

ULRR

Work as therapy in Irish district asylums: 1850 - 1880

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ABSTRACT:

Background: There is a dearth of research in relation to the Irish history of occupational therapy. Moral treatment and in turn work therapy in asylums, is widely acknowledged to have led to the materialisation of the discipline of occupational therapy (Hall 2013). This study looked at work as therapy in the Irish District Asylums, between 1850 and 1880 as documented by the Inspectors of Lunacy.

Objective: To explore the Inspectors of Lunacy Reports on the District Asylums during the period 1850-1880 and ascertain the Inspectors perception of the use of work.

Methods: As part of a larger research project, historical documentary research was used to glean data from the annual, Inspectors of Lunacy Reports, between 1850 and 1880. Data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) and coding focused solely on reference to patient work.

Findings: The terms work, employment, labour and occupation were used interchangeably .Three themes arose: Forms of work, “curative” work and “unwholesome” work. The Inspectors saw doing and being occupied, as therapeutic and “curative”. These “useful occupations” included recreation, going to church, attending school and being employed. Work was largely viewed as curative and therapeutic whilst on the other hand the working conditions were criticised as “unwholesome”.

Conclusion: This research demonstrates that the Inspectors saw value in being dutifully employed and it is clear that there has been consistent attention on the importance of doing. This attention sustained to modern occupational therapy where doing and use of work remains core to the ethos.

INTRODUCTION

A professions identity is attached to the historical roots from which it germinated (Newton 1965). The roots of occupational therapy are firmly implanted in the field of mental health (Long and Cronin-Davis 2007, Paterson 1997). We study a discipline's history to increase professional confidence, to strengthen identity and to enable us as practitioners to scrutinise the content of the curriculum and develop reflexivity (Duffin 2010). The University of Limerick is currently carrying out a large study to document the history of occupational therapy in Ireland. The research outlined in this paper is a branch, stemming from the central trunk that is the aforementioned project. To date, the use of work as therapy in the Irish District Asylums has not been researched.

Research question

How was work used in the District Asylums of Ireland, between 1850 -1880, as documented by the Lunacy Inspectors?

Research objectives

- To complete a comprehensive analysis of the use of work with patients, documented by the Inspectorates of Lunacy reports on the District Asylums between 1850 -1880, by April 2014.
- To identify the Lunacy Inspectors perception of the use of work, within the District Asylums.
- To identify whether the core concepts of the profession of occupational therapy were evident within the encouraged, labouring of patients.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ireland in 1850 - 1880

In the middle of the 19th century one third of the population lived on potatoes as their only food. A potato blight occurred in 1845 and continued until 1849: later referred to as *The Great Famine* (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2008). The population of the country in 1851, stood at 6,554,074 compared to 1841 when the population was at a massive 8,177,744. It is estimated that one million died, as a result of the famine, the rest of whom are thought to have emigrated (Kelly 2004). By 1870 approximately three million had emigrated (Davey 1999). During this difficult time everyday life continued, which included: farming, blacksmithing and a strong interest in the Irish language, song, folklore and the arts (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2008, Kelly 1989). Post famine, there was a surge in the number of beggars and “wandering lunatics” along the roadside. The creation of asylums was seen partially as a way of removing such people from everyday society (Finnane 1981). The famine led Ireland from an agricultural society towards an industrialised society. In many ways it was a time of hierarchy and inequality. The Protestant work ethic directly influenced this shift as it justified and motivated the pursuit of earthly endeavours. It identified worldly success with spiritual success, such that by prospering through industrious work, one could please God and earn a place in Heaven. Lack of success in work implied damnation from God (Hodson and Sullivan 1990).

Organisation of the medical system: psychiatry and mental health

In the 19th century Ireland was under British rule. To reinforce England’s hold on Ireland and to maintain public order and compliance, Robert Peel (Chief Secretary) rolled out numerous systems in Ireland (namely public order, education and welfare) modelled entirely upon that of Britain. The Poor Law Act (1838) saw the creation of workhouses which provided food, accommodation and medical care to the poor (Kelly 2004). In terms of public health, Ireland was significantly advanced in comparison to the other members of the British Isles. In 1817 Peel established a national system of insane asylums, yet England did not provide state care for the insane until 1845. The latter was mainly due to Peel’s ability to improve upon aspects of the British Health system, with Ireland as his blank canvas. During this time the Mental Health law, passed in Westminster, greatly influenced development, predominantly through the Lunatic Asylums (Ireland) Act (1821) and later the Criminal Lunatics (Ireland) Act (1838). The latter acts were passed to meet the increasing number of the mentally ill and provided them with institutional provision in Ireland. The laws brought about the establishment of asylums across the country (Kelly 2008b, Prior 2003).

