionalisation as the dawn of a new era for community-based case, PWMI had found new forms of confinement on the streets, in prisons, and tied to the doctor-patient relationship, where they remain dependent for their medication needs.

With confinement as the overarching narrative of the history of unreason, I sought to examine some of the subtler ways that this system of power and control had been replicated in the twenty-first century. The central question that guided this study was whether storytelling could be understood as a modern confinement, as it had the potential to confine PWMI to a stigmatized identity. Chapter Three detailed the methods used to answer this question. Factiva was used to source 1302 articles published in eight east-coast Australian newspapers between 2000 and 2014, and a preliminary analysis uncovered five principal themes within this sample, these being 'violence', 'suicide', 'homelessness', 'prisons', and 'drugs'. The wealth of stories devoted to violent crime informed my decision to analyse just the 'violence' and 'suicide' categories. The 'homelessness', 'prisons', and 'drugs' groups were set aside.

The 'violence' theme comprised 523 articles, or approximately 40 per cent of the entire sample, and within this group were two sub-categories; the first, dedicated to violence committed against family members, and the second, violence against indiscriminate others. These crimes were committed by individuals described by Australian journalists as 'mentally ill', and their most common criminal act was murder. Chapters Four and Five examined the 'family violence' articles, which comprised stories of 'fathers', 'mothers', 'progeny', 'spouse', 'siblings', and members of the 'extended family' who committed acts of violence in the domestic setting. The common theme that connected these six perpetrator groups was that their crimes were committed in the domestic setting, and journalists frequently used mental illness to explain them. Across each of these groups, the use of mental illness to explain violence differed depending on the gender of the perpetrator. When the perpetrator was male, journalists were reluctant to use mental illness as an explanatory device, and instead often *discussed* the culpability of the perpetrator and his state of mind at the time of offending. By contrast, females in these groups were often referred to as extremely 'mentally ill', and their actions were accounted for by their respective diagnoses.

Chapter Six accounted for the 'indiscriminate violence' group, which contained sub-categories devoted to stories of 'terrorism', 'mass shootings', 'knife attacks', and 'murder'. The common theme uniting this group was that every victim was unknown to the perpetrator. The attacks, whether by knife, bomb, gun, or otherwise, were targeted exclusively at innocent civilians. In contrast to the 'family

violence' sample, every perpetrator in Chapter Six was male. Similar to the 'family violence' group, journalists used mental illness to explain each of the acts committed.

The final analysis chapter, Chapter Seven, explored the suicide sub-sample, which consisted of stories of suicide and/or self-harm. Two prominent themes were identified in this sub-sample, and these were 'personal stories' of individuals who had made an attempt on their life and had either completed suicide or survived, and 'problem focused' reporting, which consisted of stories focused on the need for improved mental health facilities, more government funding, better hospital care, and stigma-reduction initiatives.

Concluding arguments and implications

The analysis detailed in Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven of this thesis yielded three principal findings, each of which will be addressed in turn in the paragraphs that follow. The first is that Australian journalists contribute to mental health stigma by frequently using mental illness to explain violence and depicting PWMI in the context of violent crime. The practice of linking mental illness with violence, and so contributing to mental health stigma, can be understood as a continuation of the confinement narrative identified in Chapter Two. It appears that the physical confinement of the seventeenth-century European asylum has been replaced in a contemporary context by the invisible confinement of a stigmatised identity, which can be created when newspapers publish stories that assume mental illness can explain violent behaviour. A variety of factors underpin reporting that presents violence as the product of mental illness, including for example, the time constraints faced by journalists preparing an article for publication, the sub-judice restrictions that were detailed in Chapter Four, or a broad tendency in our culture to want explanations for why events of a violent nature occur. I would also add to this that our culture's emphasis on individualism has informed an analysis of social issues that often excludes an examination of broader social factors involved.[6] In a culture where 'the politics of the individual prevail over the politics of the collective', individuals are perceived as being responsible for their actions and are expected to summon the free will to uphold prevailing values.[7] Medicalisation – the process of taking non-medical problems and having them defined and treated as issues that require medical attention – has reinforced in the health professions (and I would argue, in society more broadly) this focus on problems within the individual at the expense of an exploration of broader social causes.

The second major finding relates to the gendered nature of reporting in cases involving parents who take the lives of their children. When Australian journalists report on PWMI who take the lives of their children, women/mothers are often depicted as psychotic and insane, while men/fathers are more often portrayed as logical and rational. This finding reflects how western culture understands (and has understood) the distinctive roles played by men and women in both workplace and domestic settings.

Women are typically perceived as 'natural' carers and nurturers, and I argue that a story that describes a mother who kills her child/children violates this notion and offends our understanding of the mother's role as protector. To account for this offense, it appears that Australian journalists use mental illness to explain the mother's actions. Journalists appear less inclined to use mental illness to explain a father's actions, and instead engage in a discussion of the potential for mental illness on the part of the perpetrator, reinforcing socio-cultural narratives that situate men on the side of reason, discourse, logic, and rationality. This finding offers support for charting the sort of history described in Chapter Two because it illustrates the extent to which culture, norms and values inform the stories told by journalists.