The establishment of District Asylums

The original vision for the District Asylums was to stop the misplacement of the mentally ill in prisons or workhouses and provide temporary residence and cure for the mentally ill, who would then return home. Unfortunately, the admissions outnumbered the discharges, the asylums became a permanent residence to the “incurables” and overcrowding was an ongoing issue (Brennan 2012, Prior 2012). Occupancy within the asylums was evenly distributed, regionally, such that neither urban nor rural had higher occupancy rates (Brennan 2013). By 1880 twenty two District Asylums across Ireland housed 8,490 patients (1880 P.4). They were located in: Armagh, Ballinasloe, Belfast, Carlow, Castlebar, Clonmel, Cork, Down, Ennis, Enniscorthy, Kilkenny, Killarney, Letterkenny, Limerick, Londonderry, Maryborough, Monaghan, Mullingar, Omagh, Richmond, Sligo and Waterford. Inspectorates of Lunacy were appointed to oversee the running of the District Asylums and annually reported on the district, local and private lunatic asylums of Ireland (Prior 2012). Each asylum also had a Board of Governors who met monthly, to attend to and maintain administrative aspects.

Moral treatment: the origins of occupational therapy

The late 18th century brought about the age of humanism. The driving force behind this philosophical movement (later known as moral treatment) was a French doctor by the name of Philippe Pinel.

Schwartz (2003) refers to Pinel as “the father of moral treatment” (p.25). He spoke out against neglect and cruelty within the asylums and believed that inmates should not be chained but rather kept occupied. He advocated that such occupations be of individual choice and should include physical exercise, music and picturesque scenery (Brown et al. 2010, Friedland 2011). Moral treatment of the mentally ill, involved viewing the patients, humanely, as equal counterparts, encouraging a routine of work and recreation. An emphasis was put on patient and their environment, it was hoped that desirable moral traits and values would be achieved through habituation (Peloquin 1989, Pettigrew et al. 1998). At the same time, William Tuke, an English Quaker, was pioneering moral treatment of the mentally ill at the York Retreat in England which he founded as an asylum for the insane (Edginton 1997, Kelly 2008b, Pettigrew et al. 1998). The York retreat had a unique approach in that inmates were encouraged to participate in gardening, sewing, knitting and working on the farm. Patients and staff mingled on a daily basis (Punwar and Peloquin 2000). The use of moral treatment was an early form of occupational therapy, with productive labour a pivotal component (Peloquin 1994).

Work as therapy

There has been attention in previous years, by University of Limerick colleagues, in relation to the Central Mental Hospital, Dundrum, who focused more on occupation and included recreation and religion (Dunn 2013, Guinan 2013). This study focus is specifically on patient labour in mental hospitals which was regarded as “work therapy”, and in later years materialized as the specific discipline of occupational therapy (Hall 2013). Pelouquin (1991b) refers to the work of Dr William Rush Dunton, who coined the term “occupational therapy”. In 1919 he classified occupational work as having three core objectives: the most basic form of occupational work was to provide a distraction, referred to as invalid work. The second objective was occupations that were used to restore the client’s mental or physical function, referred to as occupational therapy work. The third and final objective was the use of work to restore function to those with disabilities, referred to as vocational work. These categories will be used to evaluate work as therapy within the Irish District Asylums.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The current study was historical, documentary research. Data was both primary and secondary in nature as the reports were written by the Inspectors but also contained information that they did not experience (Lusk 1997). As the data was historical, critical interpretation was essential as knowledge is not value free and contains bias to some degree (Hennink et al. 2010).

Data sources

The data was gleaned from within annual reports by the Inspectorates of Lunacy, from 1850 -1880. The criterion to become an Inspector was to be a male doctor. The first Inspectorate during the latter period was Dr. Francis White, an upper-middle class, privileged, well-educated gentleman who self-identified himself as elite in his medical profession (Grimsley-Smith 2011). He was assisted in his post by Dr. John Nugent, who in 1857 became Dr. White’s successor, whereby Dr. George William Hatchell joined to assist Dr. Nugent. The Inspectorates played a key role in guiding lunacy policy in the second half of the 19th century (Prior 2012). The Inspectorate in Lunacy’s main purpose was to inspect, provide a form of accountability and safeguard the treatment of the inmates within the asylums. The reports served as an opportunity to raise issues and point out problems that were evident during their inspection of the asylums (Prior 2012).

Original language and terminology used within the archives researched were not altered to contemporary terminology used in modern day mental health in an attempt to optimise reliability of the historical sources (Prior 2012, Malcolm 1989).

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data as it is accessible, flexible and useful in reporting themes within data (Braun and Clarke 2006).

There are six phases to performing thematic analysis. Phase one had the researcher becoming familiar with the data. At phase two initial codes were manually generated. By phase three, themes were searched for. In phase four, any themes found were reviewed. At phase five, themes were defined and named. The final phase was to produce this article of the research findings (Braun and Clarke 2006). All research must be assessed for reliability and validity, historical research is not immune (Krefting 1991, Seale 2004). This study was assessed using the work of Sweeney (2005) who advocated for quality to be tested in terms of external and internal criticism (positive and negative). External criticism was conducted by questioning the authenticity of the document through checking consistency with other already verified authentic documents. Internal criticism establishes trustworthiness of the source, biases and motives that may have been at play, through positive and negative criticism (Christy 1975, Sweeney 2005). Positive criticism refers to ensuring words used in a certain context in the past are not misinterpreted in line with how the word is currently understood (Lusk 1997, Sweeney 2005). This aspect was essential as the definition of work within 1850-1880 differs to our modern day definition. Negative criticism was carried out by confirming the author and accuracy of dates within the material. It was also important to establish that the authors witnessed some events first hand: primary source, whilst also described events indirectly: secondary source (Sweeney 2005).

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was unnecessary as the documents are in the public domain and can be accessed by anyone. Whilst this research doesn't deal with people directly, it was essential for the researcher to behave in an ethical manner. At all times the researcher was conscious that confidential data might be uncovered that pertains to deceased individuals, who may still have living relatives and descendants (Lusk 1997). The data was treated with utmost respect, discretion and dignity. Furthermore all data was documented as per reports to insure accuracy of depictions within the article (Grinyer 2009, Sieber and Tolich 2012).

Trustworthiness

The researcher is the sole measurement tool within this study such that there is a risk of subjective bias (Patton 2002). The researcher addressed this by firstly reviewing the data on a number of occasions to insure accurate coding of data and to bring the researcher as close to the data as possible. Secondly the researcher kept a reflective journal and took field notes throughout the data collection and analysis. The researcher also discussed findings in research supervision. Finlay and Gough (2003) advocate the use of reflexivity to minimise bias.

FINDINGS

The reports reviewed are abundant with information about occupation. The patients are viewed as a whole, with the influence of forces outside that of biological determinism acknowledged, drawing particular attention to that of lived experience (see appendix 2 vii, viii, ix).

During this era there is a wider movement and acknowledgement of the therapeutic importance of doing, being occupied and employed, in terms of cure or alleviation of mental affections. A greater understanding of doing be it work, amusements, music, reading or attending Church is evident. This is illustrated through the following quote:

“Whatever systems of classification may be adopted in reference to the different forms of insanity there’s one general principle treatment applicable to all namely that of affording suitable occupations and meaning of recreation, not only as moral but curative agents. There is probably no single deficiency more detrimental to the wellbeing of the insane, be they in public or private establishments, than want of occupation. A listless and apathetic existence tending to encourage delusions will often frustrate the best directed efforts of science.”

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1874, p.9)

Three themes arose, from reviewing the data, namely: forms of work, “curative” work and “unwholesome” work (see appendix 1). The latter themes that came clearly from the coding have been titled with words that regularly appear in the reports in order to remain as close to the data as possible.

Theme 1: Forms of work

Figure 1 outlines all occupations listed in the reports in association with work in the twenty two District Asylums, compiled by the researcher in table format. A large array of work, in the areas of handicrafts, utility, leisure and education were evident.

Figure 1: Forms of work

Agricultural labour	Knitting	Repairing clothing
Assisting nurses	Laundry	Sewing
Attending school	Laying out walks	Shoemaking
Basket weaving	Levelling ditches	Spinning
Building walls	Making clothing	Smith work
Carpentry	Manual work	Sub soiling
Cleaning	Mat making	Tailoring
Crochet	Miscellaneous	Trades
Domestic	Needling/needlework	Washing
Embroidery	Painting the building	Warping
Gardening	Planting	Weaving
Fancy-work	Pumping water	Weeding
Farm	Quilting	Winding
Husbandry	Reeling	

The word work and employment is used in a different manner than that in which we would use today such that, in reference to the Richmond Asylum, attending school is listed under employment (see appendix 2 iii), (Inspectorates of Lunacy 1875, p.67).