The final finding to come from the analysis chapters of this thesis is that when Australian journalists concentrate on cruel, barbaric, and sadistic criminal behaviour, the effect is to dehumanise PWMI, which has the additional effect of increasing their already stigmatised identities. To use mental illness to explain wild, barbaric, brutal crimes has the effect of reinforcing the belief that PWMI are the 'fearsome figure' of centuries past, in need of confinement and control. Such an understanding contributes to mental health stigma and can corrode our ability to empathise with the underlying humanity of individuals and their families who cope with mental health challenges.

The implications of these findings are three-fold. First, the findings suggest that combating mental health stigma will require more than just stigma-reduction initiatives promoted by organisations such as *Beyond Blue*, but also a transformation in the sorts of stories told about PWMI. Stigma-reduction initiatives often seek to normalise the experience of mental illness, reassuring individuals that their lived experience is shared by others, and that help is available. They seek to humanise the PWMI, reducing the stigma and shame that has been (and continues to be) associated with mental health disorders. Roughly 40 per cent of the newspaper articles published between 2000 and 2014 depicted PWMI as violent offenders, and frequently, murderers, suggesting that education-based initiatives are likely to be undermined by news reports that use mental illness to explain violent crime. A potential solution to this contrast in the representation of PWMI could be to offer analysis and commentary through news media that considers and explores some of the broader social factors that can underpin criminal behaviour, as opposed to providing an exclusive mental health explanation.

Second, these findings suggest that the creation of additional *Mindframe* guidelines relating to the frequency with which PWMI are linked to violent crime (and the harmful implications of this reporting trend) could be useful in providing a clearer reporting framework for Australian journalists. It is unlikely that Australian journalists are aware of the frequency with which stories about mental illness published in newspapers are also stories of violence. *Mindframe*'s guidelines need not suggest omitting mental illness from news coverage of events involving violence, but they could recommend that journalists reinforce for readers that PWMI are not inherently violent. In addition, journalists could be advised to be more specific when referring to PWMI. This study found that Australian journalists

most commonly refer to PWMI as 'the mentally ill', a phrase that I have avoided because it can have the effect of homogenising the disparate experiences of those who suffer from mental health disorders. These recommendations might go some way to reinforcing a common humanity between those who struggle with mental illness and those who are well as they could reduce the extent to which mental health disorders are understood as disorders of violence, and also deconstruct the notion that PWMI are one undifferentiated mass.

Finally, these findings could have important implications for the way news media is produced and consumed by Australians. If reporting that accounts for violent crime is to extend beyond a simple mental illness explanation to consider broader social factors that can underpin crime, then I argue that journalists require more time and space to deliver more detailed coverage. The contemporary minute-to-minute news cycle is not conducive to detailed news analysis, and I suspect that this can partly explain why mental illness has been used so frequently to explain why one person killed another. But the slower pace of the print media platform could be used in such a way as to encourage a broader examination of social forces that underpin criminal behaviour. Where online news coverage is fluid and malleable, and designed to be consumed minute-to-minute, hard-copy newspapers are slower, and could provide deeper contextual coverage, analysis, and commentary to complement the pace of the online platform. This is one possible solution to the coverage examined in this thesis that contributes to mental health stigma.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are two-fold. First, the exclusive focus on stories published in hard-copy newspapers means that the findings only have limited application to other news mediums, including Twitter, Facebook, radio, television, and so on. As news continues to be consumed through mobile devices, and via platforms distinct from traditional news sources, studies of narrative and storytelling should, if practical, include online news platforms. This study examined roughly fourteen years of print coverage, date parameters that are impractical for the scholar studying both hard-copy and online news-media. But where the parameters of a study are more narrow – perhaps focused on coverage of one particular event – I recommend examining non-traditional news sources.

Finally, the search terms used to source articles for this study were 'mental illness' and 'mentally ill'. These broad terms yielded sufficient content for analysis, but obscured a chance to examine the ways journalists tell stories about persons with specific disorders, such as schizophrenia, or major depression. A greater focus on the coverage related to specific mental health disorders has the potential to help us understand the extent to which some disorders continue to be stigmatised more than others. The present study was not set up to yield such a finding, though a study of this kind could better inform an update of *Mindframe* guidelines for Australian journalists.

That Australian journalists continue to refer to PWMI as 'the mentally ill' is a significant finding because it suggests that we often imagine PWMI as one undifferentiated mass, reflecting the way Europeans understood the problem of madness in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What I hope this study has shown is just how powerful storytelling can be, particularly when it is informed by a history that has understood a particular figure as deviant and abnormal. I believe this study's most significant finding is in illustrating how this 'fearsome figure' of the past persists in the present, and is used by some Australian journalists to explain violence. Stephen Hinshaw wrote in *The Mark of Shame* that 'the more mental illness can be humanized by its disclosure and "telling"' in everyday narratives, the better placed broader populations will be to appreciate the 'underlying humanity of people and families who cope with its challenges'. But roughly 40 per cent of the articles sourced for this study depicted PWMI in the context of violence, a figure which consigns mental illness to the realms of 'the mysterious and the unknowable'.[8] That mental illness continues to be employed to explain criminal behaviour remains a significant departure from Hinshaw's humanising intentions, and a formidable barrier to improved mental health literacy.

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