Theme 2: “Curative” work

Work was widely viewed by the Inspector of Lunacy as vital to the patients’ health and wellbeing:

They [in reference to the farms] afford outdoor occupation and if there be one curative or tranquilizing accessory better than another it will be found in exercise and the healthful employment of the insane out of doors. The main deficiency in hospital s for the insane is referable in great measure to the absence of means for the continual occupation of their inmates, to whom nothing can be more injurious than an monotonous, do-nothing existence within the precincts of a lunatic institution.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1865, p.12)

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The Inspectorate categorically states that curative means were the priority:

The amount of labour required from the patients individually is necessarily small and intended as a curative means to occupy their time and engage their thoughts, the profitable element being incidental and entirely a secondary consideration.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1866, p.13)

Social integration is alluded to in relation to being a benefit of occupation:

The barriers which hitherto separated the sane from the less fortunate fellow creatures are gradually disappearing and the lunatic is beginning to be regarded with much less prejudice and distrust.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1865, p.12)

Employment was segregated by gender. Outdoor occupations such as farming, gardening and trades were carried out by the men, whilst the women were largely employed in the kitchen, laundry and handicrafts. Social background and previous activities were taken into account, along with humane conditions to carry out said work.

A very large proportion of the females were industriously employed within doors; the weather not being favourable, few of the males could be employed in outside work. In an agricultural district it is unfortunate that there is not a suitable in door occupation available for farm labourers in a lunatic asylum.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1865 p.48)

The therapeutic benefits of being outdoors were advocated for: “The great want for outdoor employment is the chief drawback to the wellbeing of this institution” (Inspectorates of Lunacy 1865, p.52).

The use of grading, according to the patients individual level of ability is also evident:

....should at all times afford occupation to inmates possessing the requisite physical strength, while the keeping of pleasure grounds in order and the culture of flowers would be suited to the weakly.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1874, p.9)

Theme 3: “Unwholesome” work

Some aspects of the work were less than “curative”, in reference to the Limerick Asylum-

“I regret to observe on the wretched condition of the laundry, in which I see no less than twenty three females actually jammed against each other at tubs, for want of space: ad as the laundry was before it is now much worse.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1864 p.30)

This is again echoed the following year, in reference to the Cork Asylum, “I cannot speak favourably about the laundry. It seems a very neglected department” (Inspectorates of Lunacy 1865, p.40).

Recommendations were made for the rectification of the issues, but they also served to further highlight the conditions:

I would suggest that stands be placed around the troughs from the women who work in it, such as are ordinarily employed to protect their feet from wet.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1865, p.45)

The work was in many ways “unwholesome”:

There being no means of washing foul linen of epileptics and idiots of filthy habits except by hand, than which nothing can possibly be more offensive or unwholesome.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1873, p.37)

The Inspectors recognised that the work was often quite difficult, in reference to the want of a wringing machine, “It is very difficult, if not impossible, to properly wring heavy bed sticks and blankets and sheets, &c, by hand” (Inspectorates of Lunacy 1873, p.44)

There appears to be ongoing issues with the Laundry and Kitchen being described as “truly discreditable” (Inspectorates of Lunacy 1872,p.49). The work was also “unwholesome” for male patients:

It would be desirable to adopts some other mode of raising the water for the house than employing the patients, it in point of fact amounts to hard labour, and certainly without any beneficial effect to their mental condition besides taking time from employment that would be more conductive to recovery.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1875, p.101)

Consistent reference is made throughout about the sole economic benefits of patient labour. It would appear that occupations were encouraged not for therapeutic value but for monetary return:

We find but very few engaged in handicrafts such as shoemaking, tailoring, carpentry. We should desire to see more at work in these profitable avocations.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1874, p.40)

DISCUSSION

In order to remain true to the data, one must be conscious of the era it was written and the meaning of the words used in the context of the time rather than our own interpretation now. Work, labour, occupation and employment are used interchangeably throughout the reports in reference to useful occupations of that era. Modern definitions of work focus specifically on working excessive hours, monetary reward and career progression (Braveman and Page 2011). Employment can be defined as that which enables the development of daily skills in daily habits, the development of routines, valued roles, whilst providing opportunity for social integration and for financial gain (Goodman et al. 2009). Today we would not refer to education, or many of the handicrafts undertaken in the District Asylums, as work.

The forms of work identified within the reports, are in line with the occupations that were carried out by those outside of the asylums, during the same period (Fitzgerald and Lambkin 2008). It is therefore argued that within this period the occupations the patients were employed in provided social identity on the basis that their counterparts outside of the asylum were engaging in the same occupations.

Furthermore, as “insane poor” were often unskilled, many of these new skills in handicrafts, utility, leisure and education were readily transferable upon discharge and would afford the patients a better quality of life. Today we would refer to the latter as reintegrating those with mental illness back into the community through vocational rehabilitation (Lloyd 2010). The work in the District Asylums was unpaid, yet it provided social identity and status, social contact, acted as a means of structuring and occupying time, activity and involvement and allowed for a sense of achievement (Evans and Repper 2000).

Overcrowding was an ongoing issue, which in all regards led to sub-optimal conditions and provision (Prior 2004). Kelly (2008) attributes a large aspect of overcrowding to increased recognition and diagnosis of mental illness as a result of societal and political factors. The second half of the 19th century was still reeling from the devastating effects of the famine and was undergoing vast changes

associated with industrialisation in Ireland, thus increasing the visibility and rates of individuals with mental illness (Palmer 1988). During this period the Irish people were in a state of continued warfare with the then ruling British government (Grimsley-Smith 2011). Just as the definition of work has changed, within 1850-1890 the criteria of insanity changed as a result of legislative reform, which not only influenced social attitudes and societal structures but also influenced the experience and interpretation of mental illness. Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, historian, and critic, questioned the very definition and distinction between reason and madness. He refers back to the Renaissance period where madness was associated with a sacred form of knowledge, yet based on condition alone, radically became a form of oppression (Foucault 1967, Smart 2002). Foucault's work echoes the sentiments of Finnane (1981) and Bracken and Thomas (2001) who spoke of the confinement of the insane poor by removing and segregating them from the community in an effort to maintain social order.

John Ruskin (1819 - 1900), an English social reformer and critic, wrote in 1851 that:

God intends no man to live in this world without working; but it seems to me no less evident that He intends every man to be happy in his work. Now in order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it. They must not do too much of it. And they must have a sense of success in it.

(Meiksins and Whalley 2004, p.153).

This quote shows the strong Protestant work ethic at the time of these reports, but also alludes to some of the core values of occupational therapy. In terms of the Protestant work ethic, the asylums served many purposes: it removed beggars and those who were unemployed from the streets, whilst providing work for those confined and contributing to society as a whole (Smart 2002). In terms of also alluding to the core values of occupational therapy, Dunton 1919 (cited in Peloquin 1991b) outlined core objectives to occupational work namely: providing distraction and restoring function at different levels. Dunton advocated that work should ideally have a useful end, he stipulated that poor quality or useless production was better than idleness (Peloquin 1991b, Bing 1981). In line with Dunton and Ruskin's view, the reports demonstrate many of core concepts of the profession of Occupational Therapy. For example in the 24th report it is stated "I think employment however trivial is expedient in institutions for the insane" (Inspectorates of Lunacy 1875, p.78). Foucault's work lends itself to explaining the relationship between moral treatment and the Protestant work ethic, which can be viewed in many ways alongside "curative" work and "unwholesome" work. It can be summarised as the interplay between health and power or as Foucault's refers to it: 'governmentality' (Laws 2011). Foucault referred to

asylums as “cities of morality” where, based on moral principles, institutionalized work was used as a form of disciplining people and creating moral reform and control (Falzon 2013, Smart 2002).

The Inspector of Lunacy makes significant reference, to the economic benefits of work within the District Asylums. At face value it would appear that the motives of those in charge of the Asylums were based upon monetary values. Through further analysis of the data and of existing literature surrounding this era, it appears that the enterprises of the District Asylums expenditure consistently exceeded any income, year on year (Prior 2012). Although the Asylums were in fact run at a loss it does not make light the statements made by the Inspectors. The Inspectors were in essence, as Pettigrew et al stated ‘watchdogs of the asylums’ (1998 p.38). The details in the reports both positive and negative demonstrate that they fulfilled their role in so far as they consistently advocated for improved conditions and care on the patients behalf. However the same cannot be said in relation to reviewing the asylums. The Inspectors tended to visit infrequently, often only once in a year. This coupled with the fact that the Inspectors were well-educated, privileged, middleclass and upper middle class men means that the reports must only be viewed as their perspective, interpretation and vision as opposed to actual experience of the staff or patients.

The District asylums as a whole were viewed as being highly effective based on their high rates of recoveries thus meeting Dunton’s criteria for occupational work through restoring function. Furthermore the recovery rates were higher than their counterparts in England, Scotland and America (Prior 2012). John Hall, in an editorial entitled “Histories of work and occupational therapy – and occupational therapists as historians?” refers to a symposium that took place in Oxford last year. The focus of this symposium was the histories of work and occupational therapy starting from the late 19th century (Hall 2013). However the findings in this article demonstrate the use of patient labour as therapy from as early as 1850, which would appear to place work as therapy in the Irish Asylums ahead of their European counterparts.

Limitations and recommendations

With retrospective vision, come advantages and disadvantages. As the Inspectorates of the reports are deceased it is not possible to discuss any of the content or gain elaboration or clarification. Four reports, namely the sixteenth, seventeenth, nineteenth and twentieth for the years , 1867,1868,1870 and 1871 respectively, are unable to be found, such that they do not exist within the record, so it is uncertain as to their fate or if in fact they were written. Awareness of the latter is essential in order to ensure the quality of research produced (Austin 1958, Christy 1975,Seale 2004). The researcher would recommend viewing this article in context, alongside the other existing studies conducted within the Department of

Clinical Therapies as part of the ongoing documentation of the history of occupational therapy in Ireland. Good historical research will often look at more than one source (Danto 2008). Both patient data and official data should be, ideally viewed and analysed together as a means of positive and negative internal and external criticism (Malcom 1989). Whilst it is acknowledged that analysing other sources alongside these reports would provide a broader, more accurate picture, it cannot be carried out as no known patient or staff records exist.

Implications for practice and future research

The findings will help in developing a timeline and expanding our knowledge of the history of occupational therapy in Ireland. It is also important to have a sense of where we have come from to inform current practice and future developments. Furthermore it is timely to reflect upon occupational therapy's contribution to the Irish society to coincide internationally with the centenary of the development of occupational therapy as a profession (Davey 2007). The reports demonstrate that from 1850 there has been a consistent attention of the importance of doing, which is relevant to all health care professionals and may help to guide clinical discourse within mental health back to its origins in the humanities. The useful occupation of attending church mentioned in detail within the reports would merit further research.

CONCLUSION

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (Santayana 1905, p284)

The aim of this research was to ascertain the Inspector of Lunacy's perception of work as therapy within Irish District Asylum between 1850 and 1880. Hindsight afforded ease of critical interpretation of the Inspectorates subjective account within the reports. The Inspectorate consistently maintained that a "uniform system of kindness and compassion towards the insane" continued to exist in the asylums (Inspectorates of Lunacy 1865, p.10). Through analysing the data using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006), three themes materialized, namely; forms of work, "curative" work and "unwholesome" work. The forms of work (Figure 1) are varied in nature and fall under the overarching terms of handicrafts, utility, leisure and education. Many of the occupations were segregated by gender such that the men mainly worked outdoors and the women indoors. The Inspectors of Lunacy consistently and painstakingly advocated for the curative benefits of work as therapy. Work was perceived as a desirable morale trait and valued activity, to be achieved through habituation. Lack of occupation within an

asylum was frowned upon and the board of governors were instructed to rectify the situation. While the Inspectorates advocated for the use of work, they criticised working conditions

This piece of research is exciting for the profession of Irish Occupational Therapy as it appears to put the use of work as therapy in Ireland at the forefront in Europe. It also enables us to reflect on where ideas came from and not only challenge but inform current professional theory, practice, policy and research (Clark et al 1991, Peters 2011). The research demonstrates that work as therapy was unequivocally a key component of the moral treatment era and in turn occupational therapy. Furthermore the findings emphasise the long recognised importance of doing, which indirectly acknowledges the importance of modern day occupational therapy, not only in terms of mental health but in healthcare as a whole, by providing a stronger evidence base for practice. Religion as occupation mentioned consistently within the reports, merits future research.

As occupational therapists practice today and as we look back, we develop a sense of where we came from, where we are today and how to build on those very foundations into the future. Chaim Potok wrote:

“...everything has a past. Everything – a person, an object, a word, everything. If you don’t know the past, you can’t understand the present and plan properly for the future.” (Potok 2010, p.10).

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Coding

Types of work	“Curative” work	“Unwholesome” work
Agricultural labour	Capable	Unpaid Labour
Assisting nurses	Curative	Profit
Attending school	Recoveries	Economical
Basket weaving	Employment	Handicrafts-Profitable Avocation
Building walls	Useful Occupation	Self Sufficient
Carpentry	Maintenance of Patients	Pumping Water
Cleaning	Crops	Laundry and Kitchen Discreditable
Crochet	Culture of Flowers (for weakly)	Hard Labour,
Domestic	Productivity	No Benefit to Men Condition
Embroidery	Suitable amusement	Crop yields
Gardening	Idleness	Unwholesome
Fancy-work	Indoor and Outdoor	Foul Linen
Farm	Agricultural Classes	Heavy blankets
Husbandry	Able-bodied	Feet Immersed In Water
Knitting	Engendering habits of Self	Overcrowding
Laundry	Control	Outlay-Produce
Laying out walks	Tranquilising Accessory	Remunerative Employment
Levelling ditches	Less Prejudice and Distrust	Domestic arrangement-
Making clothing	Occupy Time	Unsatisfactory
Manual work	Engage Thoughts	Chronic Patients
Mat making	Need for Sheds	Net Gain from Lands.
Miscellaneous	Cure of Insanity	
Needling/needlework	Competent to Work	
Painting the building	Successful Results	
Planting	Creative Comforts	
Pumping water	Beneficial Influence	
Quilting	Encouragement	
Reeling	Decrease in Asylum Stay	
Repairing clothing	Want of Occupation-	
Sewing	Detrimental	
Shoemaking		
Spinning		
Smith work		
Sub soiling		
Tailoring		
Trades		
Washing		
Warping		
Weaving		
Weeding		
Winding		

Appendix 2: Sample of coded documents

i. “Unwholesome” conditions:

“ I regret to observe on the wretched condition of the laundry, in which I see no less than twenty-three females actually jammed against each other at the wash tubs, for want of space ; bad as the laundry was before it is now much worse and more confined by the room taken from it for the Turkish Bath. Everything connected with the department is in the worst repair ; a fact which, on inspection, the Go-

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1864, p.30)

ii. Education:

The system of tuition progresses satisfactorily in those asylums where it has been adopted, so that we trust to see it more fully recognised; not that as yet any particular educational benefit is noticeable from it, but as serving to occupy the minds and time of the patients, it produces good effects, and by abstracting the attention from delusions, tends to produce habits of regularity and order.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1865, p.12)

iii. Attendance at schools referred to as employment:

late civic population being hastened by physical debility and senile decay.

A large portion of the inmates was daily employed, 333 being males, 90 of them on the grounds in farm and garden operations, 130 in the schools, 65 assisting servants in domestic avocations, and the remainder miscellaneously. On the other side, 130 females attend the schools, 135 are engaged at needlework, knitting, and quilting, and 155 in the laundries, storerooms, kitchens, and assisting the nurses generally—a total between both sexes of 775 individuals usefully engaged is thus constituted out of 1,039 lunatics.

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1875, p.67)

iv. Gender segregation of work:

repair. A very large proportion of the females were industriously engaged within doors; the weather not being favourable, few of the males could be employed at outside work. In an agricultural district, it unfortunately happens that there is little suitable in-door occupation available for farm labourers in a lunatic asylum, it therefore becomes the more necessary that means of amusement should be provided for them, to break the monotony of existence, which tends so much to retard the recovery of the insane. I examined the provisions, which, with the exception of meat,

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1865, p.48)

v. Moral treatment, "none under restraint":

December 1, 1864.—On inspecting the Maryborough District Lunatic Asylum this day, the registered number of patients in it amounts, in the aggregate, to 180—95 males and 85 females, all of whom appear to be carefully looked after—none under restraint of any kind, or confined to bed by illness. The house I consider to be clean, orderly, and well

(Inspectorates of Lunacy 1865, p.49)

vi. Doing, habitation, idleness and social conformity/order :

Educational condition.

Occupation of patients.

Our object in introducing the educational condition of the inmates of the different District Asylums, and in which the illiterate more than double those who have received a fair amount of education, was to exhibit their previous social position, and to show the beneficial working of these institutions in producing habits of order, neatness, and even some approach to refinement among the insane classes; while the number daily employed in and out of doors serves to prove the encouragement given to industrial occupations. On this latter head, however, we feel satisfied that great room for improvement still exists, and that suitable occupations could be devised for a much greater proportion of patients than at present; for nothing can be more injurious to the insane themselves than idleness, and that listless mode of existence, particularly within doors, which we regret to observe is too much tolerated. In the absence of industrial employment, pastimes ought to be more generally provided.

(Inspectorates in Lunacy 1862, p.22)

vii. Causes of mental disease:

No. 10.—TABLE showing the supposed Cause of Mental Disease of Patients in District Asylums on 31st December, 1864.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
MORAL CAUSES.			
Poverty and reverse of fortune,	111	122	233
Grief, fear, and anxiety,	97	165	262
Love, jealousy, and seduction,	50	89	139
Domestic quarrels and afflictions,	31	59	60
Religious excitement,	54	69	123
Study and mental excitement,	45	9	54
Ill-treatment,	8	22	30
Pride,	7	7	14
Anger,	1	6	7
Total Moral Causes,	404	548	952
PHYSICAL CAUSES.			
Intemperance and irregularity of life,	221	70	291
Cerebral diseases,	146	105	251
Congenital idiocy, &c.,	50	42	92
Febrile affections,	21	67	88
Effects of climate, sunstroke, &c.,	61	10	71
Bodily injuries and disorders,	124	67	191
Abuse of Medicine,	14	3	17
Sedentary Occupations,	11	8	19
Total Physical Causes,	648	372	1,020
Hereditary Predisposition,	285	263	548
Not known,	1,128	1,081	2,209
Total in District Asylums,	2,465	2,264	4,729

(Inspectorates in Lunacy 1865, p.85)

viii. Social condition of patients:

No. 11.—TABLE showing the Social Condition of Patients in District Asylums on 31st December, 1864.

ASYLUMS.	Married.			Single.			Widowed.			Unknown.			Total.		
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.
Armagh, . . .	15	14	29	56	48	104	1	6	7	1	3	4	73	71	144
Rallinasloe, . . .	31	44	75	112	98	210	2	14	16	33	9	42	178	165	343
Belfast, . . .	40	51	91	157	108	265	4	5	9	-	-	-	201	164	365
Carlow, . . .	19	12	31	57	42	99	11	15	26	23	25	48	110	95	205
Clonmel:															
Parent Asylum, . . .	15	17	32	21	23	44	5	4	9	14	9	23	55	53	108
Additional Asylum, . . .	9	11	20	28	27	55	-	1	1	58	21	79	95	60	155
Cork, . . .	42	48	90	198	171	369	6	25	31	-	-	-	246	244	490
Kilkenny, . . .	7	23	30	72	49	121	1	4	5	-	-	-	80	70	150
Killarnoy, . . .	77	24	101	43	45	88	10	13	23	9	7	16	144	89	233
Limerick, . . .	44	65	109	173	132	305	4	14	18	3	6	9	224	217	441
Londonderry, . . .	35	31	66	75	61	136	9	20	29	-	-	-	119	112	231
Maryborough, . . .	12	14	26	80	58	138	1	10	11	-	3	3	93	85	178
Mullingar, . . .	18	31	49	125	91	216	-	8	8	7	11	18	150	141	291
Omagh, . . .	39	36	75	141	93	234	5	17	22	-	-	-	185	146	331
Richmond, . . .	64	91	155	233	231	464	6	20	26	24	44	68	327	380	713
Sligo, . . .	23	17	40	84	57	141	3	7	10	-	-	-	110	81	191
Waterford, . . .	17	10	27	54	49	103	4	11	15	-	-	-	75	79	154
Total, . . .	507	548	1,055	1,700	1,383	3,083	77	194	271	172	139	311	2,465	2,264	4,729

(Inspectorates in Lunacy 1865,p.85)

ix. Previous occupations and class of life

No. 12.—Class of Life or previous Occupation of Patients in District Asylums on 31st December, 1864.

Class of Life or Occupation.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Labouring class,	1,062	428	1,490
Farming,	281	165	446
Domestic Servants,	58	398	456
Clerks,	41	—	41
Shopkeepers,	37	41	78
Tailors and Seamstresses,	45	160	205
Artisans,	57	—	57
Painters and Glaziers,	16	—	16
Smiths and Workers in Metals,	28	—	28
Masons and Bricklayers,	28	—	28
Carpenters,	54	—	54
Weavers,	48	15	63
Shoemakers,	71	3	74
Hatters,	6	—	6
Factory Workers,	8	13	21
Victuallers,	19	—	19
Peddars and Hucksters,	16	29	45
Lawyers,	1	—	1
Medical Men,	8	—	8
Members of Religious Communities,	14	5	19
Students and Teachers,	38	19	57
Soldiers and Pensioners,	115	—	115
Police,	29	—	29
Sailors,	26	—	26
Publicans,	5	—	5
Mendicants,	24	46	70
Various Employments,	92	127	219
No occupation, or unknown,	238	815	1,053
Total,	2,465	2,264	4,729

(Inspectorates in Lunacy 1865, p.86)